

Fellowship of Joy in the Person of Christ (Part 3)

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[0:00] I just need to stop telling.

Jonathan and Chris, just how far I'm going to get in my preaching because I just never do get there. I don't apologize because we don't need to breeze over these things too quickly and so that's my excuse, okay?

However, I think you'll be blessed by what God has to say with the portion of the Scripture that we do get to this morning. Philippians chapter 3 starting with verse 12.

Not that I have already attained. In fact, let me just back up to verse 11. I meant to start with verse 12. That's not a mistake.

But as soon as I start there, I'm thinking, what was he talking about? Well, verse 11. Let's start there. If by any means I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

[1:19] Verse 12. Not that I have already attained or arrived at it or acquired it or am already perfected. But I press on that I may lead or lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.

We just heard that, didn't we, in the song. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended, but one thing I do. Forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Therefore, let us, as many as are mature, have this mind. And if anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule.

Let us be of the same mind. Brethren, join in following my example. And note those who so walk, walk in the same way. As you have a us for a pattern.

For many walk, of whom I have told you often and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their mind on earthly things.

[2:49] For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body, that it may be conformed to his glorious body, according to the working by which he is able even to subdue all things, to himself.

Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved. Alright, tremendous text.

Now, our subject, if you will recall, our subject here in chapter 3, actually the subject for this entire letter is the fellowship of joy, but our subject in chapter 3, is the fellowship of joy in the person of Christ.

The fellowship of joy in the person of Christ. Paul wrote in verse 1, you will recall, rejoice in the Lord. He said, rejoice in Christ Jesus.

Verse 3, the excellence of the knowledge of Christ, he wrote in verse 8. Gaining Christ, he wrote in verse 8, and on and on I could go.

[4:02] And so, the focus is Christ, the Lord Jesus, the person of Jesus Christ. And here in our text that I just read, the person of Christ is, and continues to be, front and center in Paul's thoughts, in Paul's subject.

Now, last Sunday, we ended with verse 11, where, if you will recall, where it may have seemed to some of you that Paul was unsearched about his eternal destination.

I mean, just a casual reading of the text might lead you to that conclusion. He wrote, if by any means, or somehow, somehow, if possible, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Remember, I explained the word attain. There means to reach the place of, or to arrive at the resurrection from the dead. And it may seem, at first glance, that he's uncertain about that.

Well, he is, to a degree, he's not uncertain about his eternal destination. He's just uncertain about the how of it, or the when of it, the timing of it, or whether he's going to be alive when it happens, or whether he's going to be dead and be resurrected when it happens.

[5:16] He doesn't know any of these things, and you don't know that either. All right, so Paul is not expressing doubt concerning his eternal destination. But the point here, really, is not about the when of it, or the timing of it, or the particulars about the resurrection.

The point here, that Paul is making, is this. Paul is talking, here about, as we said last week, about something he longed for, more than anything else in this world.

He longed for it. He longed for Jesus. He longed to see Jesus, remember? He longed to, for the day, when he would see him face to face.

That's what he longed for, more than anything else in this world. Let me spend some time last week talking about that. And added to that, and this really is his primary point, he longed for the day, when he would, so to speak, graduate from the school of Christ's likeness.

This life. He longed for that day. He longed for that blessed day, when God's refining work in his life, would be over, and it would be completed.

[6:27] And so there would be no more suffering, no more struggles, no more troubles, no more trials, no more tears, no more pains, or burdens of any kind. That would all be over.

And he would then, at that point, at that time, he would, as it were, receive his diploma, from the school of Christ's likeness. That being, the perfection.

That day, he would receive perfection, the perfection that would come, at the resurrection. his resurrection. That's what he longed for, more than anything else in this world.

As the apostle John wrote, also wrote, in 1 John chapter 3, in verse 2, he wrote, he said, beloved, now we are children of God. And, he said, it has not appeared, as yet, what we will be.

Or, what we will be like. And why? Because Christ had not come yet. And, the resurrection had not taken place yet. But, John goes on to say, we know, we know, we are certain about something, that when he appears, we will be like him.

[7:39] Because, we will see him as he is. This is, John speaking, saying something really similar, to what Paul was talking about. Or, at least expressing the same kind of confidence, same kind of desire.

