

Focus

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 17 March 2019

[0:00] Philippians 3. I think we'll start from verse 4.

I think we'll start from verse 4.

And I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have conquered, sorry, I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but done, that I may win Christ.

And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith, that I may know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings being made conformable unto his death, if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead, not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that, for which I also am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do. Forgetting those things that are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

[2:16] Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded, and if any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

Verse 13, this one thing I do. Let's pray.

Lord, we thank you again. We can come to your word. Lord, help me, help us. We need your spirit function. We need your divine blessing, Lord.

We need ears open and hearts receptive, Lord, that these things can be spiritually discerned, that your word would be opened like bread broken, that we can receive it to feed us today.

Lord, let it be all to your praise. In Jesus' name, amen. Paul says, this one thing I do. Likewise, our Lord said in Luke 10, 42, of one thing, one thing.

[3:30] Luke 10, 42, as Martha was cumbered with much serving, and she said, Lord, bid my sister come and help me. Verse 41, and Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things.

This is Luke 10, 42, but one thing, one thing is needful. And Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

Mary chose the good part. Mary chose the one thing, which was to sit at Jesus' feet and hear his word. And the Lord Jesus commended her for that. Paul says, likewise, this one thing I do.

And it's about focus today, about focus. This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Now, in the context, Paul is not putting himself on a pedestal, saying that here he is, he's arrived, he's got it all down pat, he's got it all together. He's saying the opposite.

[4:41] He's saying, I'm still growing. I'm still learning. I'm still like you. I've not apprehended. I count not myself to have apprehended. Verse 13. So Paul's putting himself in a position of humility, in a position of being alike to all of us here tonight, I put to you, that he is like us.

Paul was like us. He's saying, I'm not there yet. And Paul says, and I say to you, press toward the mark. Press toward the mark. There's more that lies ahead for us, that God has in store for us.

And he says, press toward the mark. We know that the Lord says, as I referred briefly this morning, unto the children of Israel, as in Exodus 20, verse 2, I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

And it's a repeated phrase. I am the Lord that brought thee out of Egypt. The Lord that brought thee out of the house of bondage. It's how our Lord God identifies himself.

He's the redeemer. He's the one who's brought us out, out of bondage, out of the world, out of Egypt, out of sin, into victory, across the Red Sea, into the promised land.

[6:07] But yet, for some of the travellers, as they had left Egypt, behind them, Egypt hadn't left them. You know, we see, as in Exodus 20, where that very scripture is, the giving of the Ten Commandments, thou shalt have no other God before me.

And it talks about, you know, you shall not bow down to idols, because I'm the God that brought thee out of Egypt. And then what do they do? As they come down from the mount, as he comes down from the mount, Moses with the tablets, the people are there, and they've already asked Aaron, make us a God.

The God has brought us out of Egypt. Make us a statue. Make us this molten image, this calf, that they may worship this God, that brought them out of Egypt. What an insult. To the Lord God, that they would, that they would resort to that.

What a, what a, a slap in the face, to their Saviour and God. What a reproach. But he is the Lord, who's brought us out. And when we think, as believers, we all have been brought out of somewhere, haven't we?

We've been brought out of bondage, we've been brought out of being lost, we've been brought out of our unsaved condition. And some people have more graphic testimonies of where they used to be than others.

[7:24] But nevertheless, we're all, we've all been there. We've all been out of God, out in Egypt. And now, we're his own redeemed people. And Paul's saying, don't stay put, press toward the mark.

He's saying, don't just stay where you are. And I, I get this, this, key message, is that we must move forward.

As the people of God, we must move forward. As the pilgrim, move forward as we talked of this morning, the picture of the pilgrim's progress and the, the meandering journeys and the byways and by paths and the detours and distractions.

Yet, he had the ultimate intent, that ultimate focus of heaven, of heaven's city. And likewise for us, we must move forward as the people of God.

