



Weekly Newsletter – Sunday, December 26, 2021

Office hours: Mon / Wed / Fri 9:00am-3:00pm.

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I Press On by D. Moyer

Paul knew what it meant to overcome obstacles. He himself participated in persecuting Christians, and he was determined to overthrow Christianity. It must have been a great shock, then, when He turned his life around and converted to Jesus Christ. He also knew, up front, that serving Jesus would mean he would undergo suffering and hardship (Acts 9:16). As he went out preaching, he did indeed come to know what it meant to suffer for the Lord's sake. He also knew that he needed to press on and endure the difficulties. As he and Barnabas went about strengthening the souls of the disciples and encouraging them to continue in the faith, they taught that *"through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God"* (Acts 14:22).

In facing false teachers who boasted of their own abilities, Paul spoke to the fact that if he had confidence in the flesh, he had much to boast about: *"circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless"* (Phil 3:5-6). In Christ, however, he had a new perspective: *"But whatever gain I had, I count as loss for the sake of Christ"* (v. 7). He would not be relying on his earthly accomplishments or background. Instead, he would focus on Jesus, and this meant counting those things as loss:

"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 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith..."

This is strong terminology. He was willing to give it all up for the sake of Christ. He was also willing to suffer whatever was in his path if it meant knowing Christ and being found in Him. He knew that righteousness would not come from worldly accomplishments, but through faith in the Lord. For that reason, his desire would even be to participate in Christ's sufferings: *"that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead"* (vv. 10-11).

Paul saw this as part of a greater goal. He had not yet attained perfection. *"Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect..."* (v. 12). Once a person reaches the goal, he quits striving for it. To know there is something yet ahead for Christians is vital to our endurance. To have hope is everything. Note further then Paul's attitude about reaching that goal: *"but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own"* (v. 12). Paul's reasoning is built on the fact that Christ made him "his own." We belong to Jesus, and this ought to inform everything else we do. As Paul wrote elsewhere, Jesus *"died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised"* (2 Cor 5:15).

Paul again reiterates that he had not obtained the goal just yet, then tells us how concentrated he was on reaching it: *"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, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus"* (vv. 13-14). Notice how twice he says he pressed on: *"I press on to make it my own."* and *"I press on toward the goal..."*

Note, too, how single-minded he is about what he was doing: *"one thing I do."* He did not want to be distracted by the world. He wanted his focus to stay on Jesus. We can think of a runner stretching out to the goal line, reaching as far as possible to cross the finish line. To do that requires not looking back, not looking around, but keeping our eyes on that goal at all times. We have "one thing" to do, and it requires pressing on to the goal.

What is the goal? Paul said it is *"the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."* This appears to parallel his earlier point. In other words, the final prize is the resurrection. This is based on Jesus' own resurrection (1 Cor 15). While we may depart and be with Christ before then, the Lord intends for there to be a resurrection of life for His people (John 5:28-29). Until that happens, we have one thing to do: press on to that upward prize!

Praise & Prayer Requests

PRAISE! Two-year-old, Mia, had a successful heart surgery. Pray for full recovery.

Tina Jones: recovering from injuries received in a car accident.

Bill Betit Jr: begins radiation treatments on 12/28.

Russell Miller: in hospital with sepsis and heart/blood pressure issues.

LaKeisha Smith: medical concerns

Patty Conway asks for prayers for **Terri, Lucas, & Larry.**

Reilly family: medical and financial struggles

Spanish Ministry: pray for encouragement and growth in this new ministry.

Greenbank church: Godly guidance for our elders, minister, & deacons as they lead our congregation.

Greenbank missions: Westerholm (Mozambique), Borfay (Liberia), Agbeta (Ghana), Camp Manatawny, Reflect Campus Missions/BHC. Pray for a new mission work that reflects the interest of our members.

Pray for unity in our country and for our leaders to seek God's wisdom and guidance.

If you have an item for prayer or praise, please email it to office@greenbankcoc.org for inclusion in our weekly list. To view previous prayer requests and those on our ongoing lists, please visit the Weekly Bulletins page on our website www.greenbankcoc.org.

Announcements and Events

Aid for Tornado Victims

We are collecting donations to send to aid families whose lives were upended by the recent tornadoes in Kentucky and other states. Checks should be made out to Greenbank and put "tornado relief" in the memo. Cash should be put in an envelope with "tornado relief" written on the outside. All funds collected will be sent to the Churches of Christ Disaster Relief Effort.

Winterfest

Registration forms and the 1st payment need to be turned in ASAP so we can finalize our count for the trip. The next payment of \$60 will be due on January 16th. If you would like to sponsor a student to attend Winterfest, speak with Boyd or Lisa Reed.

Coming in 2022

We will resume our 5th Sunday Fellowship Meals in the new year. Our first scheduled meal will be on January 30th. We look forward to this renewed time of church-wide fellowship enjoyed over a shared meal.

January Birthdays

3 – Sue Maynard	16 – Fern Davis, Mariana Paguada
4 – Tim Cox	17 – Walter Johnson
5 – Ja'air Clark	18 – Arturo Gallegos
6 – Sherry Kirkland, Cristina Gomez	20 – Ariana Diaz
8 – Deborah Sanichar	22 – George Adair
11 – Jamie Jones	25 – Mike Barker
12 – Carroll Blue, Avion Brasefield	26 – Ron Cox
13 – Kristal Moreta	27 – Ed Jones, Joyce Smith

January Anniversaries

6 – Crystal & Domingo Reyes
31 – Susan & Walter Johnson

Sunday Meeting Times

In-Person Bible Classes for All Ages @ 9:30 a.m. including a Spanish-speakers class (adults).

In-Person Worship Service – English & Spanish @ 10:30 a.m.

The English service is live streamed with 3 ways to connect:

- 1) **Facebook Live:** <http://www.facebook.com/greenbankchurchofchrist>
- 2) **Greenbank Website:** www.greenbankcoc.org Click on the Facebook Live tab on the menu bar at the top of the page. You do **NOT** need a Facebook account to view the service through our website.
- 3) **Phone In:** (301) 715-8592 Enter Meeting ID 889 4601 8992

BIBLE STUDIES

In Person – Wednesdays @ 7pm – John's Epistles led by George Kirkland.

Online – Wednesdays @ 7pm – Proverbs led by Domingo Reyes. Connect as you would on Sunday.

Spanish (In-Person)– Thursdays @ 6:30 pm – Contact Domingo Reyes for more information.

Ladies – 2nd Saturday each month @ 11am on Zoom – "A Woman Who Doesn't Quit" led by Crystal Reyes.

Men – 3rd Saturday each month @ 10am at Greenbank led by Mark Ray.

3 Ways to Give

We appreciate those who have been able to maintain regular giving.

- 1) **In Person:** You may give your contribution during our Sunday morning worship service, or drop it off at the office on Monday or Wednesday between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.
- 2) **By Mail:** Send your contribution to 511 Greenbank Road, Wilmington, DE 19808.
- 3) **Online:** PayPal has been set up on our website www.greenbankcoc.org. Click on the "Donate" button and follow the instructions. (**Note:** there is a small fee assessed from each donation.)

Last Week:

Attendance: 139 Contribution: \$6,580

Weekly Average: \$4,941