

**Philippians 3:12-4:1**  
**(Psalm 23; Mark 8:34-36)**  
**“I Press On to Make It My Own”**

## **Introduction**

An old friend and mentor of mine, Roger Kvam, used to say that most people should have on their tombstone the words, Died at 40, buried at 80. I find that particularly disconcerting when it applies to Christians, who of all people should recognize the pilgrim aspect of life. Yet the more we are exposed to biblical and theological studies, the more inclined some of us are to think that we have arrived. People get a hold of a theological system that makes sense to them or a pattern of life that seems to work, and then cling to it as though it had the power to save them. Truth be told, there are many who actually believe in and trust in a system of doctrine or a pattern of life, when they think that they are trusting in Jesus Christ.

Now, let me hasten to say that we need some sort of framework of thought, some sort of formal way of seeing and understanding things, or we will experience life as chaos. So I am not suggesting that truth is relative and that one person's description of reality is as accurate as another's. My point is just this: a little humility is always in order. As Paul wrote elsewhere, Now we know in part. Our knowledge is partial. We should always be seeking a fuller, deeper, richer understanding and experience of life, one that can only be had within the community of God's people, the church, the Body of Christ.

Nevertheless, many of us fear that if we remain too open, we will not know what to believe, we will not experience peace, we will be without hope. But that presumes that our hope and trust rest upon a set of propositions rather than upon a relationship with God through Christ, that our peace and our hope rest on our having everything figured out. Paul had a different view of things. Once he, too, thought that he had arrived, that he had figured it all out, that his knowledge was complete, his life righteous in God's sight. Then he met the risen Christ, and everything changed. In these verses, Paul describes what he calls a mature view of things (v.15).

## **Body**

1. We learn humility, as we confess that we have not yet arrived (3:12).
2. We learn confidence, as we realize that Jesus has made [us] his own (3:12).
3. We learn peace, as we [forget] what is behind (3:13).
4. We learn perseverance, as we press on toward the goal (3:12&14).
5. We learn hope, as we remember that our citizenship is in heaven (3:20).

## **Conclusion**

It does not rest upon us all has been given us by grace. But we must press on to make it our own. In the light of this, we hear Paul calling us to stand firm in the Lord.

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