

THE BIG IDEA: SNOW matter what, the best is yet to come.The Take-Off

This morning, we celebrate one last Sunday together in 2019 and it got me thinking about last things.

The last snow of the year, the last present under the tree, the last sermon of the year, the last words spoken to us before saying goodbye.

Sometimes we know it's the last thing, and other times we don't.

But when we do, how do we do it?

How do we say goodbye to a year, a season, a friend, a loved one, a relationship, a job?

This morning I want to show you what Scripture says - I want you to see that even though last things can be filled with lots of emotion, because of Jesus they can also be filled with hope.

How much hope?

SNOW much hope.

Turn with me to three verses found in the middle of Philippians 3 that offer a ton of insight into transitioning from old to new.

Follow along as I read **Philippians 3:12-14 (NLT)** and then we'll do some "end of the year" takeaways.

1. Verse 12

- a. Paul starts by saying he hasn't achieved "all these things" and we need to ask "what things?"
- b. The answers are sprinkled over the first 11 verses of the chapter. I'm sure there are more, but I see four things that Paul was referencing:
 - Joy in Christ / v. 1
 - Confidence in Christ / vv. 2-4
 - Confidence in what Jesus accomplished
 - Paul calls people who try to "earn" confidence through what they do "dogs"
 - This is "stinking thinking"
 - God loves me more because I _____
 - These kind of dogs will mess you up!
 - **[IMAGE / Dog bite from my run]**
 - Relationship with Christ / vv. 8, 10-11
 - Greek word for "knowing" was used in the Septuagint for the word "covenant"
 - Implies relationship
 - In verses 10-11 the fuller picture includes shared experiences of suffering and resurrection
 - Faith in Christ / v. 9
 - This is a bit of a deeper message than having confidence in Christ
 - This is the action that proves I have the confidence
- c. These are the things that Paul says he hasn't yet fully attained
- d. He sounds like a lot of us at the end of 2019 - "I had goals. I didn't meet them all."
- e. What do we do? What did he do? Give up?
- f. No. We press on - keep going after what we haven't fully attained.
- g. The Greek word for "press" means to "set in rapid motion, ride, press forward, run"
- h. Translation? We're not dragging into a new year -the future isn't happening to us; we're happening to it
- i. Verse 13 shows us how

2. Verse 13

- a. The end of verse 12 and the beginning of verse 14 mention the goal of pressing on
- b. Verse 13 reveals the way we press on: by focusing "on this one thing"
- c. What is the one thing? Learning how to "forget forward"
- d. The Greek word for "forgetting" isn't like amnesia - it means "to not recall information about a particular matter" - an intentional choice not to replay the videos of the past over and over
- e. Forgetting is trying to not remember the past; forgetting forward means not regretting the past because we're reaching for the future
- f. The Greek for "looking forward" isn't about eyesight - it's about straining toward the new thing

- g. Extending ourselves to reach for something worth reaching for
- h. In the next verse we find out that the what worth reaching for is actually a who

3. Verse 14

- i. What is the prize? We know it's something we're called to and something we're given in Christ.
- j. Let me say this: you're going to hear a lot about finding the best version of yourself in 2020 and how it's all about the "new you in the new year"
- k. But you'll never be the best you without starting with Jesus
- l. What Paul's saying is that he is going to extend himself as far as possible to be as close as possible to Jesus
- m. The things he still hasn't quite attained are all found in Christ, so let me ask you: what will you do in the new year to fully extend yourself toward joy in Christ, confidence in Christ, relationship in Christ, and faith in Christ?
- n. It won't always be easy - in fact the Greek word for "prize" means "the prize of conflict"
- o. The struggles you faced in 2019 could very well be part of the conflict that sets you up for the prize!
- p. We know that the ultimate prize is Jesus forever, and that means that every day, week, month, year moves us closer to the prize
- q. That's why Paul wrote in 2 Cor. 2:14 that Christ ALWAYS leads us to triumph
- r. This means that the new year is full of hope - SNOW much hope - because **SNOW matter what, the best is yet to come!**
- s. Greater things are ahead of us! No matter how good or bad 2019 was, 2020 is better because 2020 moves us closer to Jesus
- t. Here are two ways it will:
 - **2 Cor. 3:18 (NLT)** / This time next year we'll be more transformed to look like Jesus
 - **Prov. 4:18 (NLT)** / This time next year we'll have more insight and direction in our lives

The Landing

Increased transformation and increased direction are only 2 benefits waiting for all of us in the new year
I'm sure the Holy Spirit will reveal others to you as you forget forward and hold onto the hope that the new year offers
All it takes on your part is a decision to keep your fork.

[STORY / Keep Your Fork]

Let's pray.