And, really, John is very clear about that. John was confident, about this thing happening one day, the resurrection. And, he longed for that day, just like Paul, more than anything else in this world. Remember what John wrote, at the close of his book of the Revelation? He said, even so, come Lord Jesus. That's extreme confidence. as we say.

Now, Paul was equally confident, about his resurrection. And, he was equally confident, about the perfection, that he would one day experience, at the coming of Christ, or at the resurrection.

And, again, longed for that day. And so, I ask, shouldn't we? Shouldn't we long for that day? But, and here is the point, until that, what?

[8:48] Until that day. Now, obviously, we're talking about a day, our future. We don't know when it's going to be. We don't know we're going to be dead, then, or alive, when Jesus comes.

We don't know all the particulars about it. But, it is out in the future sometime, and we long for that day, and we should. But, until then. What?

What? You see, I believe that's what Paul's getting at here, in the rest of chapter 3. Notice again, what Paul said, in verse 13.

Look at it. Not that I have already, attained it. Attained it. Or, not that I have already, acquired, or received, or, accomplished, or, come to experience, what will happen at the resurrection.

Not that that has already happened. And then he, makes this statement, that really is just being, a little bit more specific. Not that I have already, been made perfect.

[9:56] That hasn't happened yet. That's what he said, in verse 11. And so, in verse 11, or verse 12 rather. So, in verse 11, Paul's thoughts are caught up, into the heavenlies, to the sweet by and by.

But here in verse 12, he comes back down to earth, where we live right now, where we ought to, to be right now. He comes back down to earth, to the, we could call it the nasty now and now.

And, so he's saying to us, don't miss this, it's all introductory. This, this is where he's leading us. He's saying to us, I long for eternity with Christ.

Absolutely. And don't you? Huh? I long for that. This is what Paul says. Absolutely, I long for that day. And I long for his, perfecting work in my life, to be finished.

I long for that day. But I haven't made it yet. That's what Paul's saying. And so, he's saying to his readers, and that is to us, he's saying, you haven't made it either.

[11:03] Not yet. And so, I've got some important instructions for you. Spiritual perfection, he's saying, maturity, Christlikeness, it's God's goal for you.

Did you know that? Paul's saying, that's God's goal. Christlikeness is his goal. And God is bringing everything to bear, in this life, your life, my life, in order to reach that goal, to accomplish that goal for us.

And he is bringing everything to bear, and he's going to get her done. He's going to get her done. Now, it may hurt sometimes. We may struggle sometimes.

We may gripe and complain on occasion. Maybe more than just on occasion. But God is going to get her done. But, Paul says, you are not to just stand idly by, and so to speak, let God do it.

That is in some sense of, let go and let God. Oh no. Paul is saying to us here, this passage, all the way through to the end of the chapter, and on into chapter 4, he's saying, and this is so important, you are to join God in that work.

[12:27] Oh, we've got to get that as believers. I don't know that all God's people have grasped that. We're to join God in that work. Not the work of salvation.

Don't misunderstand me. But the work of perfecting us into the life of Christ. The big theological word is sanctification. We're to join God in that work.

In striving toward that goal. And just like God, you too are to bring everything to bear in your life in reaching that goal.

So that, the idea is, everything in your life should make sense. Everything in your life should be consistent with. Everything in your life should be brought to bear on reaching the goal.

The prize. And though Paul defines it really in a number of ways, verse 14 is where he says, the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

[13:27] Everything in life is to be brought to bear on that. In reaching and striving for that goal, the prize of the upward calling of Christ Jesus.

And we'll learn more about exactly what that means in a moment. All right, so, this is Paul's objective in the text. Long for the prize of heaven, yes, he says.

Paul says, I do. Long for that more than anything else in this world. Long for the prize of heaven, yes. But for now, set your mind on the race.

And this is clear of the image in the text. Race. Set your mind on the race. Race. The journey. The Christian life. Set your mind on the race for now.

And set your mind on running it well. Set your mind on finishing well. Huh?

[14:32] That's what I want to do. I want to finish well. Don't you? Set your mind on running the race. Running it well. Finishing well. Set your mind on winning.

That's all of this in a nutshell. What Paul is stating to us. So let's look at how Paul lays this out for us. What we might call, actually I have called, five basic principles for a goal-oriented spiritual life.