As they moved through their wanderings, as much as they meandered around, the children of Israel for those 40 years through the wilderness and they got a very tangled kind of journey to actually end up where God wanted them.

[8:27] We need to move forward, keep moving, as, as the children of Israel did. As the pilgrim pictures for us of the Christian journey, of the walk with God, we need to loose our moorings and launch out and put out into the deep.

God moves us forward. He moves us in faith and for his glory. He mobilises us for ministry. We see the people of God, that they, they, struck camp, they, they made camp and they struck camp repeatedly.

And, there's a sense where God moves us forward. He, he moves us as the, as the fiery cloud and pillar of smoke. He mobilises us and he, he takes us where he wants us to be.

And he, he moves us from religion to relationship. He moves us from sin to the saviour. He moves us from doubt to faith. And, yet, sometimes it's much easier to stay stagnant and static.

To stay in the comfort zone, isn't it? When, you know, it's much easier than for you to step out and do something for the Lord.

[9:34] Whatever it be. there's opportunities to serve that are all around us. And, it's stepping out of that comfort zone, isn't it?

It's much easier to stay in the comfort zone and to, to be disengaged. But, the Lord Jesus bids us come out onto the water to step out and to be where Jesus is.

It's on the water. It's out of the comfort zone. It's in the faith zone. So, back to this text here, in particular, as we, we zero in to the, verse 13 and 14.

Paul says, number one, forget. But, this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth to those things which are before.

Paul says, forget. Forget those things that are behind. And, many can be stuck. Our attention is on what is behind us.

[10:48] You know, we might feel unworthy, inadequate. Like, oh, I've got too much baggage, too much sin. I've done, I've fouled up, I've backslid, I've, I've, I've, I've, I've, failed God, I've, I've, I've struck out.

And, they are stuck in that, that prison, as it were, that captivity. Because, their attention is on what is behind them.

And, we can all feel unworthy, inadequate, unqualified, not ready. And, sometimes, they can be cop-outs, let's face it. Now, some people have the kind of, thing when, you put something to them, they use the Christian cop-out phrase, you know, I'll pray about it.

Not, not saying we shouldn't pray about it, but, it's almost like a cop-out, isn't it? It's like, oh, yeah, I'll pray about it, when God tells me, I'll, I'll do it. Rather than, God is telling you, because you've been, it's been brought to your attention, that need, bloom where you plant it, there's a ministry, there's an opportunity, to jump in, and serve.

And, sometimes, we, we, we consider ourselves, unqualified, or we make excuses, really, let's be honest. And, some things, you're better off forgetting, those things, your own inadequacies, forget yourself, forget your limitations, forget your sinful past, or your inadequacies, that come to your mind.

[12:24] Forget those past times, those memories, maybe, it's memories, that are holding you back, of losses, of disappointment, you know, some people, and I'm not discounting this, have suffered, greatly, in their past.

Situations of abuse, I'm not discounting that, they're very raw, and hurtful things, people that have been damaged. But, God's saying forget, there's, there's a good forgetting, there's good forgetfulness, I know there was a prayer there, for someone who's got dementia, but there's some things, it's good to forget, isn't it?

It's good to forget some things, amen? You know, God can bring healing, as we leave some things behind us, that we don't hang on to them anymore, those hurts. Many are held back, because of what they have suffered.

We have to press toward the mark, don't we? Take a step of faith, we press towards the mark, as we depend upon him, and we have much need to mobilise the church, mobilise the church, to maximise ministry.

On the news lately, we're seeing this movement, that is going on, of children, being manipulated, to strike, for climate change, take the day off school, and get your placards, and carry your banners, and get the bullhorn, and you know, let's march, and protest, climate change, you know, let's strike.

[13:52] But, these children really, I believe, are being manipulated. There's a manipulation going on here, because the radicals, are quickly mobilising children, to protest.

It's a game of political scheming. The agitators, aren't really interested, in some way, supposedly saving the planet. They're interested, in power and control.

