



59A PENTECOST 18A LITURGY

knowing who you are and where you are headed;
knowing Christ.

Abstract

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. 13 Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.
Philippians 3:4b–14

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59A Pentecost 18A Liturgy

Knowing your goals; knowing Christ.

Sunday, October 4, 2020 | After Pentecost | Proper 22 | Year A

Old Testament & Psalm, Option I

Old Testament Exodus 20:1–4, 7–9, 12–20

Psalm Psalm 19

or

Old Testament & Psalm, Option II

Old Testament Isaiah 5:1–7

Psalm Psalm 80:7–15

New Testament Philippians 3:4b–14

Gospel Matthew 21:33–46

Philippians 3.4b-14

Paul sets out his credentials by citing the marks of his Jewish identity. Remaking his identity ‘in Christ’ is a big project that he has not yet fully achieved – but it is his ultimate goal.

This week's resources explore: knowing who you are and where you are headed; knowing Christ.

	<p>Pre-Service</p> <p style="text-align: center;">A place at the table (for everyone born) Haas/True</p>
	<p>Greeting</p> <p>May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ The Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all</p> <p>and also with us</p>
	<p>We Gather</p> <p>God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – calls us to set our sights on the goal of following and living in the way of Christ. God calls to us follow now.</p> <p><i>Let us Pray</i> Creator God, who calls us to follow, we are on journeys, individual journeys and shared journeys, experiences that are ours alone and ours together. Guide us on our journey this day and help us to keep our eyes on the goal. Amen.</p>
	<p>Hymn/song</p> <p>TIS #474 – “Gather us in” Haugen</p>

	<p>Welcome</p> <p><i>Let us pray</i> Lord God, as we journey towards the goal you set before us, we see glimpses of who you are, often too deep and unimaginable to grasp fully the depth of your being. What we see and feel spurs us on in our journey to discover more of you. Amen.</p>
	<p>Readings</p> <p><i>Philippians 3:4b–14</i> ^{4b}If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless. ⁷But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ ⁹and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. ¹⁰I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead. ¹²Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. ¹³Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. ¹</p> <p><i>respond</i> For the word of the Lord Thanks be to God</p>
	<p>Hymn/song/video</p> <p>Christ be our light</p>
	<p>We say Sorry God of the journey of life, the mystery of our very being,</p>

¹ [Revised Common Lectionary](#). (2009). Bellingham, WA: Faithlife.

we confess that the journey we take
 gets disrupted and we get sidetracked.
 We go off on wild goose chases that lead us nowhere,
 up blind alleys and into bad and barren places.
 We find our way back to you in sorrow for our failings
 and in penitence for our wanderings.
 May we be enriched by your welcome,
 relieved by your forgiveness
 and comforted by your all-embracing love.
 Amen.

Words of Assurance

Hymn/Song

Father Welcomes all his Children Mann

Response

Started Toward A Great Tomorrow
 Philippians 3:12-4:1

A soldier lived at a time when his country needed great soldiers!
 Yet his past was so against him
 that he almost never became the leader that his country needed.

He was born to a father who was harsh and cold and would always see him as a failure.

His mother was not a source of emotional comfort to him either;
 he never once saw her moved enough to shed a tear.

He was always small for his age.

He grew up ashamed he was not the kind of leader his father expected him to be.

At age 17, feared failing.

He hated the school, but he dared not buck his father's decision.

When he returned home, though, his neighbours mocked him in his new uniform,
 and the old humiliation returned.

The boy was deeply wounded emotionally that he would forever feel self-conscious in uniform. Later, as a 3star general,
 he would prefer to wear a simple private's shirt with 3 stars sewn on it.

Only a few good strokes of fortune

ever made it possible for Hiram to show what kind of military leader he really was.

But he truly was a leader!

We remember him as Ulysses S. Grant, leader of the victorious Northern Army and later President of the United States. (1)

"It ain't over till it's over."

There are far too many people who live as failures, as rejects,
 as disappointments to themselves, to their families,
 and, perhaps, to God. And it need not be that way.

It is never too late to make a new beginning.

There is power and potential and promise within each of us waiting to be unleashed.

Indeed, God's plan is that we be more and do more than any of us can ever imagine.

Consider that man whose writings and witness have touched more lives for God than any other except Christ himself.

Paul was a persecutor of the church.

He was there when Stephen became the first Christian martyr.

In fact, he was part of the lynch party.

But a change took place in the Apostle Paul's life.

He became a dynamo for Christ.

If anybody can give us advice

on what we can do to achieve a new, vibrant, victorious life it is he. Listen to his words:

"... but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead,

I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus."

If you wanted to write out a prescription for victorious living in just a few words, it would be difficult to improve on these words

There are three words that I would use to help us remember his exciting challenge focus, forget, and forge.

ST. PAUL'S LIFE HAD A FOCUS. "...but this ONE thing I do..." Paul writes.

His life was focused on "the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Everything he did in life was aimed in that direction.

That was how he had such impact upon his own time and upon ours.

In every walk of life successful people are focused people. They know what it is they want.

