

## Pressing Toward the Goal

Philippians 3:12-14

<sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> 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, <sup>14</sup> I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

- NRSV

## Overview

“This verse marks the opening of a section in which Paul states the tension between his present attainment and his aspiration for the future.”

- Martin, 154

## Athletic Language

- ✚ Καταλαμβάνω – take hold, grasp, seize, obtain, take aggressively
- ✚ Διώκω – press on, pursue, chase (hunting word, also for foot racing)
- ✚ Επεκτείνωμαι – to exert oneself, stretch out, strain
- ✚ Σκοπός – goal, mark, target
- ✚ Βραβείον – prize, award

## Philippians 3:12

Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal;<sup>g</sup> but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.

- NRSV

<sup>g</sup>Or have already been made perfect

## Already obtained?

Already reached the goal?

Not that I have already obtained this

Ὀὐχ ὅτι ἤδη ἔλαβον

or have already reached the goal;

ἢ ἤδη τετελείωμαι,

## Paul Pressing On

- ✚ Why?
- ✚ Does he expect to make it his own?
- ✚ Or is he just hoping?
  - εἰ καὶ καταλάβω

## Back to Greek

### Subjunctive:

From Carlson's Colorful Fun with Subjunctive's Sheet:

- "expresses probability or potentiality."

From Wallace, 461:

- "can be said to *represent the verbal action (or state) as uncertain but probable*"

## Back to Greek

### Typical Conditional Clause Structures:

- Εαν + Subjunctive (hoping)
- Ει + Indicative (expecting)

So what is this Ει + Subjunctive?

- Sloppy grammar? Oops!
- Intentional?  
Somewhere between expectation and hope...

## Philippians 3:13

Beloved,<sup>h</sup> I do not consider that I have made it my own;<sup>i</sup> but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead,

- NRSV

<sup>h</sup>Gk *Brothers*; Other ancient authorities read *my own yet*

## Reemphasis

- Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own
- 3<sup>rd</sup> time καταλαμβάνω is used

## What is Paul Forgetting?

- Everything?
- Old life?
  - Reference back to 3:4ff

## Looking to the Future

Forgetting what lies behind,  
pressing on toward the goal.

## Philippians 3:14

I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly<sup>i</sup> call of God in Christ Jesus.

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<sup>i</sup>Gk upward

## What is the Prize?

- Undefined
- Some sort of calling...

## What is the Prize?

- Upward Call
  - Continues the metaphor of the footrace and represents the moment at which the victorious athlete is called forward to receive the prize" – Osiek, 98

## What is the Prize?

- ▣ Heavenly Call
  - ⦿ Call of Christ?
  - ⦿ Eternal Life? (Resurrection?)
    - Divine Summons? – Hooker, 533

## What is the Prize?

"It is the **same call which is addressed to believers** in the mercy of God, summoning them out of their rebellion and sin into fellowship with himself in Christ on the ground of his reconciliation on the cross. Therefore it is a 'high' or 'upward' calling, leading us to God himself." – Martin, 157

## What is the Prize?

## Philippians 3:15a

Let those of us then who are  
mature be of the same mind;

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What is Τελειος?

## Τελειος

- Reference with 3:12.
- Earthly? Heavenly?
- Is it possible?
  - Paul is blameless... (back to 3:5-6)

## Philippians 3:15b

and if you think differently  
about anything, this too God  
will reveal to you.

■ NRSV

## For those thinking differently...

- ✚ “Those who think differently from the path Paul has just laid out are promised/threatened that God will set them straight.” – Osiek, 99
- ✚ “So confident is he (Paul) that the truth has been stated that he invokes the aid of God to illuminate the minds and correct the behavior of those who do not share his conviction.” – Martin, 158

## Philippians 3:16

Only let us hold fast to what  
we have attained.

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## Exhortation

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- # Encouragement
- # Leads into next section of letter

## But they still haven't attained "τελειος"

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How do we become τελειον?

Is this τελειος needed to have a relationship with God?

Who would be τελειοι?