It's about getting a whole swag, of new people, who will vote their way. It's about moving, a people's mindset. And the media, the prince of the power of the air, and all these methodologies, are about, making a movement.

A movement, towards hell. This world, is moving people, towards hell, isn't it? You see, as, there's, and I know there's, there's people, as parents, we've got to make decisions.

But, there's, there's much danger, in the secular school system. It, it seems to me. And, and our children, for some time, did go to the secular, school system.

[14:54] And you think, nowadays, what is it? It's, it's actually, conditioning a whole generation, to, it's moving them. Isn't it? That's what it is.

It's moving them. And not moving them, towards God, or heaven, but towards the devil, and hell, and all that is evil. There's that potential, I put to you.

And, likewise then, what about the church of God? We should be a movement, an uprising, for God. To be the church, that moves ahead.

Not stagnant, small minded, but seizing the opportunities, that lie ahead. And yet, for many, they just quit. They'll just quit.

I see, many situations, where Christians are held back, from their true potential. You know, there's numbers of people, you know, I've got lists of people, I've got about, I've got a list of about, five, six hundred people, to follow up.

[15:56] You know, I've got about six hundred people, to follow up. Well that's six hundred addresses, so it's probably, two thousand people. But, you know, there's lots of people, these are people who, they're kind of fringe contacts, with this church, they're people who kind of, drift in, drift out, you know, opt in, opt out, and they kind of, wander in, wander out, or mostly don't even show up.

And you know, I know, I was talking with a brother this morning, he was saying, well you should just close the door on them, basically, if they're not here, give up. You know, that's one way we could deal with it, we could just give up, don't even try.

But for me, my heart is, they're missing fellowship, they're missing blessing, they're missing opportunity to serve, to be served, to bless, to be blessed.

And many Christians are held back, there's something stopping them. They're stuck, in this, sticky, stinking bog, as it were, like pilgrims, slough despond.

You know, they're stuck in this slimy bog. What's stopping you? Don't look back, don't look back.

You know, put your hands on the plough, and plough, plough, plough.

[17:18] Stop looking back. Paul says, forgetting those things. What is it that lies behind? What lies behind? What lies behind for you? Could it be your storms?

Your defeats? Your baggage? What lies behind you? Sin? Fear? Failure? Maybe you stepped out for God, and you got shot down in flames, or you got picked on, because you weren't quite up to par, you know, it's like the tall poppy syndrome, there's that in churches too, sometimes.

Someone steps out and does something to the God, and then the whisperers start finding some fault. Oh, she didn't do that right. Oh, he didn't do that right.

And it gets back to them, and then they think, oh, I'll just keep quiet and do nothing. It's easier that way. You know, what lies behind you? Could be disappointments, discouragements. Could be the self, the ego.

You don't want to suffer that. Criticism that comes when you try to serve God, in your own stumbling efforts, that you, sometimes it's easy to stay in the comfort zone.

[18:35] And Satan loves that. He just loves, he just loves to see Christians stay in that sticky, slimy, stuck situation.

And he wants to distract you from your Lord. He wants you to linger, and drag your feet. He wants you to delay your decision. Oh, pastor, I want to do this, but I've got to wait till I'm qualified.

I've got to do a Bible Institute course, or I've, I've got to do this, or I've got to do that. Oh, I'm just, I'm just busy with this situation. I'm, I've got my family situation, or this or that, and oh, I'll get around to it.

Don't they say that? I say, don't I say that? You know, I mean, I'm, I'm as guilty as anyone, because, you know, I've got to make a confession to you tonight, as your pastor, and, just to make this very open and honest confession, that I have a to-do list.

I think I've got, I think I've had the same things on there for about two years. You know, there's some things that are on the to-do list, but you never get to do them. Thankfully, my list is getting a bit shorter.