All their thoughts and energies are aimed in the direction of their dreams.

A workable definition of sin could be anything that distorts that focus, that causes us to stray from God's goal for our lives, that demeans our reputation, that trivializes our purpose.

So many people miss the mark at just this point.

They find themselves tired and frustrated and angry and depressed because they have not focused on something worthy of their ambitions.

Jesus provides us with the mark upon which we are to focus,

"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness..."

ST. PAUL ALSO KNEW HOW TO FORGET.

"...forgetting those things which are behind,

and reaching unto those things which are before..."

Some people might be so concerned over the past that they destroy their future.

That could have happened to Paul.

He could have let his guilt over persecuting the church prevent him from giving his best.

He could have hung his head and said,
 "Nobody's going to listen to me.
 Look what I've done. I'm finished. It's over."

Guilt is a strange phenomenon.

It is a much more powerful force in our lives than most of us realize.
 Sometimes it will play tricks on us.

A little boy was acting very guilty during a power blackout.

When his parents asked him what was wrong, he broke down and cried.
 Through his sobs he confessed that on the way home from school he had kicked a
 power pole.

He was sure his action had darkened an entire city.

Some guilt isn't so easily dismissed, but that doesn't mean it is any easier to forgive
 ourselves.

When by accident a small pebble gets lodged inside one of our shoes,
 we feel intermittent stabs of pain as we walk.

So the scrupulous person, as he walks through life,
 feels the intermittent agonies of his imagined guilt.

We need to take our guilt and shame and cast them into the sea. Or bury them in
 the ground.

After all, if a holy God can forgive us,
 surely it is time for us to forgive ourselves.

Paul didn't let his past mistakes hinder him.

Neither did he allow past affronts hinder him.

After all, Paul, himself, was persecuted in every possible way,
 but he never took his eye off of the mark.

Paul was Focused, able to seek and accept forgiveness and one thing more.

ST. PAUL WAS COMMITTED TO FORGING AHEAD.

"...but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind,
 and reaching unto those things which are before,
 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

We live in the age of the entrepreneur.

Entrepreneurs take risks.

They are willing to be laughed at, to be scorned, to experience humiliating failure if
 necessary.

They are willing to take risks.

They don't wait so long for their ship to come in that our pier collapses.

St. Paul's pier didn't collapse.

His influence has extended over two thousand years of history
 because he knew what God wanted him to do

And let nothing deter him.

He was willing to put his faith into immediate action.

Whether he was standing before scholars, mobs, or kings,
 he was faithful to the high calling of God in Christ.

	<p>What is it that God wants you to do? Do you know? Have you focused in on that contribution to the world and His kingdom that He is calling you to make? Are you willing to lay aside the pain of the past and commit yourself to today alone? Are you ready to go into immediate action?</p> <p>Today can be a new beginning. Focus in on Christ and His will for your life. Forget things that are passed, and forge on to a new life.</p> <p>With God's help Paul did. With God's help, so can you and I.</p>
	<p>Hymn/song Amazing Grace My Chains are gone</p>
	<p>Offering</p>
	<p>Notices</p>
	<p>Prayers for all people <i>Just think for a moment</i> <i>How do other people see you?</i> <i>How do you see yourself?</i> <i>Are the two the same?</i></p> <p><i>How do you think God sees you?</i> <i>Reflect on these things with honesty and openness.</i></p> <p>We are who we are, Lord, and we know we get things wrong. We also know we get some things right. We are who we are and we know you love us. Help us to follow the way you would have us travel.</p> <p>God of one and God of all, we pray for: those who don't know who they are, who can't understand themselves or their place in society God of all, we pray for them.</p> <p>Those who don't 'fit in', who are or seem to be different – God of all, we pray for them.</p> <p>Those who don't know where they come from, their heritage or home, their family or bloodline – God of all, we pray for them.</p> <p>Those who feel lost and isolated, confused and afraid, rudderless or homeless, strangers in a strange land – God of all, we pray for them.</p>

	<p>Those who wish they were someone else, or somewhere else, in some other time and place – God of all, we pray for them.</p> <p>In your great mercy, Lord, hear our prayers and grant surer journeys for them all. Amen.</p>
	<p>Lord's Prayer</p> <p>Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. AMEN</p>
	<p>Hymn/song Here I am Lord</p>
	<p>We are sent out</p> <p>Almighty God, we are going on a journey, from church back to (wherever it may be). But we also go on another journey: the journey of our Christian life. Its foundations, full of all that has gone before, are part of the scaffold of our lives. Some of it can be seen by others, some only by ourselves; some is very obvious, some more hidden.</p> <p>But it is there. It is a personal journey – no one else's is quite the same – but you know it and you know all of us, and we trust you to guide us, to give us the strength, the courage and the persistence we need to follow where you lead even if the path is tough. Be our guide, we pray. Amen.</p> <p>May the Lord bless us and keep us May His face shine upon us and be gracious to us May he lift up His countenance upon us and give us peace</p>
	<p>Benediction</p>

	Thank you

