

SERIES LOGO

We all have a tendency to carry **our past** with us.

We cannot move forward without dealing with our **past**.

Acts 9:1-6

Now **Saul** was still breathing **threats and murder** against the disciples of the Lord. He went to the high priest and requested letters from him to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any men or women who belonged to the Way, he might bring them as prisoners to Jerusalem. As he traveled and was nearing Damascus, a light from heaven suddenly flashed around him. Falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" "Who are you, Lord?" Saul said.

"I am Jesus, the One you are persecuting," he replied. "**But get up and go into the city**, and you will be told what you must do."

→ The **prize** (=life in Christ) is available **REGARDLESS** of our **past**.

Our past is not disqualifying **BUT** it can be limiting and controlling.

{one slide; all together on same slide at same time }

1: Get saved = forgiveness; heaven

2: Get in church = serve, worship/attend → optional or occasional

3: Get on with life

{all together same slide at same time}

Past still shows up with **power** through pain, pride & people.

- Identity
- Emotions
- Relationships
- Mindsets
- Success / Scoreboard

Philippians 3:3-6

For we ... **boast** in Christ Jesus, and **do not put confidence in the flesh**— although I have reasons for confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he has grounds for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised the eighth day; of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; regarding the law, a Pharisee; regarding zeal, persecuting the church; regarding the righteousness that is in the law, blameless.

Salvation almost never results in instant transformation or deliverance, especially from the past and it's power.

Philippians 3:7-10

But everything that was a gain to me, I have **considered** to be **a loss** because of Christ. More than that, I also consider everything to be **a loss** in view of the **surpassing value** of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. Because of Him I have suffered the **loss** of all things and consider them as dung, so that I **may gain Christ** and be found in Him, **not having a righteousness of my own** from the law, but one that is through faith in Christ—the righteousness from God based on faith. **My goal** is to know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed to His death, assuming that I will somehow reach the resurrection from among the dead ...

{one slide}

NEW RECOGNITION

→ I do not have “it” ... cannot get “it”

{one slide}

NEW RECOGNITION

- a) I do not have “it” ... cannot get “it”
- b) Jesus is MORE THAN ... → Prize

{one slide}

TRUE FREEDOM

→ When the most important thing about me is what God has DONE for me and WHO He is to me in the Gospel.

{one slide}

GREATEST GOAL

→ To Know Him ... initially and increasingly

→ God does not save us so that we escape hell but so that we GAIN Him.

New recognition, true freedom and greatest goal → puts the **past in its place**.

Philippians 3:12-14

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. 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, I pursue as my goal the **prize** promised by God’s heavenly call in Christ Jesus.

1) Not **perfection** but a new **direction**

2) Not forgetting in terms of memory but in terms of **power and perspective**

a) Positive past → never substitute nostalgia for Gospel-bought HOPE

b) Negative past → never give failure the final say in our story

→ Just because “it” is part of my story, does not mean “it” IS my story.

Acts 9:20-22 (MSG)

Saul spent a few days getting acquainted with the Damascus disciples, but then **went right to work, wasting no time**, preaching ... that this Jesus was the Son of God. They were caught off guard by this and, not at all sure they could trust him, they kept saying, “Isn’t this the man who wreaked havoc ... among the believers?”

But **their suspicions didn’t slow Saul down** for even a minute. His **momentum** was up now and he plowed straight into the opposition ... trying to show them that this Jesus was the Messiah.

3) Not spiritual passivity but relentless effort driven by grace.

Philippians 3:17

Join in imitating me, brothers and sisters, and pay careful attention to those who live according to the example you have in us.

→ **NORMAL CHRISTIANITY ...**

Philippians 3:14

But one thing I do: **Forgetting** what is behind and **reaching forward** to what is ahead, I pursue as my goal the **prize** promised by God’s heavenly call in Christ Jesus.