

“RELENTLESS OBEDIENCE”

“Crossing Over” Pt#3

Philippians 3:12–14 (NIV84) — **12** Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. **13** Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, **14** I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

I. Every time I read this passage of scripture I get inspired.

A. Some of you may know and remember that for many years I taught the book of Acts in the Ministry Training Center back at CCC

- 1. I love the book of Acts because it tells the story of the progression of the gospel message from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth.**
- 2. It also tells the story of the birth and expansion of the church after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.**
- 3. The first 12 chapters of Acts features the work of the Apostles in Jerusalem, highlighting the Apostle Peter.**
- 4. The last half of the book of Acts is centered around the Apostle Paul and his mission to take the gospel to the gentile world.**

B. Saul of Tarsus, as the Apostle was first known, was raised as a devout Jew in the Roman province of Cilicia. Tarsus was the capital of the province and birth place of Saul.

- 1. As a young man he was sent to Jerusalem to study under the most prominent teacher and member of the Sanhedrin, Gamaliel.**
- 2. Saul was zealous for the law and exceeded all of his contemporaries.**
- 3. Eventually he led the persecution against the early church and was responsible for many believers being arrested and some even martyred.**

4. In the eyes of the world Saul was successful as a young Pharisee. He was destined for greatness in his religious career in the Sanhedrin until one day God interrupted his plans on the road to Damascus.

C. On that fateful day Saul met Jesus and surrendered to his life to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

1. He didn't just have a religious experience...

2. He wasn't just converted and changed churches... he was radically saved.

3. He didn't buy into a new religion or philosophy... He gave himself unreservedly to Jesus.

4. The zeal he once had for the law and Judaism was transferred to living a life for Jesus.

5. He expressed his motive and sense of commitment in the second letter he wrote to the Corinthians...

2 Corinthians 5:14–15 (NIV84) — 14 For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. 15 And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

6. He understood and was profoundly touched by the love of God

7. He realized that Jesus died for him and he would now live each day for Jesus... sharing the love of God with everyone he came in contact with, regardless of who they were; their station in life; from paupers and slaves to governors and kings.

8. He talked about Jesus everywhere he went.

9. It didn't matter whether he was in the synagogue talking to people who were practicing religion or in the marketplace of life sharing what Jesus had done in his life and how they could experience the same.

10. Saul has sold out... life was all about knowing Jesus and making Him known.

D. Saul would take three missionary journey's in his life preaching the gospel and planting churches throughout the Island of Cypress, the Roman provinces of Galatia, Asia Minor, into Greece and eventually to Rome.

- 1. He personally started upwards of 20 churches that we know of from the book of Acts. Many more were surely started or spun off from these works.**
- 2. He was the leading influence and primary teacher of theological thought in the early years of the church.**
- 3. His simply obedience and zealous passion to live for God made his life full and satisfying and meaningful in every way.**
- 4. When you study the life and work of the Apostle Paul you would have to conclude that he was walking in the fullness of his destiny and living out the promises of God in his life.**

E. I am sharing this with you as a preface to our study in Joshua because there are certain parallels which I see between Joshua and Paul.

- 1. Both of them were amazingly successful.**
- 2. Both of them discovered their ultimate destinies and entered into their proverbial Promised Land.**
- 3. At the end of their lives they were able to look back and say they had done what they were suppose to do in life.**
- 4. No reserves, no retreats, no regrets!**
- 5. I believe we can live out God's dreams for our lives as well if we will understand what these men gave themselves to and glean from them.**

F. I don't know about you but I don't want to simply exist, I want to live.

- 1. I don't want to just go through life living to survive or living for myself**
- 2. I don't want to end up on my death bed looking back with regret over what I did not do.**
- 3. When Jesus said I have come to give you life and life more abundantly that's what I want.**
- 4. Like the Apostle Paul...**

Philippians 3:13–14 (NIV84) — 13 Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, **14** I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

G. For the past two weeks our focus is on what God said to Joshua to help him move into the Promised Land

- 1. If we are going to maximize our potential as individuals and as a church, we need to hear the voice of the Lord and obey Him**
- 2. We learned that if we are to move into God's place of promise... we must**

II. RELEASE THE PAST

(Josh 1:2 NIV) ""Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them--to the Israelites."

(Isa 43:18-19 NIV) ""Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. {19} See, I am doing a **new thing!** Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland."

- A. If you are going to take it to the next level personally you have got to let go of the past... release the past**
- B. Release past failures and sins committed**
- C. release missed opportunities**
- D. release past lifestyles**
- E. If you and I are going to move forward to the next level, we must release our past**

III. RECOGNIZE OUR POTENTIAL

Joshua 1:5 (NIV84) — 5 No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you.

