**Keep Pressin**

Intro: Express how the topic of endurance came up again for this week’s message. **This is encouragement for today and preparation for tomorrow.**

**Because as the world gets darker, the church will get Brighter and Brighter...**

**(Isa. 60:2)**

Main Text: *Philippians 3:12-14 NLT*

*I don’t mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me. [13] No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, [14] I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.*

The goal of the message is to identify keys to help us to live a life of endurance, filled with contentment and peace in spite of what is going on with us or around us.

**Key Number One: Forgetting Past Failures**

Expound on the dangers of focusing on our past.

Illustrations:

Driving and consistently looking in the rear view mirror

A runner turns his head and keeps looking behind himself

**Holding on to condemnation from our past sin and failures is like holding on to weights that are dragging us down.**

*Hebrews 12:1 NLT*

*Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us.*

Just like it was custom for the ancient Greeks to strip off all their clothes to run their races because they wanted nothing to hinder them from reaching top speed, so should it be for us in our walk with Christ. Therefore, when it comes to past sin in our lives we are called to repent and release all shame and discouragement from past failures, so we can move forward to run our race at full speed and with endurance.

**Key Number Two: Focus Forward**

*Hebrews 12:1-2 NLT*

*Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up.* ***And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. [2] We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God’s throne.***

Illustrations:

Downhill runner (one cut, then hit the hole and get down field)

Specific Football Examples (1986 Giants Mark Bavaro drags Ronnie Lott ten yards down field & 2010 Seahawks Marshawn Lynch “Beast Mode” Beast Quake run for a touchdown in the playoffs)

When we make the determination to look forward, put ourselves in position to move toward our goal. By looking forward we keep the desired end in sight, which serves as a motivator to keep us going when there is a temptation to get weary.

*1 Corinthians 9:24-27 NLT*

*Don’t you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win! [25] All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize. [26] So I run with purpose in every step. I am not just shadowboxing. [27] I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified.*

Therefore if running backs, receivers, and tight ends can run with such intensity to score a touchdown, how much more motivation do we have to run our race with endurance for rewards that will last forever.

**Key Number Three: Remember We Are Already Victorious**

*1 John 5:4-5 AMP*

*For everyone born of God is victorious and overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has conquered and overcome the world—our [continuing, persistent] faith [in Jesus the Son of God]. [5] Who is the one who is victorious and overcomes the world? It is the one who believes and recognizes the fact that Jesus is the Son of God.*

The only way a fighter can lose a match that is fixed, is if he quits. The only way a runner can lose a race that is already been fixed, is if they don’t run. Therefore, the fight we have as believers is not a fight to obtain victory. But, our battle is to walk out and maintain the victory that has already been won. Therefore, when the fiery darts of discouragement come, hold up the shield of faith and swing the sword of the Spirit to exercise the victory that Christ has won for you.

Declarations of our promised victory in this life and life to come:

*Deuteronomy 28:1-8 NLT*

*“If you fully obey the LORD your God and carefully keep all his commands that I am giving you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the world. [2] You will experience all these blessings if you obey the LORD your God: [3] Your towns and your fields will be blessed. [4] Your children and your crops will be blessed. The offspring of your herds and flocks will be blessed. [5] Your fruit baskets and breadboards will be blessed. [6] Wherever you go and whatever you do, you will be blessed. [7] “The LORD will conquer your enemies when they attack you. They will attack you from one direction, but they will scatter from you in seven! [8] “The LORD will guarantee a blessing on everything you do and will fill your storehouses with grain. The LORD your God will bless you in the land he is giving you.*

(Expound on the reality that Jesus fulfilled the Laws requirements, therefore we are beneficiaries of God’s great and precious promises)

*Matthew 28:18-20 NLT*

*Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. [19] Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. [20] Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”*

**In Christ we have been given His Protection, Provision, Purpose, and Presence. Understanding this reality along with Forgetting our Past Failures, Focusing Forward, and Remembering We Are Already Victorious will provide us with the ability to Keep Pressin.**