[19:49] I've been able to catch up with some things. But isn't that true for all of us? I want to serve God, but he's probably number 10 down here, or whatever it is, that kind of ministry that I want to, that I feel God's, God's pressing me to take up, and it's just down the list, isn't it?

You never get, never quite get to that. And I put to you tonight, we must not hold back. Do not hold back. How much time have we got? Honestly, let's not wait.

I know some will think, oh, I'll wait till retirement, or I'll wait till this, or I'll wait till that, and then I'll serve God. But, now is the time.

Now is the time to say, yes, Lord. Yes, Lord. We must decide to forget some things, to take a stand. You know, suffering and sorrow will not hold us back.

We don't want anything to stop us serving God. Now, God turned the captivity of Job, even Job with all of his misery. God turned the captivity of Job.

[20:53] And, brother, sister, you can leave it behind. Whatever it is, that's happened. We know, Julie and I know some people, whose house burnt down.

They had nothing. A pile of ashes. It was a, a terrible situation, wasn't it? And, yet they rebuilt. They rebuilt. And they didn't look back, to what the house that they had, all the things that they had, that got burnt up.

They, moved on. Leave it behind. All that grieves you, all that you have lost. Some things are best forgotten.

They're best put on the shelf. But some will stay there, in that burnt out shell, as it were, of that, in their sadness. And some, will live with their eyes still on the storm, as if the storm is in front of them. But, put it behind you. Put the storm behind you. My, my plea to you tonight, as every believer, is don't get stuck.

[21:56] Some, will not shift. We can get stagnant, in our Christian life. And, like it's been said, a stagnant river, breeds mosquitoes, disease, and death.

A stagnant river, is not a good river. An unmoved vehicle, is destroyed by rust. Now, I've got a, a lawnmower, in the shed.

I haven't used it, with all this dry weather. It's starting to, I had a look at it lately, and it had, all these, redbacks all over it. And, and, you know, dust, it was, it was kind of a layer of dust over it.

And all these spider webs, in the little shed, that I've got it parked in. And, you think what, an unmoved vehicle, is destroyed by rust? You see those cars out in the paddock, and they just crumble, don't they?

I know, I've got a wheelbarrow out there, and the tyre hasn't been pumped up for ages, and I know it, it's just rotted right through now. And it's just a fit for the dump. The tyre, of that wheelbarrow.

[22:57] An unmoved vehicle, is destroyed by rust. What about the Christian? Let's not be, static. It's been said to a person, who only lies in bed, develops bed sores.

It's not good for you to lie down, and stay lying down. A person who will not work, becomes lazy. You lose skills, you lose ability, as you, laziness takes over.

So, as the saying goes, we're either going forward, standing still, or falling behind. What about us tonight? Let's make an honest, spiritual self-assessment. Paul says, I forget those things, that are behind, and I press, toward the mark.

So, let's look further into this. Let's, let's consider. And at this time, that Paul wrote this, he was writing from prison. He was in a dingy, dark, doomed, damp, prison cell.

And Paul says to us, go forward, don't look back. Keep on rejoicing, keep serving, keep striving. You know, in Philippians 3, the context there, is to rejoice in Christ Jesus.

[24:07] You know, the book of Philippians, talks about rejoicing, it talks about joy. It's one of the themes of Philippians. So, that we can have joy, even in times where it's tough. So, let me get to my first point here.

Number one, he says, press. Verse 14. Sorry, the first point was forget. I forgot that one. The first point was forget, right?

The second point is press. Verse 14. I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Where are we headed? We must press towards what?

The mark. The mark. We need to be about mobilising the church to pray. Are we moving in the right direction? Are we going ahead spiritually? Are we moving forward with vision and vitality?

It's time to move ahead. Press towards the mark. It's time to cross over your Jordan. It's time to cross over the Red Sea. Wow, that's a bit challenging.

[25:12] Preacher, I'm, you know, there's water there. I'm going to, how can I get across? God will get you across. Amen. God will get you across Jordan.

