

Opening Reading: Philippians 3:7-21

Two Questions:

What is the goal of the Christian life? (12, 14, 21)

- The goal is being raised from the dead to live with God (12, 14, 21).
- Ezekiel 48:35, "And the name of the city from that time on shall be, The LORD Is There."
- Revelation 21:3, "And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God."
- Revelation 7:15 "Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence."
- Zechariah 2:10, "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for behold, I come and I will dwell in your midst, declares the LORD."
- Psalm 16:11, "You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore."
- Matthew 25:21, "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'

How do we reach the goal?

We need to:

1. Remember why we're running for the goal

We run because:

- Christ has made us His own (12)
- This is the maturity God works in us (15)
- We're given new pleasures and values (20)

To reach the goal we need to:

2. Make grace the fuel for your race (13-14)

- Grace enables us to forget what lies behind (13-14)
- Grace enables us to do what we know (16)
- Quote: "There are some of you, beloved, who think you are not growing in grace because you do not feel as lively as you used to do. "Ah!" you say, "when I was young, everything was bright then. What peaceful hours I then enjoyed! I would go over hedge and ditch to hear the gospel preached. I had such an intense desire to hear about God and Jesus Christ, such love to the gospel that, when I once got to hear a minister preach, it mattered not whoever he might be, it all seemed sweet. But now I am so depressed that I cannot enjoy the truth as I used to do." Do not think, because your wild heat is gone, that you have not

grown. When we light a fire, we always put the straw and kindling at the bottom; and when we first light it, there is a deal of flame, and a great deal of smoke. But, afterwards, when the flame gets hold of the coals, there is not so much blaze, but there is really more heat. You may have lost some of your flame and smoke, but you have more solid fire; we would rather warm our hands by the coals than by the straw, for that must soon go. So is it with divine grace; it begins with a flame which catches the lighter substances, and lays hold on the imagination and the passions; but, later in life, it appeals to the judgment, and makes the man one solid lump of burning fire. He is not a little flame, rising towards heaven, that the wind might blow out with a puff; but he becomes so strong a fire that the wind shall but increase the flame, and shall make the heat the greater. So it may be with you. Perhaps you have become more solid though you are less fiery.”

To reach the goal we need to:

3. Wait on the Lord (15, 20)

- Maturity comes from the Lord over time
- The Lord's return will happen in His time

To reach the goal you need to:

4. Follow good examples (17)

- We need the good examples of:
 - Parents/Grandparents
 - Older believers in church
 - Saints that have come before us