

Higher Ground; Philippians 3:13-14

- I. Lord, Plant My Feet
 - a. The idea behind that phrase is to be firmly rooted, steadfast, immovable in God
 - b. 1 Corinthians 15:58 (ESV) 58 Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.
 - c. Starting in Philippians 3:2, Paul gives us a list of things that made him a great Israelite
 - i. He was not planted in Christ, but Judaism
 - ii. A Pharisee persecuting the church who could trace his lineage back to the tribe of Benjamin
 - iii. All that changed when he met Jesus on the road to Damascus
 - iv. Philippians 3:7–8 (ESV) 7 But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake, I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ
 - v. His feet were, then, firmly planted in Jesus, in Christianity
 - vi. So much so, that everything was worthless compared to knowing Jesus
 - vii. Luke 14:33 (ESV) 33 So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.
 - viii. Paul lived this statement by Jesus
 - d. It is in this context that Paul gives us our text for this morning
 - i. Philippians 3:13–14 (ESV) 13 Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.
 - ii. Straining forward; to exert oneself to the uttermost, *stretch out, strain*
 1. An Army captain was completing training for her expert field medical badge at Fort Dix, New Jersey
 2. The last step in earning the badge is to complete a 12 miles ruck in 3 hours carrying 70lbs of gear
 3. There is a video detailing the last few minutes of her 12-mile march
 4. She struggles to make the last 20 yards, falling multiple times
 5. Each time, she got up and continued, finally crossing the finish line at 2 hours 46 minutes
 6. The pack weight around ½ (or more) of her body weight
 - iii. Exerting ourselves to the uttermost describes how we should be living as Christians; the amount of effort we put into ‘good deeds’
 - e. When we sing, “I’m pressing on the upward way,” we are telling God that we will give our uttermost in service to Him

- II. My Prayer, My Aim
- a. Aim: A directed intent or purpose (we aim to win)
 - b. There is no 'in-between' with God; we are either totally in or out
 - i. Matthew record Jesus healing a demon-possessed man in Chapter 12
 - ii. The Pharisees said to the crowds that He did this by the power of Satan
 - iii. Jesus a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand, and that you must first bind a strong man before you can steal from him
 - iv. Matthew 12:30 (ESV) 30 Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.
 - c. There can be no 'fence-sitting' or neutrality with God
 - i. We must give up our old selves, "my heart has no desire to stay where doubts arise and fears dismay"
 - ii. It has always been a heart issue with God
 - iii. He wants your complete heart, your whole self
 1. Our bodies can survive a lot of injuries
 2. When the heart stops beating, we are dead
 - iv. God wants our very lives, all of us, completely
 1. "Remember Lot's wife" Luke 17:32
 2. Genesis 19:15–17 (ESV) 15 As morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, "Up! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be swept away in the punishment of the city." 16 But he lingered. So the men seized him and his wife and his two daughters by the hand, the Lord being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city. 17 And as they brought them out, one said, "Escape for your life. Do not look back or stop anywhere in the valley. Escape to the hills, lest you be swept away."
 3. Genesis 19:24–26 (ESV) 24 Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the Lord out of heaven. 25 And he overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. 26 But Lot's wife, behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.
 4. Her heart's desire was her life back in Sodom
 - d. We who are Christians have clothed ourselves with Christ!
 - i. Romans 6:1–4 (ESV) 1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? 3 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.
 - ii. Romans 6:17–18 (ESV) 17 But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, 18 and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.
 - e. When we sing, "My prayer, my aim is higher ground," we tell God that our directed intent or purpose is to be a servant in His Kingdom

III. Lord, Lead Me On

- a. "I will follow in your Son's footsteps"
- b. "I will strain, give my uttermost"
- c. "I have a directed intent or purpose"
- d. "I want to live above the world, though Satan's darts at me are hurled; for faith has caught the joyful sound, the song of saints on higher ground"