

FORGING AHEAD

Scripture used: [Philippians 3:12-14](#) and [Acts 7:51-58](#) (NASB)

OVERVIEW

Pastor Dan focused today on the story of Saul becoming Paul, and related that journey to his realization that, past age 70, he cannot “coast” in life but must vigorously press forward. Past a certain age, we all want life to be like “downhill cycling”, yet growth must continue and we must press on toward our goal: the prize of faithfulness to God and fulfillment of our calling as we walk intimately with Him. We must show humility to know that our accomplishments to date are not “good enough” to be able to slack off, that we have not attained fullness, and that we must put the effort into what lies ahead.

KEY POINTS

- 1) Pastor Dan used the story of his mother who passed away at age 86 after 66 years of marriage to his dad. His dad (who is now 97) said that he had to stay on Earth as God still had things to teach him. His continuous learning contributed to his optimism, energy, and longevity. Our text tells us to let go of the old sorrows and griefs and focus on what lies ahead.
- 2) Pastor Dan has been deeply challenged by the coronavirus and race relations in the US. What he took for granted has been questioned to the core. He wondered if he was more concerned about preserving his image / reputation / status / privilege, or, on the contrary, about pressing on without compromise. It's the difference between how we'd like to see ourselves; and how God sees us. Pastor Dan says he was raised with substantial naiveté in his view of culture and race, finding reassurance in the “American way”, including our political system and the Constitution. Now his hope is wholly anchored in the Kingdom of God, and this hope allows him to be vulnerable in acknowledging where God continues to teach him and to be unashamed in continuing to pursue growth with God.
- 3) Pastor Dan acknowledged that he derived a lot of his standing from the comfort and reassurance that he was well-liked, accepted, and respected by all. But he had to become more self-aware & cognizant of his limitations, blind spots, and biases. Not only had he not “arrived” - he had a need for “gnashing of teeth”, new revelation, and mustering the steady courage to stand for the innocent, those affected by injustice, and those with limited voice in our culture. For Pastor Dan, it means seeking to embrace a culture of life that truly values each person from the time they are in the womb all the way to the time they pass at the end of their lives.

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - Discern your heart. What in the past do you need to let go of? How would you describe the growth edges of your life right now? Is it hard to acknowledge that you are still growing, or does it come easily for you?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Do you feel like you are still “pressing on” with your relationship with God and the things of God, or do you feel like you are now “coasting”? Are there certain things in your past that make it hard for you to “press on” in your relationship with God? Consider the Apostle Paul in [Philippians 3:12-14](#); how do Paul's words speak to you or inspire you in this season?
- 3) **DO** - Reflect on how God is calling you and write down three examples of where you can reach forward to what lies ahead. Join us next Sunday as Pastor Hurmon shares a new message with our community!