Written Service Sunday June 21st 2026
A service of worship for use at home
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Philippians Chapter 3: Press On

Opening Prayer:

Lord, as we worship today give us a vision of your holiness.
Move us by your Spirit.
Bring good news to us all.
Freedom to all the broken people,
And heaven, here on earth,
Open our eyes to see you as you really are and open our hearts to praise you.
Amen

Hymn - StF 20

Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One is here;
Come bow before Him now with reverence and fear:
In Him no sin is found, we stand on holy ground.
Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One is here.

Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around;
He burns with holy fire, with splendour He is crowned:
How awesome is sight – our radiant King of light!
Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around.

Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place;
He comes to cleanse and heal, to minister His grace:
No work too hard for Him – in faith receive from Him.
Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place.

David J Evans

Gospel Reading: Matthew 16:24-28

Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone wants to come with me, he must forget himself, carry his cross, and follow me. For whoever wants to save his own life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. Will a person gain anything if he wins the whole world but loses his life? Of course not! There is nothing he can give to regain his life. For the Son of Man is about to come in glory of His Father with His angels, then He will reward each one according to his deeds.
I assure you that there are some here who will not die until they have seen the Son of Man come as King.

Prayer of Adoration and Praise:

We cannot keep silent. For all the great things you have done in Jesus.
Wonderful God, we praise and adore you.
For His charismatic presence,
Wonderful God, we praise and adore you.
For His humility,
Wonderful God, we praise and adore you.
For His love for all people, no matter their status, rich or poor,
Wonderful God, we praise and adore you.
For all that we know from Bible stories,
Wonderful God, we praise and adore you.
For His obedience even to death on the cross,
Wonderful God, we praise and adore you.
For His glorious resurrection,

Wonderful God, we praise and adore you.
For opening the way to heaven for us,
Wonderful God, we praise and adore you.
We have to shout out because we have witnessed your love, revealed in your Son Jesus Christ,
Wonderful God, we praise and adore you. Amen

Reading: Philippians 3:12-16
I do not claim that I have already succeeded or have already become perfect. I keep striving to win the prize which Christ Jesus won for me to Himself. Of course my brothers, I do really do not think that I have already won it; the one thing that I do however, is to forget what behind me and do my best to reach what is ahead. So I run straight towards the goal in order to win the prize, which is God's call through Christ Jesus to the life above.
All of us who are spiritually mature should this same attitude. But some of you have a different attitude; God will make it clear to you. However that may be, let us go forward according to the same rules we have followed until now.

Hymn - StF 455
All my hope on God is founded;
he doth still my trust renew.
Me through change and chance guideth,
only good and only true.
God unknown,
He alone
calls my heart to be His own.

Human pride and earthly glory,
sword and crown betray our trust;
What with care and toil we fashion,
tower and temple, fall to dust.
But God's power,
hour by hour,
is my temple and my tower.

God's great goodness aye endureth,
deep His wisdom passing thought;
Splendour, light, and life attend him,
beauty springeth out of nought.
Evermore,
from His store,
new-born worlds rise and adore.

Daily doth the almighty giver
bounteous gifts on us bestow;
His desire our soul delighteth,
pleasure leads us where we go.
Love doth stand,
at His hand;
joy doth wait on His command.

Still from earth to God eternal
sacrifice of praise be done,
High above all praises praising
for the gift of Christ His Son.
Christ doth call
one and all
ye who follow shall not fall.

Robert Bridges

Sermon Part One: Pressing on
Paul means only that he is not a complete Christian – he is "pressing on". He uses a picture to illustrate the point:-
He says he is trying to grasp that for which he had been grasped by Christ Jesus he was stopped on the Damascus Road by Jesus. Christ had a dream, a vision of what He might become. And that was what he had become. This was the dream or vision, for which He had grasped Paul. And Paul felt that he was bound to "press on" towards the goal for which he had been grasped.

To that end Paul says that he is forgetting what is behind and pressing forward to future projects. He says he is saying two things.

The first is that he is forgetting what is behind. Paul says that he can never rest on his own achievements and the task is to face what is to come. He looks forward to all things. It means that he is not able to sit still and contemplate all that has gone before; there is no sitting back and contemplating the future; no sitting back and resting on his laurels!

