I’M RUNNING

**HEAVEN IS MY GOAL!**

***Written By: Tommy Romans September 2019***

**Philippians 3:8** - Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may Win Christ,

**12** Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after (I pursue), if that I may **Apprehend** (to lay hold of & grasp) that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

 **13** Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this One Thing I do, **forgetting** those things which are behind, and Reaching Forth unto those things which are before,

 **14** I **press** toward the **Mark** (Goal) for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

 **15** ¶ Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded:

 What the great apostle Paul is saying in these scriptures to the Philippian Christians is this: “More than anything in my life I want to **Win** Christ.” Studying the Greek meaning to the words Attain, Apprehend, Press, and Mark, What Paul was saying is – “I want to Apprehend Christ, to seize and grasp a hold of Him in the same manner that He seized and laid hold of me! **Apprehend:** Paul had a Goal for Christ as Christ had for him. He said: “I have not yet **Attained** – I haven’t got there yet, I haven’t arrived to lay hold and obtain, but this ONE thing I do – forgetting those things behind me, I’m pursuing, I’m pressing toward the **Mark** (Goal) for the Prize of the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus!”

Forgetting those things behind me: Paul knew the key to victory. He had a lot to forget. It shows us that we must mentally break free from the past, forget and leave the past behind – we can’t change it or undo it anyway – repent and get it all under the Blood and go on for God! The past will cripple you and hinder you. You can’t focus on past failures and sins, missed opportunities, let downs and disasters – get them out of your mind because the devil will beat you up, fill you with doubt and get you down over it. You also cannot let up and be at ease in your Christian race today by living on past victories and successes. No! Your race right now is current and it is critical – God is only interested in what you are doing for Him right now at this moment and your aim for the future. The Lord will never be done with you until He calls you

home. His gifts and callings are without repentance.

**RUNNING THE RACE**

**1Co 9:24** - Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So **Run**, that ye may obtain.

 **25** And every man that **Striveth** for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

 **26** I therefore **so run**, not as uncertainly; so **fight** I, not as one that beateth the air:

 Christianity is not a spectator sport – we are all called to be involved. Every Christian must run their own race. We don’t contend or compete against each other but we are surely up against obstacles and hindrances that are personal, physical, and spiritual in each of our lives.

 When we enter our Christian service for God, we must know that it will cost us - it will be **labor** and striving (Col. 1:29). Through much tribulation, we must **strive** to enter into the Kingdom of God (Acts 14:22). Since the days of John the Baptist, the Kingdom of God is preached and men **Press** their way into it (John 16:16). It will be a **Fight** - Paul wrote Timothy – Fight the good fight of Faith and lay Hold on eternal life (I Tim. 6:12). Remember, the Cross precedes the Crown. We haven’t made it to the finish line yet! We must keep running, striving, fighting, enduring and pressing our way through this evil world of temptations and trials.

Don’t lose your vision of Heaven – there will be rewards and crowns. Friends and Loved Ones will be waiting for you on that golden strand. Don’t let up in your Race now – Run with the torch in your hand - Run to Win! In the Father’s house are many mansions and Jesus is there now preparing you a place. When we cross over, the thrill of eternity will be to hear His words – Well done, you have been faithful, you endured, now enter into the joys of the Lord! You could have gotten discouraged and quit, but you kept your Vision and your desire, you believed and held on and God gave you His Grace that brought you through!

**A FOCUSED CONCENTRATION**

 In the Apostle Paul’s time, the Greeks had two great athletic festivals – the Olympic and the Isthmian games. The stadium at Corinth was 600 feet in size. The athletes who would be competing in these games would go through months of vigorous training for their bodies with strenuous exercises to build endurance and strengthen their muscles, lungs and heart. They put themselves on special diets and daily work-outs. Do you know why they trained so hard for so long? They wanted to WIN! They knew their Fathers and Mothers, brothers and sisters, friends and loved ones would be in the grandstands of the arena watching them -cheering and applauding and rooting them on and encouraging them to Win! Paul borrowed a picture from these games when he wrote in Hebrews 12 - Lay aside every **weight** and every sin which doth so easily beset you and Run the Race with patience. To accomplish anything in your personal life, in your home, marriage, job, schooling and most of all Church work – both physical and spiritual – there must be commitment, discipline and self-control. Half-heartedness will never work! When these wrestlers, runners and fighters entered these games, they wanted to Win. No-one wanted to lose! Who in their right mind would ever want to go home a loser?

 Every athlete and runner in a race will fix their eyes ahead of them. Those who glance into the crowd to watch others will be distracted. It doesn’t matter what others are thinking or doing – you must run on! You cannot stare down while you are running, it may cost you the race if you stumble and fall. Every runner must **Focus** and **Concentrate** on the Goal ahead of them! Fix your eyes on the prize at the finish line!

**Prov. 4:25** - Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee.

 **26** Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.

 **27** Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.

**REACHING FORTH**

 We must know that we are in the Arena now. It’s our turn. The great Patriarchs and Matriarchs of old have run their race and gone on. Every Christian through the ages, all of God’s children – friends and loved ones – singers, preachers, ministers, helpers, laborers, workers and witnesses have already been in the great Arena of life. They lived out their life, they fought their fight, ran their race, finished their course, and are now at Home with the Lord – Now it’s our turn! We must know - Our time is short and we must give it all we’ve got to finish!