Step out. And we see through the Old Testament days, we see a number of times through the early books of the Old Testament that they removed and they encamped.

They removed and they encamped. And sometimes God's got a way of shaking us out of our complacency. Sometimes we've got to be removed and encamped.

Press on. Take some steps ahead, some steps of faith and move forward. Some people will just stay static and they'll fall backwards, backslide.

They'll go off into false doctrine. Let's, let's look at the example of the early church about this pressing that we're called to. In Acts 5, 42, Acts 5, from verse 40, it tells us about the early church.

[26:22] In Acts 5, verse 40, the context there is of how they were preaching and they were called before the council of the day and they were, they called them and in verse 40, it says, they beat them and they commanded them, they should not speak in the name of Jesus.

Don't speak in the name of Jesus and we'll leave you alone, they said. Verse 41, and they departed from the presence of the council. They'd just been beaten up, they were rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.

Verse 42, and daily in the temple and in every house they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ. Now the comfort zone would have been to say, okay, we'll obey the council, we'll obey the authority, we'll obey the human law that forbids us to teach and preach and to mention and speak in the name of Jesus but no, they said, we will.

Step out of the comfort zone, we will step into the faith zone, we will press towards the mark. They will, we will witness even when it hurts. Psalm 126, verse 6, it says, he that goes forth and weeps bearing precious seed shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

Go forth and weep bearing precious seed. You know, witnessing is one of the hardest things to do in many ways. Especially people who call themselves shy.

[27:50] She's not looking at me. People who call themselves shy, they find it hard to witness. Me too. I'm a bit shy. But we should witness and we commanded to.

Let's not hold back. Here that goes forth and weepeth and bearing precious seed shall doubtless come again with rejoicing. What's holding you back? Press towards the mark.

That pressing towards the mark means to go and be a witness. He says, go into all the world. Take the message. What's holding you back? Could it be suffering?

Could it be difficulty? You know, Paul would have had an ample reason to say, look, I've got reason why, look, I'm just going to not do anything for God.

You know, 2 Corinthians 11, 23, he's talking in the context of those who are challenging his ministry and he says, are they ministers of Christ? I speak as a fool.

[28:48] I am more. This is 2 Corinthians 11, 23. I am more. In labours, more abundant. In stripes above measure, he'd been flogged more than anyone. In prisons, more frequent.

In deaths, oft, you know, he comes to the point of death often. Of the Jews, five times received I 40 stripes, save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods.

Once I was stoned. Thrice I suffered shipwreck. A night and a day I've been in the deep. In journeyings, often, in perils, often, sorry, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers.

It goes on and on of perils, of weariness, of watchfulness, of painfulness, of hunger, of thirst, of nakedness, of cold. Paul could have said, look, I've done the hard yards, someone else can do a bit now and I'll just enjoy my retirement.

But Paul says, we must go forward. I must. I must press toward the mark, he says. Paul says, I press on. And so, if Paul could do that with all the perils and the beatings and the painfulness, surely we can in this relatively easy nation we live in, this nation where it's easy to be a Christian, let's face it, and get your feet into motion and go.

[30:11] Go. Go the distance. Be not weary in well-doing. We are in a conflict and I think sometimes we hang up our armour in the cupboard at home and we just sort of, just coast.

And we get mediocre and carnal. We have to get off the bench and into the game. Philippians 1, 6, Paul says, being confident of this very thing, he that has begun a good work in you shall complete it. He shall perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. Reach forward, run forward. He's given us his power. This is a time and a day when the enemy comes in like a flood.

It's like Isaiah 59 and verse 19 it says, the spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. God's lifting up his standard, this banner, and he's calling us to marshal our forces and to enter the fray.

He's given us his power. We must press. That means exertion and effort. This word press. Paul was speaking from experience. This is ministry. Press.

