

Paul's New Outlook
(Philippians 3:12-16)

Introduction:

1. The apostle Paul stated in 2 Corinthians 5:17 that those who get into Christ are new creatures.
2. We gain access to new blessings, and we are given new responsibilities.
3. Paul became a new creature when he was baptized into Christ (Acts 9, 22).
4. In Philippians 3:12-16, Paul revealed his new outlook that helped him to fulfill his new responsibilities -- his outlook will also help us.
5. The first point we need to make from his new outlook is that . . .

Discussion:

- I. PAUL WAS NOT SATISFIED WITH HIS SPIRITUAL CONDITION (vs.12)
 - A. Paul had a goal that he was striving to achieve.
 1. He mentioned his goal in vs.10-11.
 2. He realized that he had not reached that goal and that he was not perfect.
 3. Nevertheless, he kept his eyes focused on his goal.
 4. His goal led him to make improvements in his life so he could achieve it.
 - B. There is a sense in which Paul had learned contentment -- he had learned to be content with his physical condition (4:11-12).
 - C. Paul had his priorities in the right order.
 1. He had learned to be content with his physical condition.
 2. However, he was not satisfied with his spiritual condition.
 - a. He knew that he needed to make improvements in his life.
 - b. He was striving diligently to make these improvements.
 - D. The opposite approach must be avoided -- if we become satisfied, we will not seek to make improvements.
 - E. Because Paul was not satisfied with his present spiritual condition, he was led to do one thing (vs.13) which actually consisted of 2 activities.
- II. THE FIRST ACTIVITY WAS FORGETTING THOSE THINGS THAT WERE BEHIND
 - A. We must remember that Paul was warning the Christians in Philippi against certain Jewish teachers (vs.2).
 1. These teachers boasted of their accomplishments in the Jewish religion.
 2. (vs.4-6) Paul listed his accomplishments as a Jew.
 3. Vs. 7 teaches us that these are the things that Paul forgot -- he counted them all loss for Christ.
 - B. In forgetting these things, he did not completely remove them from his memory because he was still aware of them.
 1. "Forget," as it used here, means "to neglect, no longer care for."
 2. In forgetting these things, Paul neglected them (he no longer cared for them, and they were no longer important to him).
 - C. Perhaps the most difficult thing for Paul to forget was his persecution of the church before he became a Christian.
 1. (vs.6a) He had been zealous in persecuting Christians.
 2. After he became a Christian his past haunted him for a time.
 3. He never was able to completely remove what he had done from his memory.
 - a. (1 Corinthians 15:9) He said that he was "*the least of the apostles*" because he had persecuted the church.
 - b. (1 Timothy 1:13) He had been a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious.
 4. Paul remembered what he had done, but he did not allow what he had done in the past to control him.
 5. He had been forgiven when he obeyed the Gospel, and he knew that God had taken away his sin.

- D. Thank God that when we take care of our sins we no longer have to bear the guilt of them (Psalm 32:1-2).
- E. After forgetting those things that were behind, . . .
- III. PAUL REACHED FORTH UNTO THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE BEFORE
 - A. (vs.11) Paul's goal was to attain unto the resurrection.
 - B. Paul was diligent in achieving this goal.
 - 1. (vs.13) He used the expression "*reaching forth.*"
 - 2. (vs.14) He also used the expression "*pressing toward the mark*" [stretching to cross the finish line].
 - C. It is imperative for us to understand Paul's outlook because . . .
- IV. WE ARE TO IMITATE HIS EXAMPLE
 - A. (vs.15) We are to be "*thus minded.*"
 - B. (vs.16) We are to "*walk by the same rule*" and "*mind the same thing.*"
 - C. Let us:
 - 1. not be satisfied with our spiritual condition
 - 2. forget those things which are behind
 - 3. reach forth unto those things which are before.

Conclusion:

- 1. Because he remained true to his outlook, Paul was ready to meet the Lord when his life ended (2 Timothy 4:7-8).
- 2. You and I can have this same confidence if we will follow his example.