

# Pressing towards the Goal

## Driven people

Do you know anyone who is driven?

By something or other?

### Examples

#### F1: Max Verstappen

Even now he has the F1 championship

He continues to compete for any race

He has achieved it all, but still continuous on

What does drive him?

Why is he so driven to win?

#### Politicians: Churchill

Came into his strength when there was a crisis: WW2

But before and afterwards he was not so well regarded

He was driven

And in the war he could drive people because of the common goal

But afterwards when there was not a common goal anymore; and people did not accept his drive

#### The apostle Paul

Even before his conversion

He was driven to persecute the Christians

After his conversion

His goal had changed

But not his drive

Perhaps his drive became even stronger

to achieve his goal

But what was his goal?

## Paul's Goal

### One step back

In order to understand this passage, we need to look back a bit

Paul starts with his goal in v12.

### So what it is?

I think it is summarised in the two previous vs, which I assume you have looked at last week

I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

△ Phil 3:10-11

1. Knowing Christ

2. knowing the power of JC resurrection

3. participation in JC sufferings

even until death

participation = koinonia => fellowship

4. To somehow attaining to the resurrection from the dead

## Paul's drive

△ Phil 3:10 I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of

his resurrection and participation in his sufferings,  
becoming like him in his death,

## This then is what drives Paul

### To obtain that goal!

### To know Christ more

And know more of him even through suffering

Paul says that you cannot know someone well, unless you understand/ experienced what they have gone through

So he welcomes suffering, as that will bring him closer to Christ

### Even if it means death

Because the end of the goal is beyond death in the resurrection

### Death => resurrection

He knows he needs to die, but also knows that what he does now reflects on what he will obtain after death

## Achieved or achieving

<sup>△</sup> v11 and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

### Why does Paul have this goal, you may ask

Did he himself not say that we are saved by faith and not by works?

So if we believe in Jesus Christ, as Paul does, then surely we are saved - and are assured of the resurrection?

Why then does he need to work so hard for it?

There is a dualism here in Paul's

## message

As he clearly does not feel satisfied as he presses on towards this goal

But even in Romans where he speaks of being justified by faith, he says:

5 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,<sup>2</sup> through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God.

<sup>3</sup> **Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance;**<sup>4</sup> **perseverance, character; and character, hope.**

In one breath he links being justified by faith and grace with sufferings, perseverance, character and hope

We are in the yet and not yet times

Jesus has returned, but he will come again too

We have been saved, but we are still being saved too

And as we are saved by faith, our faith has to be an active faith

A faith that wants to grow more, become ever stronger

A faith that wants to know Jesus more, incl his sufferings and death

A faith that regards everything as a loss, because of the surpassing value of

because of the surpassing value of  
knowing Jesus Christ my Lord

^ v7

A faith that transform's everything we do  
and are

### This is Paul's goal and drive

To continue to be transformed through  
our relationship with Christ.

## Pressing on

### Paul continues this theme, exhorting his readers

^ 12 Not that I have already obtained this or have already  
reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own,  
because Christ Jesus has made me his own. 13 Beloved, I  
do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one  
thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining  
forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on towards the goal  
for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

### I press on to make it my own / to take hold of

As Christ has made Paul his own/ is  
holding on to Paul

Paul senses that Jesus owns him

And therefore he wants to own this goal,  
to know him more

### He does not consider what he has achieved or suffered as gain

stronger: forgetting what lies behind

and: straining forward to what lies ahead

He does not let what happened in his past  
(good or bad)

distract him from wanting to achieve his  
goal in Christ Jesus

## Less mature?

△ 15 Let those of us then who are mature be of the same mind; and if you think differently about anything, this too God will reveal to you.

However, he does realised that not everyone shared his drive

And he encourages everyone to do so

But even if you cannot see what Paul's trying to convey

he gives space to come to our own minds, but under Christ

As he is certain that God will reveal the same drive to those who are mature in Christ

But he warns to let not any disagreements on this harm their faith, unity and fellowship: hold fast to what you have obtained

△ 16 Only let us hold fast to what we have attained.

## Imitate!

△ 17 Brothers and sisters, join in imitating me, and observe those who live according to the example you have in us.

Paul then urges the Philippians and therefore us join in:

Imitating Paul who imitating Christ

or join with Paul in imitating Christ

Even if you do not have the same conviction or understanding as Paul, if you imitate him or Christ, you won't be far off.

Refers back to Ch2 v6-8: Christ

became nothing, like that we need to

became nothing, like that we need to become nothing

## Do not imitate!

△ 18 For many live as enemies of the cross of Christ; I have often told you of them, and now I tell you even with tears.  
19 Their end is destruction; their god is the belly; and their glory is in their shame; their minds are set on earthly things.

### Paul urges the Phils not to imitate another group of Christians:

Those who live as enemies of the cross

strong words!

Their minds are on early things:

Bellies: food

shameful behaviour

this leads to destruction

He does not give any firm examples here

But we can see that he means those who put their earthly welfare above everything

Excessive food, unhealthy sexual practices or relationships, behaviours that give glory to self and not to Christ

We can add other things out of experience

But the striking thing is that he refers to Christians who lived their lives in that way

Perhaps those who believe in Christ, but their faith has not resulted in a change of priorities, morals and

change of priorities, morals and attitudes

## Heavenly citizens

△ But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. 21 He will transform the body of our humiliation[m] so that it may be conformed to the body of his glory,[n] by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself.

He reminds the Philippians that they are heavenly citizens

I am a Dutch citizen, but live in England

I have a Dutch passport

But will I ever return to the Netherlands to live there? I do not know

But I do have certain affiliations and emotions being Dutch

And my behaviour reflects also back to other Dutch citizens

Likewise we are heavenly citizens who live on earth

We have a heavenly passport which is given to us by Christ

And it is from there that we expect Jesus our King to return

And even transform our bodies that are limited and ageing and have unhealthy desires so that it become like the body of Jesus himself!

Great promises!

## Stand firm then

△ Phil 4:1 Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved.

## We should do an inventory here of our own lives

What is our motivation?

Are we driven to know Christ and  
make him known?

Or are there aspects in our lives where  
we look more to us and our own  
desires, ambitions and fears?

Do we share Paul's goal?

Do we want to imitate Paul or Christ?

I must admit that there are times that  
I don't.

As I assume this is the case for most or  
all of us

## But we have received this heavenly passport

When we accepted Jesus as our Lord  
and saviour

Are we willing to let that transform us  
in imitators of Christ

Even if we live in a world where all of  
us, British or foreign

Are all foreigners as citizens of  
Heaven?

## Let's pray