

## A Gospel Driven Goal

### 1. Goal Driven Living [SLIDE]

- Whether we do it consciously or sub-consciously, nearly all of us are goal driven
  - Pretty normal way of operating in life
  - Bucket-list phenomena reiterates this reality
    - Bucket-list is a checklist of things to do in life before you 'kick the bucket'
    - Google this > 66.7 million hits in 0.54 seconds!
    - Website > '10,000 things to do before you die'
      - Sign up and *"Discover your bucket list and explore over 3,123,987 goals"*
    - Website > '101 things to do before you die'
      - *"If you don't live your days by personal goals and plans, chances are you spend most of your time caught up in a flurry of day-to-day activities"*
      - List of 101 things include
        - Travel around the world
        - Achieve your ideal weight
        - Learn a new language
        - Run a marathon / do a triathlon
        - Scuba-diving, skydiving, horseback riding, mountain climbing
- Much of our life is goal driven
  - Business > sales targets and profit margins
  - Sport > fitness, strength, skills > no of wins > races you're targeting
  - Music > scales or piece of music to master for performance
  - Student > grades for essays and pass my exams
- They're all very measurable and concrete and functional

- But we're also very goal driven in other areas of life
- May have as a goal to
  - be in a relationship > married > have children
  - retire by certain age
  - retire with certain amount of money
  - achieve certain position in your career
  - earn a million dollars
  - publish a song
  - own your own house
- Having goals in life is a good thing
  - It focuses on what's important > rather than the urgent
  - If we don't have them we'll end up wasting the time, money and resources God has given us in our life
- But what about your spiritual life?
  - What about life after death?
  - What goal or goals are you going set yourself to ensure your bucket list doesn't just end in the grave?
- Here in Philippians 3, the Apostle Paul tells us what that goal ought to be
- He says ...
  - "You might have lots of goals in your life > you may be a very goal; driven person ... but this is THE goal you need to have ... and this is how you go about it"
  - "You want a goal driven life ... then focus on this one goal ... because its greater than anything you'll ever tick off your bucket list in life"

## 2. Jesus Gospel Driven Goal [SLIDE]

- But before he tells us about our goal ... Paul tells us about Jesus goal

- The reason he needs to tell us about Jesus goal first ... is because the goal of a Christian comes from Jesus goal
- The goal the Christian needs to focus on and take hold of ... can only happen because Jesus first took hold of you
- Check out v12
  - *Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to **take hold** of that for which Christ Jesus **took hold of me***
  
- You see what Paul is saying
  - He says I take hold because Christ took hold of me
  
- What's Paul talking about here when he says Jesus took hold of him?
  - Paul was a Pharisee > devout, legalistic, ultra-conservative Jew
  - Persecuted Christians
  - One day > going to Damascus to arrest Christians and put them in jail
  - He encounters the risen Lord Jesus
  - Jesus says "Paul, Paul why do you persecute me?"
  - He was blinded for a few days > through that process he was converted
- Jesus took hold of Paul and drew him to himself
  - Paul didn't decide to become a Christian > last thing on his mind!
  
- That's how God acts in all of us
  - We're taken hold of > therefore we take hold
  - God acts first in Christ
  - Jesus doesn't take hold because I take hold of him > other way around
  
- This is very relevant ... because some ppl will say
  - I was raised a Christian
  - I was always a Christian
  - I went to church > Sunday school > Youth group

- You're not a Christian unless you've been grasped
- Somebody else will say
  - "Xnty is a private thing"
  - "My faith is my faith and I don't need to talk about it or go around showing my faith ... its between me and God"
  - That statement assumes Xnty is a PIECE of your life
  - But true Christianity means your ENTIRE life is impacted by the gospel and evident in the way you live it out
- Friends ... we need to realise that Christianity is not something you take up – it takes you up
  - Xnty not something starts with you > it starts upon you
- This is important to understand
- Because we live in culture were we think we can enrich and improve our lives by doing things
  - Take a class
  - Counseling
  - Hobby
  - Fitness
  - Diet
- But all that stuff we do ... starts with you
  - You have to be motivated to do this
  - You have to want it
  - You have to make it work
  - You must take hold
  - If you take hold of this thing ... then these things will happen
- Xnty says the utter opposite
  - Xnty says you can't be Xn by making yourself one