Now let me say that again. Five basic principles for a goal-oriented spiritual life.

Or if I can shorten it down to this, running for the prize. Running for the prize. Five basic principles.

Now Paul said in verse 15, as many as are mature, have this mind.

And so with that in mind, principle number one. Have a, now listen to this very carefully, don't, don't misunderstand me. Or mishear me.

[15:49] Here's principle number one. Have a spiritual-minded dissatisfaction. I didn't misspeak there.

You didn't hear me wrong. I used the word dissatisfaction. That's exactly what I meant. Have a spiritual-minded dissatisfaction.

Dissatisfaction. Dear people, if you're going to run the race, if you're going to run that race and keep moving forward in your spiritual maturity, focusing, focusing on the teaching, the reaching of the goal, if you're going to do all of that, then, you must always have a healthy measure of dissatisfaction with where you are now spiritually.

Do you understand? This is the good use of the word dissatisfaction. If you're going to run to win, that you must always have a healthy dissatisfaction with where you are in your life spiritually right now.

a spiritual-minded dissatisfaction. Look back at verse 11. If by any means I may attain to the resurrection from the dead, verse 12, not that I have already attained.

[17 : 27] Paul's saying, not that I have already attained it. Or, a better translation might be, and I think it is, this in the New American Standard, obtained it.

not that I've already obtained it. Not that I've already acquired it. Or, am already perfected. Not that I'm already perfected.

This is Paul's admission. I'm running to win, but I haven't made it yet. I haven't already obtained it. Not yet.

I'm not already perfected. And by the way, the word perfected here does not mean flawless or sinless. The meaning here is maturity.

The idea is maturity. Paul is saying, I am not yet mature spiritually. Now, get that. This is Paul speaking.

[18 : 24] This is an interesting admission on his part. Actually, when you go back in chapter 3, you might have remembered that at some point, it seemed obvious, that at some point in his life, he was quite proud of his spiritual accomplishments.

Wasn't he? That at one time in his life, he was extremely proud of them. And in fact, he considered himself blameless. That's what he said.

Just another word for, another idea for perfected. He was perfect. it. That's what, at some point, that's what he thought about himself.

But that was all in the past. That was Saul speaking, not Paul. And that was Paul before he had his life-changing encounter with the living Lord Jesus Christ.

And so Paul is saying, if I might turn it into a metaphor, he's saying, if my life were a fruit tree, here and there you would see fruit beginning to form.

[19 : 34] But it's not yet full grown. And there are signs that something is happening in my life that I have not yet become mature. That's what he's saying.

This is the apostle Paul. I mean, this is amazing when you think about it. And think about who's saying this. It's apostle Paul. This is the man who, if you will recall, had a personal visit from Jesus at his conversion.

Now, I know that Jesus is there every time someone is saved. I know he's there when I was saved, but I mean Jesus actually left heaven and came down and met Paul on the road.

Paul had a personal visit from Jesus when he was saved. Any of you say that? Not in that same sense. This is the apostle Paul speaking. This is the man who was caught up into the third heaven and was allowed to see things that he could not describe in human language.

In fact, he had seen things that in order to keep him from becoming too prideful, God sent him some kind of an affliction, a thorn in the flesh, to keep him humble. The things he saw, was allowed to see that no one else has seen, not this side of heaven.

[20 : 56] This is the man who wrote 13 of the 27 books of the New Testament. 14 if you count Hebrews, Tom. And I do.

Incredible. And now, after some 25 odd years of incredible ministry, unequaled by anyone's sense, unparalleled by anyone's sense, after 25 years of incredible ministry, and all the revelation he had received, and the things he had seen after that, Paul's not satisfied.

He's not satisfied. Not satisfied with his spiritual maturity. Now, listen, don't get the idea that he was disappointed. You know, to the point that he was always angry with himself and put out with himself that he wasn't more spiritual.

That's not the idea. Not to the point that he was discouraged, you know, and depressed, always in the dull rooms because he was so weak spiritually.

Now, a lot of believers are like that. That's not the idea. But, he was dissatisfied to this point. He had a healthy dissatisfaction.

[22 : 14] He had a spiritual-minded dissatisfaction. In fact, you might remember something he wrote in 1 Timothy chapter 1 verse 15. He said, Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I'm chief.

