

I. Introduction

- What are your goals? Right now? Five years? Ten years?
- Goals are good. Like any good athlete, we can be driven by aspirations, imagination and we can direct those aspirations towards goals and prizes. That's good.
- Our problem is that we make these earthly, good things our very life. We make them ultimate things and in making them ultimate things we are settling for less. Our short-sightedness is settling for less because we live like this earth is all that there is. We forget about glory.

II. Lesson

• Read Philippians 3:11-4:1

- **Question:** How would you describe the Christian life? What would you compare it too?
 - Whether it's a good analogy or not, listen because it will give you insight into what he or she believes and how that affects his or her worldview
 - A great illustration is one that discusses running a race:
 - Paint a picture of a runner striving towards the finish line with focus and determination and not looking back. He or she is outstretched for the prize. The goal/prize is his or her only focus.
 - *To be with Christ* was Paul's prize. He knew Christ was his and that there was more of Christ to attain. So he ran harder and with a singular focus, to be with Christ. That changed the way he ran the race, he pursued holiness wholeheartedly because of the prize at the end of the race.
- Even though we are talking about running a race and training, our discussion is still rooted in grace.
- "The grace that seized Paul's heart set him in a lifelong race...that he was running in."
 - Thinking back to last week, yes, we do rest in knowing that faith in Christ makes us right before God and not our works. But it does not mean we are inactive in the Christian life.
 - **Question:** So what does God's grace do to us in this life?
 - God's grace towards us causes us to run hard.
 - God's grace towards us opens our eyes to the real prize.
 - God's grace towards us sustains us when life gets hard.
 - That's why exercise/training is such a good analogy for the christian life.
 - We suffer through training so that we may attain what is already ours in Christ: glory; our perfection in Christ.
 - We gain Him fully at the end of the race.
 - **Question:** What is the prize? What is the goal? What are we striving for?
 - More grace. The grace to come is a greater grace.
 - Our climax in the Christian life is not the beginning (our conversion) but it is at our death or Christ glorious return.
 - At that point, we will fully know Him and be with Him face to face. We will be as He is, glorious and perfect.
 - **1 John 3:2-** "Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is."
 - **Question:** What is John saying?
 - There is more grace to come. It is greater grace. That is why Paul said it is gain to die. He would be with Christ face to face and in the fullest manner.

III. Now What?

- **Disclaimer,** in our striving, there is confidence we will reach the goal. We can reach the goal because it is grounded in grace already received in the past acts of God's sovereign mercy.

- Yes, God is sovereign over what happens in this world and in our lives. Since we trust that truth, we understand that God uses our decisions and others' to achieve God's good and invincible goals. So, what we do matters.
 - We will completely and wholeheartedly attain everything that is his in Christ. To know him completely. Gain all of Christ.
- **Point:** Because he has seized me, my utmost desire is to seize him
- **Question:** But what is irresistibly attractive to you?
- **Question:** So you understand God's love for you in your salvation but has your appetite been hungry for more?
 - God is calling to a life of joy and suffering in obedience to him.
- **Question:** What do you think a life looks like that is striving after future glory in Christ?