- You might be able to make yourself
  - More educated
  - Fitter, stronger, skinnier
  - More widely read
  - More experienced
- But you can't make yourself a Christian
- Paul says I only grasp because Jesus has grasped me
  
- And so a Christian is aware they've been taken hold of
  - Not saying that you need to have some amazing spiritual experience to become a Christian > No!
  - It's not about your experience
  - You know God has taken hold of you
- Our consciousness of this comes at different times
  - Some will know it straight away
  - For some it will take time
    - On a search > try and break it off > but can't because God's got hold of you
  - Your mind is being transformed > you're being convinced
  - You're not taking it up its taking you up!
  
- Obvious question is ...
  - "How do I know if God is coming after me?"
  - "How do I know if Jesus is taking hold of me?"
- Before you were grasped by God either
  - Irreligious > didn't care about God, didn't believe, skeptical of the whole thing ... or
  - Religious > but always casual thing, God was always on the periphery
    - "I know it's good to be moral > it's good to pray sometimes"
    - But that was it ... you kept God in a box on the shelf and that's it

- But when you are grasped / being taken hold of ... there's a zeal, there's a passion, there's a spark that comes into your life
  - Your casualness and your spiritual indifference is all gone!
  - Your
    - Constant seeking of the hobby
    - Self-centered thinking
    - Coming to church when you feel like it ... it's all gone
- You might be religious, but you're not a Christian until you sense God has taken hold of you and is leading you in a completely different direction in life
  
- And the amazing thing about this change that happens when you become a Christian is ... that if you grasp ...it's because you're being grasped!
  - Any grasping after God, any yearning at all ... even your spiritual **dissatisfaction** is a result of God grasping hold of you
  - If you find in your heart any dissatisfaction with your spiritual condition
  - If you say
    - "I'd love to know God"
    - "I'd love to know this"
    - "I'd love to have real faith" ...
  - Do you realise that's impossible unless God's already at work inside you
    - God's love is always prior to your grasping
  
- Do you want to repent?
  - Do you have any interest in these things
  - Do you have any yearning for these things
- You don't have to say > "well will he accept me?"
  - Will he accept me?!?
  - Don't you see ... you only could care if he already cared!
  - You couldn't care about him unless he already cared about you in the first place!

- Paul says I grasp because I've already been grasped!
  
- If you're here today and you're not a Christian and you want to sort out your goal for eternal life ... then the fact that you are already here shows Jesus as taking hold of you
  - Repent and put your trust in him
  
- If you're here today and you're already a Christian ... before we start talking about taking hold of any goals that lead to eternal life you need to remember that you can only take grasp because you've already been grasped

### 3. Our Gospel Driven Goal [SLIDE]

- Not only does Jesus take hold of us ... in v12-13 we see we are also to take hold of something
- There are some churches, there are philosophies that hold that being a Christian is a passive thing
  - That once you become a Christian you just need to sit back and let God do his thing
  - Sort of a closing of your eyes and getting into some position of spiritual surrender and then God does everything through
- That's not what Paul's talking about here
  
- There's something for us to take hold of
  - There's a goal to reach for
  - A prize to strain towards
- That's not passive ... that's active
  - Being a Christian requires action
  
- In these verses we see the single minded focus of Paul
  - v12 - I press on > I strive > I pursue > I run after > urgency!