[31:23] 2 Corinthians 6, verse 4, it tells again of this afflictions of necessities, of distresses, of stripes, of imprisonments, in labourings, in watchings, in fastings.

It goes on and on. This is 2 Corinthians 6. He's saying by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report, we live as chastened and not killed.

He's saying this is discipline. He's saying this is ministry. He's saying serving God. It means testing yourself to the extent of death. And Paul says, I press.

It's not a relaxed word. Paul says, I press. This is not a man in a hammock. This is not a man in a hammock sitting around sipping a drink.

It's pressing. Pressing on. And I put to you tonight, fellow believers, fellow Christian soldiers, press on.

[32:24] Force yourself. There's a sense where, and this is not, look, I'm not meaning to come the heavy with you here tonight and saying, oh, the pastor's hammering us and putting us under the thumb and saying, you must, you must.

But God is saying, press on. I press. I press. I urge you to press too. To press on. To say to your soul, I will press on.

I will press on. We have a mission to fulfil, all of us. And we must do our duty. Faith presses on. This is not works.

This is not condemnation. Faith presses on. Paul says, this one thing I do, I press on. And the word, the songbook says, like a mighty army, moves the church of God.

We're a mighty army, aren't we? And we must mobilise. Think of how the Muslims are mobilising today. The Jehovah's Witnesses are mobilising today. You know, the greenies, the political machinery is mobilising today.

[33:33] And vast multitudes of young people are being influenced today. They're being moved. And yet, the church is not.

By and large. Not moving. I've got three points here tonight. And the first one, I remembered it now, is forget.

Now, what was the second one? I've forgotten that now. Forget. The second one is press. And the third one is prize. What lies ahead for you, fellow believer?

Not that you're working for your salvation, but there is a prize ahead. He says, for the prize. I press ahead for the mark, for the prize, the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

You've got a wonderful high calling. A wonderful high calling. A high and holy calling. And this is something special. Something above and beyond what the world considers important.

[34:33] You know, I was at some award ceremony lately, and it was a bit kind of, it was kind of a bit shallow, a bit kind of superficial, where you come forward and you shake the official's hand and you get a piece of paper.

You know, we're talking about a high and holy calling. You know, we think this is the greatest and most wonderful occasion that we will enter in one day into his presence.

This is something special. Something above and beyond what the world would consider important. Even if you were to get some great prize or some great contribution or some great trophy.

It's nothing, really, is it? This is the prize. The prize. And the riches of his glory are at our disposal. We have a crown ahead.

You know, I don't know, some of our heads are a bit bigger than others, but whatever the case, he's got a crown just for you, hasn't he? He's got it already ready to put it on your head.

[35:42] Amen? A crown lies ahead for you. And so for the meantime, press on. We've got something higher and greater than anything this world can offer. There's no more greater honour or valuable reward for us.

Nothing is more important, is it? Nothing. Paul says, in the context, as I mentioned earlier today, all the credentials that he had, all of the things that he could brag about, of all of his knowledge and of his upbringing, of his heritage, I count it, but done.

It's just rubbish. To find, to know, to trust him is the greater glory. There's nothing more valuable. Nothing is more important. And we have something to aim for. So press on for God's best. Paul is urging us still. He's urging us onwards, onwards.

This is a man possessed by God, a man intent, a man on a mission, a driven man. Keep pressing. And while you're pressing, spur one another as well.

[36:55] God is raising up an army. We need each other. Encourage one another. I press on, he says. And Paul, in his closing chapter, literally the closing chapter of his life, in 2 Timothy 4, verse 8, he tells of this crown that lies ahead, just ahead.

And he tells Timothy, watch thou in all things. He says, be watchful. He says, endure afflictions. Do the work of an evangelist. Make full proof of thy ministry. For I am now ready to be offered.

Unlike a sacrifice on the altar, I'm ready to be offered. And the time of my departure, I'm about to exit planet Earth. The time of my departure is at hand. It's just around the corner.

