

THIS IS MY STORY: Series Introduction CHOOSING YOUR STORY

Phil 3:12-14

ATTENTION:

- Let's go ahead and consider a few things that will push our stories along:
 - List the things that will make you smile as you live your story!
 - ...make you cry...! - ...you will be proud of...!
 - ...you will regret...! - ...frighten you...!
 - ...the ways and number of times you will be sick...!
 - ...the things you will celebrate...!
 - ...the opportunities you will have to help someone...!
 - ...the surprises both good/bad you will experience...!
 - ...the times you will need to ask for help...!

ATTUNE: Is it possible to make such a list? **Nope!**

- We can't even make an educated guess about much!
- Let's consider something we can do as we live our stories:

¹⁰ My goal is to know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed to his death, ¹¹ assuming that I will somehow reach the resurrection from among the dead.

¹² Not that I have already reached the goal or am already perfect, but I make every effort to take hold of it because I also have been taken hold of by Christ Jesus. ¹³ Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and reaching forward to what is ahead, ¹⁴ I pursue as my goal the prize promised by God's heavenly call in Christ Jesus.

Phil 3:10-14

BODY:

I. TAKE NOTE OF WHERE YOU ARE NOW IN YOUR STORY!

¹² Not that I have already reached the goal or am already perfect

- What is Paul leaving out?
 - Paul could have bragged about accomplishments, changes...
 - He makes no claim of having arrived himself.

- None of that is in mind as he considers his future story!
 - Paul was clearly awareness - he's a sinner
Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.
1 Timothy 1:15

For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.

Romans 7:18

Your story includes your struggle!

- It's hard to admit your marriage is lacking.
- It's hard to admit your career is in trouble.
- It's hard to admit your dreams have yielded to your doubts.
- It's hard to admit you have a problem with addiction.
- It's hard to admit you've got a critical spirit full of anger.
- Etc. etc. etc.

- We live repenting of the results of our weaknesses
- But, Martin Luther made an interesting statement about repentance.
 - *He remarked that pride is so deep within us that we must "repent of our repentance,"*
 - By which he meant that even our repenting is stained with pride
 - e. g. "Look at me! I'm honest enough to repent of my sins. I'm not like you. I don't cover things up
 - Sin is so much with us that even our confession potentially contains within it the seeds of pride's disobedience.

Was it not for His grace, none of us could ever stand before the Lord BUT because of His grace we can choose a story of faith!

- No reason to quit!
- New start available at every turn of life!
- The love of God urging you on to live a divine story!

II. CHOOSE WHERE YOUR STORY GOES FROM HERE!

(See Paul's goal/direction in bold below)

¹⁰ My goal is to **know him** and the **power of his resurrection** and the **fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed to his death,** ¹¹ assuming that I will somehow **reach the resurrection from among the dead.**

^{12b} *I make every effort to take hold of it because I also have been taken hold of by Christ Jesus*

- Your Story = Life lived because Christ has taken hold of you!
 - Christ found you - saved you - has a purpose for you!
 - The supreme motivation = Christ has made you His own!

III. CHOOSE HOW MUCH YOU WILL FIGHT FOR YOUR STORY!

¹³ *Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself to have taken hold of it. But **one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and reaching forward to what is ahead,** ¹⁴ **I pursue as my goal the prize promised by God's heavenly call in Christ Jesus.***

Hear the **DETERMINATION – THE GRIT!**

one thing I do - forget what is behind - reaching forward

- A single-minded focus = essential to reach God's goal for you!
- An accomplished artist will say, "One thing I do."
 - A gifted teacher... - competitive athlete... - single parent... - dedicated student...

Paul's one thing was the prize of God's upward call in Christ

- All that God had for us when we hear, "*Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of the Lord.*"

Paul clarifies his determination:

- *Forgetting what lies behind.*
 - Don't cry over spilled milk!
 - *Don't be distracted by this or that – **FOCUS!***
 - Sounds like Paul as he forgot the past
 - o Cut it out and move on!!!!
 - o Move on from: worries, fears, failures, victories, defeats
 - o Move on from the attacks of enemies and praise of friends
 - o **LEARN AS YOU LIVE AND MOVE ON!**
 - Get some "HOLY AMNESIA"
 - **"Lay aside your claims to fame and reasons to complain! AND PRESS AHEAD!!!!"**

PROJECT:

- What is important to you? GOD?
- What is worth working hard for to you? GOD?
- What plans do you have? GOD'S PLANS?

ACTION: Book Prayers by Michael Quoist - **LORD, I HAVE TIME**

I went out, Lord.
Men were coming and going,
Walking and running.

Everything was rushing: cars, trucks, the street, the whole town.
Men were rushing not to waste time.
They were rushing after time,
To catch up with time,
To gain time.

Good-bye, Sir, excuse me, I haven't time.
I'll come back, I can't wait, I haven't time.
I must end this letter—I haven't time.
I'd love to help you, but I haven't time.
I can't accept, having no time.
I can't think, I can't read, I'm swamped, I haven't time.
I'd like to pray, but I haven't time.

You understand, Lord, they simply haven't the time.
The child is playing, he hasn't time right now.... Later on....
The schoolboy has his homework to do, he hasn't time.... Later on....
The student has his courses, and so much work.... Later on....
The young man is at his sports, he hasn't time.... Later on....
The young married man has his new house; he has to fix it up.
He hasn't time.... Later on....
The grandparents have their grandchildren. They haven't time....
Later on....
They are ill, they have their treatments, they haven't time.... Later on....
They are dying, they have no....
Too late... They have no more time!

And so all men run after time, Lord.
They pass through life running—hurried, jostled, overburdened,
frantic, and they never get there. They haven't time.
In spite of all their efforts they're still short of time,
Of a great deal of time.
Lord, you must have made a mistake in your calculations.
There is a big mistake somewhere.
The hours are too short,

The days are too short,
Our lives are too short.

You who are beyond time, Lord, you smile to see us fighting it.
And you know what you are doing.
You make no mistakes in your distribution of time to men.
You give each one time to do what you want him to do.
But we must not lose time, waste time, kill time,
For time is a gift that you give us,
But a perishable gift,
A gift that does not keep.

Lord, I have time,
I have plenty of time,
All the time that you give me,
The years of my life,
The days of my years,
The hours of my days,
They are all mine.
Mine to fill, quietly, calmly,
But to fill completely, up to the brim,
To offer them to you, that of their insipid water
You may make a rich wine such as you made once in Cana of
Galilee.
I am not asking you tonight, Lord, for time to do this and then that,
But your grace to be conscientiously, in the time that you give me,
what you want me to be.

THAT IS THE WAY TO YOUR STORY!