A. One of the things which keeps people from fulfilling their destiny or moving forward to the next level is they fail to recognize their potential

- 1. You and I were created to succeed**

2. **We were created to have dominion in this lifetime**

B. Hear me church... this is for someone here today... If you are ever going to move forward, you are going to have to agree with what God says about you

1. You have to start rehearsing who you are in Him.

2. God says... I am more than a conqueror

3. I am the head and not the tail

4. I was created to have dominion over all the earth

5. I am accepted in the beloved

6. I am seated with Christ in heavenly places

7. I am loved by God

8. He will never leave me or forsake me

9. I am the apple of his eye

10. I am called, appointed and anointed

11. I am His beloved

C. If you and I are going to move forward we must break the stigma's of our past

D. I am not who you say I am, I am who God says I am!

1. You have to step into agreement with the truth of God's word about who you are in Him.

E. If you are going to cross over into God's purposes you must release the past, and recognize our potential

IV. RELENTLESS OBEDIENCE

(Josh 1:7 NIV) "Be strong and very courageous. **Be careful to obey all the law** my servant Moses gave you; **do not turn from it to the right or to the left**, that you may be successful wherever you go."

A. As God was preparing Joshua to lead His people into the land of promise God gave Joshua some secrets to success.

1. Here in verse 7 God tells Joshua to “be careful to obey **ALL THE LAW...** do not turn from it to the right or to the left. If you do this you will be successful wherever you go.”

B. There are two key phrases in this passage:

1. First God says obey All the law

2. The second, “do not turn from it to the right or the left”

C. I believe we live in a church culture which can best be described as buffet Christianity.

1. Much like the Duff’s buffet restaurant that some may visit after church where customers will go up and down various aisles picking and choosing what they will put on their plate and what they will pass by... many people who identify themselves as Christians do the same with the commands and life principles revealed in God’s word.

2. I will have some of this and some of that, but no thanks to the rest.

3. It matters not how clear God’s word is about an issue to some... many are more interested in what they like; what they are comfortable with; and what they feel and think about an issue as opposed to what God’s word declares.

4. God says “thou shall not...” and too often it falls on deaf ears and cold hearts.

5. God’s word commands us to do... and some will ignore it all together or try to theologize or rationalize why it doesn’t apply to them.

D. When you get right down to it the real issue is that of LORDSHIP

1. Who rules in the matters of my life?

2. On what basis do I make my daily life choices?

3. What is the foundation for my core belief system?

4. Is Jesus Lord or do I retain certain rights and privileges that I am not willing to surrender?

5. This attitude of heart that says God understands or God will forgive me anyway leads to a life full of compromise.

6. When we act in contradiction to what we profess to believe it weakens and dilutes the power of our testimony with the people who are observing the God story we live out on a daily basis.

7. If we lie, cheat, steal, divorce, fornicate, live in anger, cuss like sailors, hate, abuse, abort, lust, discriminate...

8. When we are not faithful, selfish, uncaring, apathetically watching the people around us heading toward eternal destruction... and the list could go on and on... why would anyone who is not a follower of Jesus ever consider Him if they see that's how we live out our lives?

E. We must deal with all of the **COMPROMISE** in our lives if we are going to cross over into God's purposes

1. God told Joshua to obey ALL THE LAW.

2. We are not to take the parts we like and discard the rest.

Ephesians 4:1 (NLT) — 1 Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God.

3. We are to live in a manner that is worthy of our calling as Christians.

4. Jesus called us the salt of the earth, and the light of the world.

5. We are described as Children of the light.

6. People who are not Christians are called children of Darkness.

7. God is requiring all of us to walk in the light He has given us

F. **OBEDIENCE** to His word is essential if you are going to succeed in what God has called you to do

1. God is looking for people who will relentlessly pursue personal holiness regardless of what others will say

2. No more compromise

3. No more half hearted, wishy washy, undercover Christianity

4. ...this is no longer acceptable, it never was.

5. Listen to what the Apostle Paul says to the Ephesians and to us

Ephesians 5:1–17 (NIV84) — 1 Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children **2** and **live a life of love**, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. **3** But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. **4** Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. **5** For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a man is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. **6** Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. **7** Therefore do not be partners with them. **8** For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light **9** (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) **10** and **find out what pleases the Lord**. **11** Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. **12** For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. **13** But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, **14** for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: "Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." **15 Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the most of every opportunity**, because the days are evil. **17** Therefore do not be foolish, but **understand what the Lord's will is**.