- v13 - I strain towards what's ahead
  - Image of a runner with his eyes fixed on the goal, his hands stretching towards it and his body bent forwards as enters the last decisive stage of the race
  - He's eyes are fixed on the goal
- Paul is after one thing – the prize
  - He's single-minded > totally goal focused in order to take hold of it
  - Image of effort > perseverance > focus
  - No room for lethargy or apathy
- What is the prize?
  - Salvation! > having eternal life > having your sin forgiven > spared wrath of God
- Paul talks about this in different ways
  - v10 – he wants to know Christ!
  - v14 – I press on to win the prize of which Christ has called me heavenward
  - v20 – being citizens of heaven
- Paul's goal for life is Jesus
  - Jesus has grasped hold of him ... and now he wants to grasp hold of Jesus so that he may be saved and share the sure hope of heaven
- This is Paul's goal in life ... his single minded purpose and focus
  - This is the prize he's running, straining, reaching for
- But it's not like he's unsure if he'll get it
- It's guaranteed > it's his to claim
  - v16 – *"live up to what you have already attained"*



- He knows the prize will be his because Christ has already gone to the cross and risen from the dead
- It's guaranteed!
- This is THE ONE goal in life Paul is pursuing over ALL other goals
  
- **Illustration - Bucket List (the Movie)** [SLIDE]
- The movie called 'The Bucket List' – stars Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman
  - Jack Nicholson plays a cranky old billionaire hospital magnate
  - Morgan Freeman a hard working mechanic
  - Both are older men who end up sharing a ward in hospital where they are both dying of cancer
  - While in hospital ... they resolve to make the most of their remaining time in life by creating list of things to do before they 'kick the bucket'
  - They make a bucket list
    - Drive a Mustang Shelby
    - Visit the Taj Mahal / Stonehenge etc
    - Skydiving
    - Laugh until I cry
    - Get a tattoo
    - Help a complete stranger
  
- Before Morgan Freeman's character dies he writes JN a letter
  - In the letter he writes
    - *"there's no way I can repay you for all you've done for me, so rather than try, I'm just going to ask you to do something else for me – find the joy in your life"*
  - The whole story is about them finding joy in life
  
- The implication is ... to find true joy ... you need to
  - Go and do all these things

- Try all those things you wanted to do in life
- Set some goals and go and fulfill them
  - ... then you'll find true joy
- There's nothing wrong with having a bucket list or setting yourself goals for life
- The secret to living a goal driven life is ...
  - Not to have endless amounts of money that you can do everything on your bucket list
  - It's not setting SMART goals that you can achieve in life that help you move forward and grow etc
- The secret is having the right goal
  
- The problem with having a goal driven life that's not centered on Jesus means ultimately you're going to be left disappointed
  - Either you don't achieve your goal; or
  - You do ... and then you're left wondering ... "What next"
  - Either way your left disappointed
  
- How many goals do we have in life that we don't achieve?
  - When I was younger I wanted to run my own business > big man's clothing store > all planned > Stretch Clothing
  - I wanted to play rugby for Australia
  - I wanted to travel to Canada
    - So many goals in life we just never achieve
  
- But even if you do ...
  - Get that promotion you were aiming for
  - Retire early like you planned
  - Get married > pay off your mortgage ... whatever your goal in life is ...
    - Then what?

- **Illustration – Boris Becker [SLIDE]**
  - Youngest winner of Wimbledon > 17yrs age
  - 6 grand slam titles
  - 1991 became world #1
  - He worked all his life to be the best tennis player in the world
  - When he became No. 1 he said
    - *"Where do you go when you're the best in the world? What's next?"*

- The goal driven life needs to have the right goal
- And the apostle Paul says ...
  - This is THE prize
  - This is the ONE THING I Do
  - This is the ONE GOAL I pursue
    - Knowing Christ and having the sure hope of heaven

**[SLIDE OFF]**

- Because this is one goal that will never disappoint
  - It's a goal that is guaranteed
    - Not because you chase and pursue and work hard to get it
    - But Christ gives it to you the moment you repent and put your trust in him
- It's a goal that won't leave us disappointed when we get it because we're talking about heaven!
  - Knowing Jesus Christ > second person of the Trinity
  - Having life to the full and experiencing that for eternity
  - Being citizens of heaven > God's restored, perfect, renewed creation > forever
- You need to have the right goal
- The one goal we should be focusing one ... over and above all other goals in life ... is to know Christ and the sure hope of heaven