Paul said in **Phil. 3:13** - Reaching Forth unto those things which are before - I **press** toward the **Mark** (Goal) for the prize! Paul was saying – “Lord, I know you called me for a purpose. You Saved me and gave me this Blessed Gospel to preach to others. I must do everything in my effort to reach them that they might be saved. It is my Goal to not only Win for myself, but to help others also to reach the finish line and make it Home!”

 The Greek word for reaching forth means to **Stretch!** This is a word picture describing the Runner – He is bent forward, stretching and straining every muscle to its limit to reach the FINISH LINE! In his heart he longs for the prize and he strives to Win. Just picture his head thrust forward, the expression of his face is set in fiercely determined lines, his body straining toward the Goal – every nerve is tense, his breath is coming in gasps and his whole being is strained to the utmost. He has just rounded the last curve and is now in the Home stretch! His eyes are fixed on the Goal that is just ahead and the Race is almost over. Every last ounce of energy and Will Power in his Being is being spent to WIN! As he nears the ribbon at the Finish Line, he waves his arm and pumps his fist in the air as he nears the Goal and he shouts - I’ve made it, I’ve made it – I’ve WON, I reached my Goal – my Crown is waiting - the Prize is mine!

 Paul wrote Timothy - **2Tim. 4:6** For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. (Paul labored, traveled and preached for 25 years – how long have you?)

 **7** I have Fought a good Fight, I have **FINISHED** my course, I have kept the faith:

 **8** Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

**WHAT IS YOUR GOAL?**

**WHAT IS YOUR VISION?**

 Paul goes on to write the Philippians after describing that he was Pressing toward the Mark for the prize – **Phil. 3:20** – For our Conversation (Manner of Life) is in Heaven; from whence we also LOOK FOR THE SAVIOUR, the Lord Jesus Christ.

 Can I tell you that Heaven will be worth it all! It will be worth every tear you shed, every time you made yourself press on Home. Paul said – I caught a glimpse of Heaven a long time ago and I never lost the Vision. That Heavenly Vision has kept me going and striving through all my troubles and trials through the years – I know what awaits! I’ve got a longing to go and be with Christ which is FAR BETTER than anything in this world. I have completely sold out and I have set my affections on things above. I earnestly pray, I stay focused and keep my mind on the Lord. I live in the Spirit and it’s as though I’m already there. The only thing separating me from my eternal Home in that Heavenly city is this old fleshly body I live in. I’m ready to step out of it and be with Jesus!

**WHAT WILL HEAVEN BE LIKE?**

 O what a Homeland – the eternal Rest for the Soul! In that far away Country there is a Celestial city – the New Jerusalem, having the Glory of God. Her light is like unto a stone most precious – clear as crystal. This Heavenly city is built upon twelve foundations made of precious stones and the most beautiful gems of various shades of color. The streets there are pure Gold, transparent as glass. The walls are made of jasper – clear as crystal. The twelve gates that enter into it are each made of one solid Pearl. Heavenly beings – God’s Holy Angels stand at its gates. A Glorious Throne sits in its very center. A rainbow encircles it and the sight is like a brilliant Emerald green. And the Glorious One who sits upon this magnificent Throne is the God of all creation - the King of Glory! The sight of Him is like unto a Jasper and Sardine stone. To look upon His Majesty and to behold His Glory is like gazing upon a most bright flashing Diamond that is clear as crystal and radiating from within a deep fiery ruby red.

A pure River of water of Life clear as crystal issues out from the threshold of the Throne and flows through this Holy City of splendor. It shines and radiates with Eternal Life. In the midst of the street and on each side of this River is a Tree of Life growing, bearing their twelve manner of fruits every month and their leaves are for the healing of the nations. There is no more curse for the Throne of God and of the Lamb are in it. The redeemed shall behold Him and look upon His face – they shall reign for ever and ever. This beautiful Heavenly City has no need for the sun or moon to shine in it for there shall be no night there: There’s not a shadow anywhere – for the Glory of God and the Lamb does lighten it. It will be one Eternal Day!

O what a Vision! O what grandeur and the splendid sights there will be in Heaven, our eternal Home! Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men! God Himself shall dwell with them and be their God, and they shall be His people. God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: Praise be unto our Wonderful Lord for all the former things shall pass away to be remembered no more. He that sitteth upon the throne will make all things New! God’s love and Righteousness shall reign forever! Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, nor has it entered the heart of man the things that God has prepared for those that Love and Serve Him!

**IF YOU CAN ONLY IMAGINE?**

Can you only imagine what it will be like in Heaven? What will it look like and feel like in that place of transcendent Glory and beauty? What will be the sights and sounds that we will see and hear in that celestial city that will outshine the sun? What will the people be like who go there? Can you visualize a country where no twilight shadows deepen, unending day where there never comes a night? A city where no storm clouds ever gather – this is what Heaven means to me. O to be among the redeemed, to stand among the blood washed throng upon the Glassy sea before the throne of our God and of the Lamb and sing His praises throughout the countless ages! O to meet the many good friends we have known, who have served God and gone before, and to be with precious loved ones again and never to be separated anymore! A place where there’s no misunderstanding, from all envy and strife we are free. No unkind words there are ever spoken – surely, this is what Heaven means to me!