Now, I know it has occurred to you by now, that if that's the way Paul felt about himself, how should I feel about myself? Someone has said, if you think you've arrived, think again.

because the proverbial room for improvement is the largest room in the world. And we're all in it. A healthy dissatisfaction.

A spiritual-minded dissatisfaction we should always have. Dear people, if your prayer life is weak, is very likely that you're too satisfied with where you are spiritually.

If your desire for the church or the church itself holds no special attraction to you, and you can just come or miss, and it doesn't really matter to you one way or the other, then you're probably not saved.

[23 : 31] But if you are, then it's very likely because you don't really know how weak you are, how immature you are, how needy you are.

If reading and studying God's Word is a hit and miss with you, maybe even non-existent, then you need a good dose of reality, spiritual reality.

You think somehow you're perfect when in reality you're pitiful. you think somehow you've arrived when in reality you've only just begun.

And that is true of every one of us. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 10 and verse 12, therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

And so learn from the apostle Paul. There can be no growth spiritually apart from a healthy dissatisfaction with where you are right now spiritually.

[24 : 44] And a spiritual-minded dissatisfaction with where you are in relation to the ultimate goal of Christ's likeness, a spiritual dissatisfaction about that will go a long way toward reaching the second principle.

And that is to have a single-minded devotion. That's principle number two. A spiritual-minded dissatisfaction and a healthy, or excuse me, a single-minded devotion.

If you have a spiritual-minded dissatisfaction, then very likely you will have a spiritual-minded devotion.

Now, Paul basically wanted one thing to happen in his life. He really had kind of distilled it all to this one thing.

The one thing he wanted to happen in his life, in his journey through life. And we could maybe break it all down into three things.

[25 : 59] A singular desire. Paul had a singular desire for his life. Toward a singular direction and with a singular determination.

Just put it down just like that. This describes Paul's single-minded devotion. The kind of devotion that you and I ought to have. A singular desire toward a singular direction and with a singular determination.

Now, let's see this. Paul's singular desire is expressed in the second half of verse 12 where he said, I press on.

Do you see that there in the text? But I press on. Now, again, the image here is an athletic image. It's of a runner, a racer.

And so, he says, I press on. It's like a sprinter who's in a race, running, straining every spiritual muscle in order to win the prize.

[27 : 15] Every muscle straining toward it. You see, Paul is not satisfied with his spiritual accomplishments of the past. He's going on for the prize. The prize, the gold, the end game.

He's going on for the prize. And what is that prize? Well, Paul says, I press on that I may lay hold of that for which Christ has also laid hold of me.

That's a mouthful. In fact, it's a rather interesting phrase in the Greek text. If I were to just take the Greek words and bring it right over into English, word for word, and say more, here's what he said. Lay hold of what Jesus laid hold of me for. Now, that's not good English, but it's excellent Greek. Excellent Greek. What does it mean?

Well, if you have a King James, you might notice that the King James used the term apprehended. Do you see that?

[28 : 18] Some of you have a King James? Apprehended. That's actually a very good translation. And it's very picturesque. And it's intended to be. Apprehended.

In law enforcement vernacular, that would mean arrested. He says he was arrested. And so this is a very vivid picture.

Very, very, very vivid word picture. remember when Paul then saw, just before he was saved, he was traveling.

Do you remember? He was on the road to Damascus. He was on his way to Damascus. And why was he going? To arrest people. To arrest Christians.

He had letters of authority given to him so he could go and kind of carte blanche he could arrest Christians. Those letters might have been letters for specific church leaders to be arrested.

[29:18] Maybe just it was a kind of open thing. He could arrest all Christians. And so he's on his way to Damascus to arrest Christians. And yet, on the way, he was arrested himself.

Apprehended himself. Somebody put the cuffs on him. Who was it? Jesus. Jesus. I believe it's this experience that is behind this phrase that Paul uses, lay hold upon that for which Jesus laid hold of me for.

He went off to arrest Christians and he got arrested, arrested by Jesus, and Jesus arrested Paul for a purpose, a grand purpose, an eternal purpose, one that extended on out into eternity.

And now, Paul has nearly spent all of his life, the rest of his life, fulfilling that purpose, as a part of that purpose, right? And now he is very near death.

