

Upward Still

by H.J. Vine

We are called to press forward on our spiritual journey, just like Paul, with the same grace, love, and power that he had.

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 4:17, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Ephesians 1:7, Ephesians 3:18, Philippians 3:14, Colossians 3:1

Topics: "Perseverance Of Faith", "Christian Endurance"

Description

H.J. Vine preaches about the journey of Paul as he pressed onward towards the heavenly goal, despite facing trials and sorrows. He emphasizes that the same grace, love, race, goal, and power that sustained Paul are available to all believers. Paul's intense spiritual activities were fueled by the grace of God within him, leading him to labor abundantly for the sake of Christ. As believers, our life is hidden with Christ, and though trials may beset our path, the goal of being with Him where He is should encourage us to press forward with endurance and cheer.

Transcript

Paul pressed onward. The calling on high in Christ Jesus was before him. Forgiven, justified, saved and reconciled to God through the death of His Son to start with, he still urged forward to the heavenly goal.

The same grace which called him has called us. The same love of God which blessed him has blessed us. The same race which he ran is ours also. The same goal to which he hastened is before us too. The same power which strengthened him is given to us likewise. May the same purposefulness which marked him be also found with us. "Ye have known my . . . purpose," he could say.

Although the apostle apprehended the things of the Spirit in an exceptional degree, and saw the glorious range of heavenly and earthly administration of which Christ is the Head and Centre; and the assembly united to Him as His body in His exaltation over all things; yet, though filled with unspeakable joy at the prospect, and with the glories of all that greatness, nevertheless, present labours for others marked him, whilst sorrow and trials beset his path, in the midst of which the love of Christ made him more than a conqueror. Divine purpose in Christ, and counsel as to divine ways, filled his mind. The mystery, Christ and the assembly, and the riches of the glory of the mystery rejoiced his soul, yet snares, slanders and persecutions were always about him. He himself ensnared none, he slandered none, he persecuted none, he preached the unsearchable riches of Christ. Unseen realities, their vastness and stability, as secured in Christ--his hope within the veil--filled his keen vision, nevertheless he was practical beyond others. "I laboured more abundantly than they all" he wrote--"yet not I, but the grace of God which was with Me." His

activities were both intense and varied. He was most spiritual, yet quite natural; and if there be an explanation of his exceptional energies, it lies in the fact that the former gave character to the latter, the inward to the outward, the unseen to the seen, the spiritual to the natural, the heavenly to the earthly. It is here where most get astray; and one is often pleaded for to the neglect of the other.

The Lord Jesus is now at the right hand of God, and our life is hid with Christ there. We are to be with Him where He is. Meanwhile, our pathway has to be pursued to the end. The goal is still ahead. It is ours to press forward. Endurance is needed; but encouragement and cheer will not be lacking as we travel onward. Let us take an illustration. It was a bright, spring morning. The air was fresh and fragrant when we started off upon a three-mile walk. From the river valley we were to ascend about six hundred feet. The goal before us was a meeting to be held in a hall at the very top of the hill. Our view was certainly circumscribed when we began our journey, although it was very fine, and the thought of what was at the end imparted interest and glad anticipation. As we climbed higher and higher the view became more expansive and beautiful; but, though we saw vaster grandeur than when we started, yet we noticed that thorns and thistles, such as were beside the path at the beginning, still grew quite near to us.

Just so is it in our pathway heavenward, trials and sorrows beset our way. The rising scenes of divine glory spread their beauteous charms before us however; the goal shines ahead; and as we ascend we increasingly apprehend the breadth and length and depth and height, which Christ is the centre of; and His surpassing love constrains us.

"For aye the dews of sorrow

Are lusted with His love."

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