And he says, I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course. I have kept the faith.

Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day.

And not to me only, but unto all them also, including you. Amen. Including us. That love is appearing. One day, there's going to be a crown. A crown of righteousness.

[38:00] And the calling of the Christian is from heaven and to heaven. So, press on. There's a price. Press on. And say to your soul, line up with God's word.

You know, Psalm 103, a Psalm of David. Bless the Lord. Oh my soul. You're going to bless the Lord. And all that is within me, bless his holy name.

David talked to his soul. We need to tell our soul to get into line with God. Amen. Tell your soul, get into line with God's word. Tell your soul, I'm going to bless the Lord. Your soul is going to bless the Lord.

All that is within me is going to bless the Lord. It's going to bless his holy name. And friends, there's a mark. The high calling of God. It's the ultimate and most important purpose of life.

God's plan. And you might shrink back and say, look, I'd rather, the comfort zone sounds a bit kind of more easy for me. It's kind of easier that way.

[38:58] I'd rather stay in my hammock and just watch the world go by and somebody else can do it. But we're all in the army of God.

And I know there was one time, only a brief time, a couple of years or so, that I was in the army reserves. I was a weekend warrior. And, you know, I was a kind of temporary soldier.

But, you know, when someone is a soldier, when someone's in the military, it's 24 by 7. There's no clocking on or off. It's like you're always available. You're always on call.

And, anytime you can be summoned to the front, summoned to duty, summoned to, to leave and to go to the battle zone. And we should have that same heart, shouldn't we?

We're soldiers. And, and this, role of a soldier, it means battle. Paul says, 1 Timothy 2, Thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

[40:03] Please him, who has chosen you to be a soldier. And, this battle is, it's a battle for souls. It's a fight against evil.

And, there's a resisting, a striving against sin. In Hebrews 12, it talks about, you've not resisted yet unto blood. Press. And, that pressing is not, a pressing of works, as in a, a yoke of, having to, but, it's a love of his appearing.

It's a love of our saviour. It's, it's the least that we can do, is to want to, live, as pleasing him. It's our passion.

There's nothing more important. And, to wrap up, really, I urge each one here, to consider these things. And, look, I'm in these shoes too, as to, how can I serve God more?

How can I press toward the mark? What am I lacking? What can I do more of? What should I do less of? What? Be a man, a woman, of one thing.

[41:20] Mary, has chosen that good part. This one thing, is needful. Paul says, this one thing I do, forgetting, those things, which are behind.

I press, toward the mark, for the prize, of the high calling of God, in Christ Jesus. One thing, one thing, one thing, only one thing. It's our focus.

And, there's nothing more important. It's that relationship with him, and hearing his word, and, not coming up with some cop-out phrase, or some, petty reason, why not?

but rather, saying yes to him, saying yes to him. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you, that we have a calling, a high calling, a high and holy calling.

Lord, you've called us out of darkness, into your marvellous light. You've, you've brought us out of Egypt. Take Egypt out of us, Lord. Help us to be, a people, as Mary was, who sat at your feet, and heard your word, and you said, this one thing, is needful.

[42:31] And, Lord, we see Paul, who says, this one thing, I do. Help us to forget that, which would, hold us back.

Help us to press, forward, to realise the passion, the urgency, the importance, of your call, on our lives.

And, Lord, to look forward to that, prize that you've purchased, and that, glorious crown, that you have, fit for us.

Lord, despite our lack. Help us, Lord, to make this personal, here tonight, as far as, help us, Lord, to be impressed upon, by your spirit, as to what it is, that we, can do, that, we're not doing.

Lord, help us to see, how we can, press toward the mark. Draw us, Lord, closer to the cross, to, to be that living sacrifice, to, to realise this, there's nothing, more important, than, to be in your will, and in your way.

[43:42] Lord, open doors, of witness, of opportunity, of ministry, of service, May we press forward, not hold back. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen. Amen.