I think Paul suspects that he's very near it. And, here he is, he's done all of this for Christ. been given all of this revelation, experienced things that no other preacher has ever experienced.

[30:44] And he's been fulfilling the ministry, the thing for which Jesus laid hold of him for. And he's near death, and he's not satisfied.

Because there's more. There's more to come, more than he wanted. And what this does is give us a window into his heart and his mind.

Paul had a one-track mind. He wanted what Jesus wanted for his life and eternity, and he pursued it with dogged devotion.

He pursued after it with a singular desire, the purpose. He wanted to lay hold on all of what Jesus had laid hold of him for.

shouldn't we? What makes us different from Paul? Nothing. Yeah, maybe we will not be used in exactly the same way that the apostle Paul was used for.

[31:50] I certainly don't think that's ever going to happen to me. That's not the point. What is it that Jesus laid hold of you for? That is, why did he save you?

What purpose does he have for you? And not just a purpose for this life, but one that reaches on out into eternity, out into the unknown eternity. That purpose doesn't end in death, doesn't end in our resurrection.

He has a purpose for us that reaches on out into eternity without end. Do you not want to lay hold of that? Arrest that for your life now?

Shouldn't we? Shouldn't we? I think so. Now, we're talking about this principle have a single minded devotion and it first involves a singular desire to lay hold of that for which Jesus laid hold of us.

And so we have a singular desire. And then with that it involves a singular direction. A singular direction. See, Paul possessed a singular desire toward a singular direction.

[33:08] Look at verse 13. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended. To have apprehended. Translation, I am still not all I should be in Christ.

And I still do not have all he wants for me. All I want to be for Christ.

I haven't realized that yet. I haven't apprehended that yet. Again, kind of a spiritual minded dissatisfaction. But read on.

But one thing I do. One thing I do. Actually, I do is not in the text. That's why it appears in the italics in your version.

Literally, Paul said, one thing is for emphasis, a strong emphasis. But one thing is important to me.

[34:13] Forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead. And Paul was saying, we're to be like runners, sprinters, running a race.

We're to be like them. A runner never looks backward. Not if he or she expects to win. A runner never looks backward, not in the race that is being run right then.

You know, looking back at other runners and maybe all the way back to those dragging behind or maybe looking back to the track that has just been run or stepped over, maybe looking all the way back to the start line.

No runner that expects to win ever looks backward. Not in the present race. And may I add also, no runner expects to win looks backward to past races.

Maybe past victories. Or even past failures. No, he runs for the race that he's in. The past is irrelevant.

[35:22] And it's the same for the believer. A runner reaches forward. And the believer who is running the race reaches forward. What matters is who you are right now in Christ, right now in the

present, and who you desire to be for Him in the future.

That's what matters. Forget the past. Forget past failures. If you've repented, God has. So don't bring it up again.

And forget past victories in the sense that you might be content to stay where you are spiritually. Looking back at past victories where you once walked or things that did happen in the past and become content with where you are right now.

No, forget the past. Past victories, past failures. I read a story about a famous Greek artist by the name of Tamanthes back in the 4th century.

And when he was young, he worked under the tutelage of a famous painter of his day. And he was being taught how to paint and so forth. And after several years of training, Tamanthes completed his first major work of art.

[36 : 40] It was a portrait. portrait. And he was so proud of it. Thrilled. So much so that every day when he got to the studio, he would just sit there and look at his painting.

And he admired it so. And he was just so proud of it. And he just sat there day in, day out and looked at it. And one day when he arrived at the studio, he was horrified to see that his mentor, his teacher, had defaced his painting.

And in anger he asked, why? He said, why did you do that? Why did you deface my painting? And this is what his teacher said.

He said, I did it for your own good. Because it was hindering your progress as a painter. It was indeed a very fine painting.

But it was not perfect. And so try again. Try again and do better at this time. Matthews took his teacher's advice and eventually became one of the great painters of the fourth century.

[37 : 48] I believe that is in essence what Paul is saying to us as believers. Forgetting those things which are behind. Past victories, past defeats, past failures, forget them.

And reach forward. Stretch yourself. Strain. That's the idea. It kind of pictures to me a runner with the veins popping out of his neck, you know, and body and everything so taut.

