

**Preparing For the Journey**  
**January 11, 2009**  
I Corinthians 13:4-7, Philippians 3:7-16  
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**KEY VERSES:**

**And now faith, hope, love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love I Cor 13:13**

**Forgetting what lies behind. . . I press on Phil 3:13-14**

**INTRODUCTION**

**Visual prop: Travel suitcase with Bible, novel, magazine, flashlight,**

**Excedrin, Tums, Pitco tea bags, change of underwear.**

**Here we are at the beginning of a New Year, and what a daunting one it is: Fighting in Gaza, ethnic violence in the Congo, Darfur, famine and disease in Zimbabwe, and the world economy in a mess, and here in the US people losing their homes and their jobs. Is there any god word, is there much hope?**

**As we begin the journey, what should we take and what should we leave behind? For the answer, let's turn to the Word of the Lord, and in particular to Paul the Apostle.**

**I. WHAT TO LEAVE BEHIND**

**Think of Paul's journey which began on the Damascus Road when he met the Lord Jesus Christ.**

**He says, *Forgetting what lies behind.***

**He has all the qualifications to make him a model Jew:**

***Circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, born of Hebrews, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews , as to the law a Pharisee, as to zeal, a persecutor of the church, as to righteousness under the law blameless Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ.***

**He goes on to say I count them as rubbish.**

It's a polite word for the Greek word **SCRUBALA**, it's the word you hear when the other team intercepts your quarterback.

All those things I thought important, I discount because of the supreme joy of knowing Christ.

He says, **forgetting what lies behind. . .**

I wonder what Paul wanted to forget:

**REGRETS**—yes I'm sure he had many

What are yours? Should have gotten out of the stock market

**UNFORGIVENESS**—he speaks of Alexander the coppersmith

Release yourself and others from prison

**GUILT**—stoning of Stephen

**Guilt is the gift that keeps on giving**

**ILLUSTRATION** Patrick with backpack

## **II. WHAT TO TAKE**

### **A. FAITH**

Instead of righteousness based on the law, and his observance of it, he wants a righteousness based on faith to know Christ.

Throughout his writings Paul stresses the importance of faith.

**The just shall live by faith.** In Colossians 2:20 he says, "I live, **nevertheless not I, but Christ lives in me, . . .**

By faith he is going to forget what lies behind, and strain forward to what lies ahead, **the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.**

Yes the future is frightening, but with faith in Christ we can go forward. I trust that you will develop your faith. How do you do that?

The Bible— faith comes by hearing the word of God

Believing His promises, putting God to the test

### **APPLICATION**

I know that it is a challenging year for our church. Our proposed budget has been cut drastically, our dedicated and gifted staff are all having to take painful salary cuts. Our programs & mission will suffer.

Yes, you say, it's happening in industry and in commerce, people are lucky to have jobs and are taking cuts. But folks, this is God's work, Kingdom work, it must not suffer. I know many of you are on fixed income, welcome to the club! But let's be positive, let's believe that God can and will supply if we step out in faith let's press on to the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

**ILLUSTRATION** Erich and flying

**ILLUSTRATION** Good news and bad news about money

Individually and as a church, we must –choose FEAR or FAITH?

**B. HOPE** Christ Jesus is our hope, we have no other!

**C. LOVE**

Paul's life was touched by love. When Paul went to Jerusalem the community looked upon him with suspicion as the Gestapo. But Barbanas, loved him and introduced him to the believers.

That's why Paul can write:

**Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.**

Because Love in Jesus Christ arrested Paul when he was the most angry and rebellious

**ILLUSTRATION**

I see a parallel in a young Hamas radical changed by love of Christ.

**CONCLUSION**

What are you going to leave behind this year?

What will you take for the journey?

Faith, hope, love?

**ILLUSTRATION** Think about this. When we get to heaven one day we won't need faith nor hope anymore, we'll only take our love!