 I’m truly Homesick for a country to which I have never been before. No sad good-byes will there be spoken, for time won’t matter anymore. I’m looking now across the river to where my faith is going to end in sight; just a few more days to labor, then I will take my heavenly flight. Beulah land, O Beulah land, I am longing for you, and upon thee one day I’ll stand. There my home shall be eternal – Beulah land, O sweet Beulah land!

**THE THINGS THAT CANNOT ENTER**

 Don’t you get tired of all the bad news we hear every day? We live in a world full of crime, hate, abuse, and murder. We are surrounded by evil, wars and strife on every hand. Drugs and bloodshed flow in our streets and sin fills the homes. Floods of iniquity abound everywhere. There’s no peace in this generation. People have cast their morals to the wind. The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up the mire and dirt.

But can I tell you – there’s another land of the happy and free? There’ll be no hurt or pain there! You will never hear the sound of gunfire and sirens – no hospitals or ambulances. There’s no violence and No-one locks their doors. There’ll be no worries, no fears – you will be safe and happy forevermore! Tears will never stain the streets of that Heavenly City. In it, you will never hear a baby’s cry. If I could count all the tears that have fallen, it would seem like an ocean to me; if hearts were a window you could look through, Oh the pain and scars you would see. We question the death of a loved one when the grave seems so final and cold; O but we’ll meet again where death has no victory – in a land where we’ll never grow old. I’ve never met one man without sorrow, never looked into eyes with no pain; but I know a land where grief is a total stranger, and songs of joy are the only songs we’re going to sing! Tears will never stain the streets of that city, no wreathes of death on our mansion door; teardrops aren’t welcome beyond the Gates of Glory and the heart will never break anymore!

Can you only imagine a place where sad goodbyes will never be spoken? There’ll be no wheelchairs there. You’ll never see a walker or cane in that land, for no-one grows old or feeble anymore. Sickness and disease can never enter. Cancer and Heart trouble remains outside the Gates!

**IF YOUR LOVED ONES THERE**

**COULD TALK TO YOU NOW**

 Dear loved one, I know you are with the Lord now, but if you could talk to me now here is what you would say: I wish you were here, it’s such a beautiful place – wish you were here, nothing but clear sunny days. It never rains and no-one complains and we haven’t seen a tear. We are having a great time – I wish you were here! I can see my loved ones walking on the shores together – they’re talking to Jesus, safe and secure in His love; friends and loved ones walking in Heavenly peace – if they could talk to me now, here’s what they’d say to me: Wish you were here, it’s such a beautiful place – nothing but clear sunny days, we’re having a great time – I wish you were here!

 Can I tell all my dear readers whom I love and write to every month - Don’t lose your Vision of Heaven?! The whole purpose of this Newsletter is to create a greater and more determined desire in our hearts to serve God like we never have before. Jesus is coming soon! Heaven will surely be worth the journey when we get there. We’ll be glad for every time we made our selves press on home. Heaven will be worth every trial you go through, every tear you shed and every time you held on to God and didn’t let go!

**THE GLORY WILL FAR**

**OUTWEIGH THE PAIN**

 **Ro 8:18** - For I **reckon** that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the **Glory** which shall be revealed in us.

 The Greek word for Reckon and its definition is: (To count and add up) What the Holy Ghost wants us to know through Paul’s writing to us here is – “If you could add up everything you have gone through in your life – every trouble, sorrow, hurt and pain, every heartbreak, let-down, every problem and trial and add them to one side of the scales; and then put the Glory that is waiting on us over there in the other side of the scales, it would FAR OUTWEIGH it all! And to think, that that Glory is going to be revealed **in us.**

**2Co 4:17** - For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory;

 **18** While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

 Are you longing for home dear reader? I’m ready for Heaven and more than ever - I want to go! I don’t feel at home here in this world anymore. There’s nothing here holding me – no strings attached. God’s true Children are feeling more and more out of place here – we are looking beyond what man is building. People can have this world - its technology and entertainments, but give me Jesus!

 I want to close by saying: Be not weary in well doing and don’t get discouraged – the best is yet to come and O what a payday it will be, the reward will be out of this world! Don’t ever forget – though you get weary of your struggles and battles and get tired in your labors, **Heb. 4:9** – There remaineth a Rest to the people of God. It’s an eternal rest. There is a Hope that is laid up for you in Heaven. We’ve got to make it. Don’t let up now! We must be like Paul in the beginning of this Newsletter – “Let’s keep Running, fighting, and striving! In the Spirit, we have just rounded the last bend and I can see the Finish Line ahead – Jesus is waiting with arms and hands outstretched beckoning. I can see our friends and Loved Ones smiling with the most beautiful youthful smiles – I hear them cheering and saying come on, you can make it! Stay focused children, and give it all you got! It’s now about Home Time! **May God Bless all my Readers!**