And he's nearing the finish line. You know how they do when there's someone close that they all stretch forward. It's amazing during the Olympics to see those photo finishes, see these bodies stretched forward for all they're worth.

And this is the idea by reaching forward, straining, stretching to those things which are ahead of you. Those things that God has designed and planned for you.

Which together form the perfecting work of God in your life. Jesus said in Luke 9 62, no one having put his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God.

[39 : 10] Solomon wrote these wise words in Proverbs chapter 4 verse 25, let your eyes look directly ahead and let your gaze, I love this, let your gaze be fixed straight in front of you.

Watch the path of your feet and all your ways will be established. It's a tremendous word. Again, carrying this idea, this all encompassing, all overpowering principle to have a spiritual minded devotion that stretches forward to all that God wants for you and has for you.

all God wants you to be. And so this really kind of completes the description of Paul's single minded devotion, a singular desire. Hold on to that for which Christ has held on to me for.

Take hold of it. A singular desire toward a singular direction. Forget the past. stretch toward the future, to what's ahead of you, and with finally a singular determination.

Believers need to be more determined in their lives spiritually. We're just too much at ease, too content.

[40 : 53] Maybe, maybe too lax, truly too lax in our spiritual disciplines. We need to reach forward.

This is determination. Look at how he words this. Let's just take this step at a time. Reaching, straining, forward to those things which are ahead.

Greater glorious things. Paul says, this is what I do. I press toward the goal. The goal.

King James has the word, the mark. And that's very literal translation. Skopos. It means the mark, the mark on which you fix your eyes.

Picture runner. That's the image here. He's running and his eyes are on the finish. And so Jesus, or Paul, saying, this is what I do.

[42 : 03] I press toward the mark that I've fixed my eyes on. The goal, the finish line, the prize at the finish, which is what?

He says the prize is the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Paul is running for the prize. He's running for the finish.

He's not running just because he likes running. He's not running for the accolades of man. He's running for the finish. And everything in his life came to bear on that.

Everything in his life that wasn't consistent with that, he removed it. He denied it. Everything was for the prize, for the finish line.

He ran for the finish, for the prize. When I was in high school, I played football, and I remember one summer camp, our coach had invited an NFL football player running back for the Kansas City Chiefs.

[43:05] I don't even remember his name. It was back in the early 70s. Some of you Chiefs fans, you might think of some of the running backs back in the early 70s. Back in the glory days, the Chiefs. Anyway, he came and he spoke to us and we had a chance to ask some questions and one of our guys, who was a running back for our football team, a rather proudful man, a young man, and he challenged this Kansas City Chief to a race.

He said, let's race, let's see who could win. I mean, really, he did, so bold. And I'll never forget what he said. He said, son, I don't run for fun. I dash for cash.

I know that came from a prideful heart, obviously, and I'm sure he probably could have won. But this is somewhat Paul's mentality that he applied to his Christian life.

I don't run for fun. I run or dash for cash. I'm running for the prize at the end of the race. And what is that prize ultimately?

Well, verse 14 says, the upward call. Or more literally, the above call.

[44:24] The above call. Call from above. The call from heaven. This is heaven's call. Do you hear it? heaven's call?

Listen. Do you hear heaven's call? It is the call of God in Christ Jesus.

It's the call to the finish line. It's the call to perfection that you'll not see here, but will there.

When you cross the finish line. And we're pressing on toward it. But it's the call of God in Christ Jesus. Someone said the finish line is the threshold of heaven.

And we're all pressing toward it. reward. And listen, the prize is grander than just some earthly concept of a reward.

[45:35] Did you know that the prize is Jesus himself? You say, well, I already have him now. Yes, but not like you'll have him then.

Then, Jesus is the prize. Jesus is the reward. He is our inheritance.

Hebrews 12.1 Now, finish with this. Let us run. Here's the same image.

Let us run with endurance. perseverance. Determination. Let us run with determination what?

The race. The race that is set before us. That is, a race that's been set before me, a race that's been set before you.

[46:37] We've all been put in the race. Let us run it with determination. Let us run the race that is set before us and then what?

fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. That is, Jesus is the author.

He put us in the race. And Jesus is the perfecter. He's the one who ran the race before us and is with us as we're running our race.

And not to but the perfecter of our faith means that He is the one to whom we run. Our eyes always fixed on Him.

Amen and Amen.