**No Matter What – A Study In The Book Of Philippians**

**~Philippians 3:12-4:4 – Letting Go Of The Past And Handling Disunity~**

**\*\* As we begin:**

* There are people we encounter who have had things happen in their past that still to this day controls them.
* People will bring up our past and use it against us even if we have changed. For some, things we said or did, or having something happen to us in our past, controls our present and future.

**Three Main Thoughts To Consider Today**

**Keys to forgetting our past – Phil. 3:12-15**

* In **vs. 12** Paul tells us that we should never be satisfied with where we are at spiritually.
* **Rom. 7** tells us that we, as believers, have a desire to be like Christ. It is a lifelong journey.
* The idea of “perfect” in **vs. 12** means “full maturity, brought to the goal, reach the end of our course.” Even Paul saw room for growth in his life.
* We are to “press on” **(vs. 12)**, pursuing maturity in Christ.

**\*\* The three keys to forgetting the past.**

* **First**, we must make a conscious choice to move forward **(vs. 13)**.
* The word “forgetting” **(vs. 13)** means “neglecting, no longer caring for.”
* **Point:** Do not live in guilt and do not live in the past that people will at times bring up. We cannot undo the past, but that is who we were, not who we are.
* **Point:** It is easy to bring up someone’s past mistakes while ignoring our own. We must choose not to do that and let go of our past.
* **Second**, focus on what God wants for us now **(vs. 13)**.
* Paul talks about “straining forward” like a runner stretching out at the finish line. Focus on God’s eternal perspective.
* Point: Look at what God is doing in our life now and wants to do in the future. Where does He want us to serve? What do I need to do to grow spiritually?
* **Third**, we must be consistent and persistent as we move forward **(vs. 14)**.
* To “press on” means “to run swiftly in order to catch something or someone.” It is the picture of one running a race swiftly to reach the goal. See **2 Tim. 4:7-8**.

**Problems that cause disunity cannot be swept under the rug – Phil. 4:1-3**

* There was a problem at Philippi between two ladies **(vs. 2)**. We do not know what the problem was.
* Some churches ignore issues, not wanting to confront them, or they make excuses.
* Some people think that they have the freedom to say what they want and cause problems.
* These two ladies were fellow workers in the Gospel. Paul “entreats” (encourage, admonish) them to “agree” in the Lord. They could agree to disagree and pursue helping the work of Christ.
* Paul wants them to be in harmony, to be humble, headed in the same direction. The call to unity is based on our relationship with the Lord and with one another. See **Jn. 13:15**.
* In **vs. 3** Paul, seeing the problem was someone big enough, asks for help.
* The word “companion” is either someone Paul worked with, or it could be a person’s name.
* What does this look like in practice? If it is a public problem, then we would have a meeting with the people and the elders. If dissension and disunity continue, it is brought before the church. These kinds of problem can ruin our testimony before the world.
* **Point:** Many things cause disunity – selfishness, anger, pride. Practicing **Phil. 2** guards against this.

**Find things to rejoice in – Phil. 4:4**

* The word “rejoice” is used twice in **vs. 4** and is a command, because attitude matters.
* We all can find things to rejoice in. The word “always” in **vs. 4** helps us to stay on track.
* Joy, remember, is not based on circumstances but on God being in control of all situations.
* It is a work of the Holy Spirit in our life **(Gal. 5:22-23)**. See also **1 Thess. 5:16-18**.
* **Point:** Think of things to rejoice in, to be thankful for.