This is the same illustration that Jesus uses when He is talking about how a person must take up his cross and follow Him. By 'taking up his cross' He pointed to the fact that the only burden is the burden of self sacrifice. By 'denying himself' Jesus was saying, 'no' to self 'yes' to God

The second is he must reach for what he must do next, but he uses a very vivid picture – it is a picture and one used of a racer. He pictures someone reaching for the winning tape – and nothing is going to stop him getting there.

Then there is a discussion takes place of what it means to be antinomians. The antinomians were a sect that disagreed that the Christian life had anything to do with the law. They denied that it had nothing to do with the law, and they were living with forgiveness. And the grace of God denied that had nothing to do the law. They declared that it did not matter what they did; God would forgive; they were quite safe; no further discipline and no further effort was necessary. Paul is insisting, to the end of the day that the Christian life had everything to do with the law and the life if an athlete pressing onwards to a goal would always be in front. But it must be remembered that the antinomians were essentially Christian where as the Gnostics were an off shoot of an oriental code. They liked to call themselves Christian but were not Christian at all.

Hymn - StF 459

Captain of Israel host and Guide
of all who seek the land above,
Beneath your shadow we abide,
the cloud of your protecting love;
Our strength, your grace; our rule, your word;
our end, the glory of the Lord.

By your unerring Spirit led,
we shall not in the desert stray;
We shall not full direction need,
nor miss our providential way;
As far from danger as from fear,
while love, almighty love, is near.
Charles Wesley

Reading: Philippians 3:17-21

Keep on imitating me, my brothers. Pay attention to those to those who follow the right example that we have set for you. I have told you everything before, and now I repeat it with tears; there are many whose lives make them enemies of Christ's death on the cross. They are going to end up in hell, because their god is their bodily desires. They are proud of what they should be ashamed of, and they only think of things that belong to this world. We however are citizens of heaven, and we eagerly wait for our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will change our weak mortal bodies and make them like His own glorious body, using the power by which. He is able to bring all things under His rule.

Sermon Part Two:

Very few preachers would make the statement that Paul makes in verse 17!

Paul says don't "do as I say", Paul would only say "follow my example". It is worth noting here that Bengel, one of the greatest interpreters of the scripture who ever lived, translates in a different way: "Become fellow imitators with me in imitating Jesus Christ." This seems a reasonable translation of what Paul means.

There were in Philippi people whose conduct was open to scandal, and who by their lives, showed themselves enemies of the cross of Christ. Who they were is not quite certain. But is quite certain that they lived gluttonous and immoral lives, used their so-called Christianity was to justify themselves. We can only guess who they were.

It seemed likely that they were Gnostics. These Gnostics who liked to call themselves as Christian but, were certainly not Christian at all. They were heretics who liked to intellectualise Christianity and to make a kind of philosophy out of it. They began with the principle that from the beginning where were two realities – spirit and matter. Spirit was altogether good; as against matter which was altogether evil. They argued that if the world was made of matter which was essentially evil and that the body was evil. It didn't matter what you did with it. Therefore, you could do what you liked with it. It would always remain essentially evil. This led to them living their lives in gluttony and scandal. It didn't matter what you did with it, it would always remain essentially evil.

These were not Christian but came from the Orient. There was diverse culture who took many different forms. Some of them drifted into the Christian Church. It seems likely they drifted into the church in Philippi, where Paul had to deal with them.

Whatever they were, Paul reminds them that their citizenship is in heaven. Here was picture the Philippians could understand. Philippi was a Roman colony. These Roman colonies were amazing places. Here and there at strategic military places the Romans set down their colonies. These people were rewarded with full citizenship.

Now the great characteristic of these Roman colonies was that, where ever they were, they remained fragments of Rome. No matter where they were, Roman dress was worn; Roman magistrates governed them; Latin was what was spoken; Roman justice was administered; Roman morals were observed. Even in the ends of the earth these colonies remained unshakably Roman. So Paul says to the Philippians, "Just as Roman colonist never forget that they belong that they belong to Rome. You must never forget you must never forget that you are citizens of heaven; and conduct must match your citizenship." Wherever the Christian is, his conduct must prove that he is a citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven.

