

# ***PRESSING TOWARD THE MARK***

by Lee Moses

At some time or other, almost all Christians face the danger of becoming stagnant, mired in the muck. Perhaps stagnancy may result from a sense of self-defeat. On the other hand, it can come as a result of self-satisfaction. Either way, we are far better served to have the mindset of Paul:

*Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. 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, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:12-14).*

Paul was speaking of his desire to attain the resurrection of the dead (verse 11); that is, of the **blessed** dead who will rise to spend eternity with the Lord. Not all will attain this goal. Jesus had spoken of *“they which shall be accounted **worthy** to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead”* (Luke 20:35, emph. LM).

One can imagine that if Paul had dwelt too much on his past, self-defeat could have done him in. He had expended much of his life and much effort in what he thought were profitable religious efforts, which actually were counterproductive to his right standing with God. But he described himself as *“forgetting those things which are behind”* (Phil. 3:13). And the best way to do that was by *“reaching forth unto those things which are before [‘ahead,’ NKJV].”*

On the other hand, if anyone other than the Lord Himself would be reckoned worthy of the resurrection of the blessed dead, one would have to think it would be Paul. He was an apostle of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, Paul *“laboured more abundantly than”* all the other apostles (1 Corinthians 15:10), sacrificing more and suffering more than perhaps any Christian who has ever lived (cf. 2 Cor. 11:23-33). But he knew he had not yet attained the resurrection of the blessed dead.

In view of this, what justification can **we** find for wallowing in self-defeat? Jesus Christ assures us the victory if we persevere (1 Cor. 15:57; Revelation 2:10-11). And if Paul, in all his accomplishments for the Cause of Christ, had not yet attained unto the resurrection of the dead, how can we feel satisfied in resting on our laurels? How can any of us say, “I’ve done enough”?

We are far better served to have the mindset of Paul.. Furthermore, we are **commanded** to have this mindset: *“Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you”* (Philippians 3:15). The

Christian life is a life of constant growth and improvement, seeking new ways to serve the Most High. Let us never cease pressing toward the mark.