G. Live a life of LOVE

- 1. Love others like Jesus loved us**
- 2. Don't allow even a hint of any kind of sexual immorality or impurity into your life**
- 3. Be very careful of the words that come out of your mouth... Jesus wants and needs Lordship over your tongue because of the power of your words**
- 4. Find out what pleases the Lord... our daily pursuit is to know His will and live for Him**
- 5. Be very careful how you live... live wisely**

H. Realize each day, with every decision you make, you are expressing your God story to the world around you. What is your God story telling people about Jesus?

- 1. We must redeem the time**
- 2. We must pursue and walk out God's will for our lives.**
- 3. Let's make Jesus Lord in every area of our lives**
- 4. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to deal with the hidden sins**
- 5. Let's ask Him to reveal any compromise in our lives**
- 6. Let's ask Jesus to make us more like Him**

- I. **If we are going to take it to the next level and move forward into God's promises we must pursue relentless obedience.**

V. Summary

- A. **If you are going to cross over into God's purposes**
- B. **If you want more in your walk with the Lord**
- C. **If you want to fulfill your destiny**
 1. **Release the past**
 2. **Recognize your potential**
 3. **Pursue relentless obedience**
- D. **Some of us may need to do some business with God**
- E. **Some are holding onto the past**
 1. **You have unforgiveness in your heart toward someone and it's the singular obstacle that hinders your personal growth and spiritual maturity.**
 2. **Bitterness has poisoned the well of your heart and it's hampering your relationships with the ones you love.**
 3. **Out of that bitterness comes a critical heart... and you are driving people away and finding yourself more isolated**
 4. **YOU MUST GET THE HATE OUT!**
 5. **The only antidote for an embittered heart is forgiveness.**
 6. **You must apply the blood of Jesus over that person and that situation so you can be free of the pain in your past.**
 7. **Holding onto that offense is holding you back.**
 8. **It's time to heal by letting it go and applying the forgiveness you received from God to the one who offended you.**
- F. **If you are going to cross over you must release failures.**
 1. **Living in shame and regret is the enemies ploy to chain you to your past so you can't cross over**

2 Corinthians 7:10 (NIV84) — 10 Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.

2. **The key to getting free of your past failures and sins committed is to receive into your heart God's forgiveness so you can get the regret out.**
3. **It will require that you buy into the truth of God's word.**
4. **And this is the rub... many people read and know and can quote 1 John 1:9 but somehow it doesn't get from the head to the heart.**
5. **It's not enough to know God forgives you; you must believe it and embrace it, then live it as if it's true, because it is.**
6. **I know you don't feel forgiven**
7. **I know you can still see the consequences of those bad choices in your life.**
8. **You might still be feeling the pain of a harvest of bad seeds you sowed in life.**
9. **But it is critical that once you repent of your sin you embrace God's forgiveness.**
10. **In the eyes of God that sin is gone... buried... forgotten... never to be remembered again**
11. **You are clean. Holy, righteous, justified, reconciled, redeemed!**

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NIV84) — 21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

G. This is called the Great Exchange

1. **I gave Jesus my sin... and He took it upon Himself**
2. **In exchange, He gave me His righteousness**
3. **You and I have the same right standing before God as Jesus does! That's the truth.**

H. If I'm going to cross over I must release my former lifestyle

Ephesians 5:8 (NIV84) — 8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light

1. **I don't need to say much here... it's pretty plain**

2. **Christian is not a label, it's a lifestyle**

Acts 24:14 (NIV84) — 14 However, I admit that I worship the God of our fathers as **a follower of the Way**, which they call a sect. I believe everything that agrees with the Law and that is written in the Prophets,

3. **Christians were first called "followers of the way."**

4. **Their lives reflected a deeply held belief system that was rooted in the teachings of Jesus**

I. **Some of you have a false picture of who you really are that's holding you back from crossing over**

1. **God' wants to break the stigma and impart a vision of who you really are**

2. **Once again, it's going to require you accepting and embracing the truth of God's word**

3. **You must silence that voice that keeps beating you down**

4. **You must come into agreement about who God says you are.**

5. **Believe it, confess it, pray it, mediate upon it, get it deep into your spirit that you are who God says you are...**

6. **When you really believe it... you will live it. That changes everything!!!**

J. **Today some of you may need to get things right with the Lord**

1. **He wants you free from all bondages of the flesh and the devil**

2. **Repentance along with relentless obedience**

3. **The Holy Spirit is here to empower you to live a holy life.**

4. **You don't have to try harder... you have to surrender to him and He will do it in you and through you.**

5. **Pray the Lord's prayer... "lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil..."**

K. **Let's cross over in 2026**

L. **Let's seek Him together.**