Intro: Paul gave very sage advice in Philippians 3:13-14 “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, 14I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” Let us consider what Paul taught.

I. FORGETTING THAT WHICH IS BEHIND (NEGLECTING)

A. Sins committed for which we have received forgiveness.
   1. God is faithful and has forgiven them. Eph. 1:7 “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;”
      a. God’s forgiveness is a forgetfulness.
      b. Heb. 8:12 “For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.”
   2. We also need to forgive and forget.
      a. The ones who sin against us.
         (1) All forgiveness is based on repentance.
            (a) Luke 13:3 “I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”
            (b) Luke 17:3 “Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.”
         (2) Mat. 18:21-22 “Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? 22Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.”
         (3) Luke 6:37 “Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven;” ; Mat. 6:14-15 “For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: 15But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”
   b. Forgive ourselves.
      (1) This is often the most difficult area of forgiveness. We should not have guilt feelings.
      (2) Mat. 9:2 “And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.”
      (3) Rom. 4:7-8 “Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.”
   3. We are not discussing those sins for which we need to seek forgiveness.

B. That which is good.
   1. We cannot allow ourselves to become complacent over the good we have done.
   2. We need to continue in that good.

C. But, in forgetting we learn from what has gone before.
   1. We cannot change it.
   2. Rom. 15:4 “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.”
      a. Applies to the Scriptures.
b. It is a principle that can apply to our lives.

II. REACHING FORTH FOR THAT WHICH IS BEFORE.
   A. We have not yet attained the goal God has set for us.
   B. We look for that which is in the future.
      1. The figure is that of a person who is so eager that his hands and body are stretched to lay hold of it or the racer who leans forward to the goal.
      2. We must make those things in the past spur us on to greater things in the future (not allow them to hold us back).

III. PRESS TOWARD THE MARK.
   A. Press
      1. It means to move rapidly and decisively toward an object.
      2. It gives the idea of a runner straining with every ounce of energy he possesses.
      3. This shows determination in one’s life.
      4. Christianity should be foremost in our lives.
         a. Mat. 6:33 “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”
         b. Luke 9:23-24 “And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. 24 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.”
   B. Mark
      1. It is a mark on which to fix the eye, or as Strong’s says, “the distant mark looked at, the goal or end one has in view.”
      2. Goal—example of the race.
      3. Heavenly calling.
         a. Tit. 1:2 “In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;”
         b. Heb. 6:18-20 “That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: 18 Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; 20 Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.”

Conclusion: The only way to receive that crown of life is by becoming and then living the Christian life—reaching forth and pressing toward the mark.