**Christ Our Goal**

***12****Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.****13****Brothers and sisters, 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.*

***15****All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you.****16****Only let us live up to what we have already attained.*

***17****Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do.****18****For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ.****19****Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things.****20****But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ,****21****who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body. (Philippians 3:12-21, NIV)*

A believer’s life has Christ as the goal. Greetings dearly beloved as we talk today about goals (or purposes). Sometimes the word “purpose” or “goal” is not enough when trying to discuss Christ. Just what is it (about Christ) that needs to be our lifegoal? Today we’re going to hear how Paul the Apostle deals with this topic. Again, a believer’s life has Christ as its goal. Let’s go into a bit more detail…

Our life is a journey which needs to have Christ as both its means and end. The Bible speaks about a life-race in this passage from Philippians. It is a race much like the Olympic games (even in those days), in which one needed to run with awareness and a clear goal. The Apostle says, “I do not consider that I have obtained it.” In other words, he has not gotten a hold of the final, completed prize, which is to find himself in heaven. Rather, he runs this faith-race correctly, leaving behind all past events from his life and moves forwards. He heads toward God’s will, God’s calling, which he can only reach through Christ. He says that churches should be thinking the same about this topic. No one has yet won the prize, but all believers ought to be on the lifestyle path that goes toward God.

The Lord has helped each person to have the grace that has been granted to them. Thus, the believer needs to live according to the grace that has been given. They should not leave the path of God’s grace and try to walk another path of life. If believers can live according to the Apostle’s example, they would already be a friend and follower of Christ, and not His enemy. Christ’s enemies are those who busy themselves with Old Testament food laws as the unbelieving Israelites do, who also pride themselves on their physical circumcision and even sometimes their immoral life. If the new believers were of Hebrew origin this command was because they were still attached to the Law, which does not save. If they were of non-Israelite extracts, then the word was coming at them because of their immoral past, which teaching was a part of some of the philosophical schools of the day, and still tempted some who were new in the faith.

A Christian, however, is not to be obedient to this world’s customs. A Christian belongs to the Kingdom of God, to God’s order and lifestyle, to God’s Savior, and not to the self-made saviors in this world.

For example, when you go on vacation or visit another country, your passport is with you. You know that you are a visitor in that country. Yes, you have to follow the laws of that country, but you always take into consideration that you are not a citizen of that place. You can learn the customs of that country to a degree – but your heart remains connected to your homeland. Your heart is with Christ, and not focused or attached to this world.

Therefore, if we will have Christ as our life goal, then we will be able to walk His right path much better. Our decision will be formed in a much more spiritual fashion. If we have Christ’s love as the end-goal of our life-journey, we will not desire to have that goal leave our vision – because a life that is headed toward Christ is going to find rest. However, a life that does not see Christ will end in condemnation.

Our lifegoal, our target, our focus is to be God’s representative through Jesus Christ; may God make it so that we walk toward Jesus through Christ Himself. May we forget the things of the past that do not save us, whether pastimes or idols, and may we continue forwards, toward our final rest in Christ.

Our life is a journey which needs to have Christ as both its means and end. A believer’s life has Christ as the goal. God bless you all. Amen.