So Paul ends with the Christian hope. The Christian awaits the coming of Christ Jesus, and at His coming everything will be changed. We will lay aside this mortal body, which we now which we now possess, but we will be changed in the body, which the Lord Jesus Christ has reserved for us.

Hymn - StF 465

Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,
pilgrim though this barren land;
I am weak but thou art mighty;
hold me with thy powerful hand:
Bread of heaven, Bread of heaven,
feed me now and ever more;
Feed me now and ever more.

Open now the crystal fountain
whence the healing stream doth flow;
Let the fiery, cloudy pillar
lead me all my journey through:
Strong deliverer, strong Deliverer,
be thou still my strength and shield;
Be thou still my strength and shield.

When I tread the verge of Jordan
bid my anxious fears subside;
Death of death, and hell's destruction,
land me safe on Canaan's side.
Songs of praises, songs of praises,
I will ever give to thee;
I will ever give to thee.

William Williams

Prayer of Confession:
All-seeing God, we shut our eyes to the terrible images of human suffering.
The mangled bodies of warfare; the swollen bellies and stick like limbs of the unfed and the haunted stare of the beaten and tortured.
We confess our blindness.
Open our eyes to the suffering of others; forgive us Lord and guide us in our caring of others

All-hearing God, we shut our ears to the heart-rending cries of the suffering humanity; the shocked mumblings of an orphaned child unable to cry.
The whimpering of a baby held to an empty breast; or the wailing of a bereaved family around an open grave.
We confess our deafness.
Open our ears to the suffering of others, forgive us Lord, and call us to action.

All-knowing God, we shut our minds to the questions raised by suffering humanity; to the complicated issues of aid and intervention; to the painful reality of the human sin; to the challenge to own way of living.
Open our minds to the suffering of others; forgive us Lord and enlighten our giving.

All loving and merciful God, you promised that if we truly repent you are willing to forgive. Thank you for the lifting of guilt of sin so that we can follow you. Amen

Meditation
Loving and Almighty Lord,
Forgive our part in creating where innocent people still flee from guns and bombs,
From oppression and fear,
From starvation and homelessness.
Give us a portion of love that is in your heart, so that we may what power and wealth that we have to create a world where no one has to live in fear,
Where no children are faced with freeing from there to find safety. Amen

Prayer of Intercession:
Let us pray for all victims of injustice and warfare.
Lord Jesus, you knew the pain of betrayal and the agony of torture.
We remember before you the people of the Ukraine, Gaza and particularly the people of the Middle East.
We pray that you will strengthen them and that the peoples of the world and their leaders might work together for justice and peace.
Lord in the darkness - let your light shine.

Let us pray for the destitute, the hungry and the homeless.
Lord Jesus, you understood what it was to be poor, hungry and without shelter.
We remember before you those who find it a struggle to find the means of life, the malnourished, and the refugees.
We remember before you all who suffer this day.
We pray for all peoples of the world and their leaders that they might work together for a fairer sharing of earth's resources.
Lord in the darkness – let your light shine.

Let us pray for those who work to help the suffering you fed the hungry, healed the sick, and restored sight to the blind.
We remember before you all who work with Christian organisations, who work with the suffering of peoples of the world.
Lord in the darkness – let your light shine. Amen

Hymn – StF 707

Make me channel of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me bring your love;
Where there is injury, your pardon Lord;
And where there's doubt, true faith in you.

O Master, grant that I may never seek
So much to be to consoled as to console;
So be understood as to understand,
To be loved, as to love with all soul.

Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope;
Where is darkness, only light,
And there's darkness ever joy.
O Master …

Make me a channel of your peace.
It is pardoning that we are pardoned,
In giving unto all that we receive,
And in dying that we're born to eternal life.
O Master …

Final Prayer said together

Dear Lord, fill your church with love and understanding,
So that she may show forth your Gospel of love.
Fill your people with respect for each other, a willingness to listen,
And a generosity to share.
Amen