- And so once we have the right goal we need to strive towards it
- In 13 Paul says – “Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead”
  - When you have the right goal ...
    - You don’t look back on your past life
    - You don’t look back thinking
      - “I wish I was still back there”
      - “I’ll just go back there for a bit”
  - You look forward to the prize Christ has guaranteed you through the cross
    - You keep your eyes fixed on that one thing
    - You stay focused so you’re not distracted from the glorious goal of heaven
- **Illustration – John Landy [SLIDE]**
- John Landy was an Australian Olympic middle distance runner in 1950’s
  - Second man to break the four minute mile after Roger Bannister in a world record time
  - 1954 Commonwealth Games Landy and Bannister were racing against each other in the final
  - The meeting of the world’s fastest milers was called the ‘Miracle Mile’ and the “Race of the Century”
  - In the last lap, Landy was leading Bannister
  - As they came into the final turn, just before the finishing straight ... Bannister was easing up behind Landy
  - But Landy couldn’t hear his footsteps because of the screaming crowd
  - Then he made a fatal mistake ... he looked over his left shoulder to see where Bannister was
  - In that moment, Bannister accelerated past Landy on the right and into the lead

- That brief lapse of concentration meant Bannister was able to gain the few metres he needed to go on and win the race
- Sadly, John Landy looked back when he needed to be straining ahead towards the prize / the final goal
- Conversely ... Bannister had his eyes fixed towards the prize
  - He pressed on > straining towards that which was in front of him
- When you've been grasped by Jesus ...
  - don't look back ...
  - keep pressing forward, keeping your eyes fixed on the goal ahead you have in Christ

**[SLIDE OFF]**

- So you see ... Paul tells us that the Christian is someone who's entire life singularly focused towards this goal
- You're not a Christian unless your entire life is revolutionised and facing in a different direction
- And Paul knew it ... he'd experienced it
  - His entire life changed
  - Because he'd been grasped
  - Because he'd been saved by grace
- You know ...
  - As a Pharisee Paul would've said
    - "God takes hold of me because I take hold of him"
  - As a Christian he says
    - "I take hold of God because he takes hold of me"
- Now EVERYTHING is different
  - Everything is aimed at a single goal in life
- Gospel changes everything > every part of our life is to be lived in response to what we've already attained
  - Your attitude towards

- Other races
- Your parents
- Parenting
- Business
- Understanding of sex
- View of your material possessions
- Of money
- Everything is changed ...
  
- Some ppl will say ...
  - “Oh I know plenty of people who say they’re Christian ... but they’re not living like this”
  - “They don’t have this zeal > they don’t have this focus”
  - That’s because they letting other things cloud the true prize > the ONE goal
  
- Friends ...
  - Don’t let the failings of other Christians cloud your understanding and appreciation of the prize that is on offer when you come to Jesus
  - Don’t let the imperfect follower of Jesus cause you to think that Jesus is not perfect
  
- Christian friend
  - While you can take absolute comfort and assurance from the fact that in Christ the prize is guaranteed
  - You mustn’t let that amazing assurance of your salvation be an excuse for sitting back and settling for a comfortable Christian life
  - If you’ve understood at all what it means to know Jesus, then it must motivate you to keep pressing forward, striving for the goal
  - As Paul says in v16 ... “to live up to what you have ALREADY attained!”

#### 4. Conclusion

- What's your big goal in life friends?
  - Do you have a bucket list you're trying to work your way through before you die?
  
- Do you have the
  - The goal that ought to be top of every person's bucket list
  - The one goal that will guarantee you life after you die?
  - Are you making that the one thing you are grasping for?
- If not ... turn to Jesus
  - Allow him to grasp hold of you
  
- Has Jesus already taken hold of you?
  - Then take hold him
  - Press on > pursue him > strive & strain towards the prize you have in him
  - And live up to what you have already attained

#### PRAY