

I. Introduction

- A. Inside of you, right now, there are three different versions of you living at the same time.
 1. There is your Present Self—that's you, in this moment, listening, thinking, feeling.
 2. There is your Past Self—the person you used to be, made of memories, experiences, and a specific story about your life.
 3. And then, there is your Future Self.
- B. Your Future Self is the person God is calling you to become. This is the you with your full potential unlocked.
 1. This is your truest, deepest identity unleashed, realized, actualized.
 2. This is the courageous you, the at-peace you, the vibrant and free you.
 3. This is the you that has a deep, unshakable confidence not in your own abilities, but in God's grace. This is the masterpiece God has destined you to be.
- C. Our Bible passage for today says this:
 1. *"Brothers and sisters, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."* (Philippians 3:13-14)
- D. These words were written by a man named Paul. A thinker. A scholar. A philosopher.
- E. For Paul, his vision of his Future Self was incredible.
 1. He calls it his prize.
 2. He says it is the highest possible calling on his life.
- F. This was his truest self, fully actualized, fully unleashed, glorious and free.
- G. But how to get there? How do you get to the fullest possible realization of the massive potential that is sitting inside you right now as your future self?
- H. That is the mental roadmap we have here.
 1. **You have to conclude a certain reality about your Present Self.**
 2. **You have to accept a certain power over your Past Self.**
 3. **You have to strive a certain way toward your Future Self.**
- I. We're not going to be able to talk about all three of these principles today... because I really want to go deep. I'm going to focus on the just the second one.

II. Series

- A. What we're doing today is opening the Bible. Because that's where God speaks to us.
- B. Specifically we're looking at a section called Philippians. We're really digging deep to see what God wants us to see here.
- C. My talk today is part 13 in the series. The series is called **Quit Telling Yourself I Can't**.
 1. Because the key verse in Philippians says, "I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength" (Phil 4:13).
- D. My talk today is called **Quit Being Haunted by Your Past Self's Story**.
- E. Because if you truly want to unleash your future self; if you truly want get to the fullest possible realization of the massive potential that is sitting inside you right now...
 1. You have to accept a certain power over your Past Self...
 - a) So I'll talk about who, what, and how.
 - (1) Who your past self is.
 - (2) What power you have over your past self.
 - (3) Exactly how you can use that power

III. Who, What, and How

A. Who is your Past Self?

1. Your past self is your history. It's where you store everything that's happened to you and everything that you've done.
2. **Your Past Self is your history, your psychology, and your approach to life all rolled into one.**
 - a) This is where you learned your lessons.
 - b) This is where you store your memories.
 - c) This is where you remember your victories.
 - d) This is where you keep your traumas, losses, and abuse.
 - e) This is where you became you... the you that you are today.
 - (1) Your past self is constantly talking to your present self.
 - (2) This is actually the most important thing to understand about your Past Self.
3. **Your Past Self is the bodyguard of your comfortable, familiar way of life.**
 - a) Think about it. Your Past Self is the one who learned all the lessons. It learned what causes pain and what brings comfort. It learned what leads to rejection and what leads to acceptance.
 - b) And based on all that data, it built a fortress around you. That fortress is your comfort zone. It's a system made up of your habits, your routines, your familiar ways of thinking, and your core beliefs about yourself and the world. The entire system is designed to produce one result: predictability. Because to your Past Self, predictable means safe.
4. Safe is good for a while. But safe will mess you up long term.
 - a) Because for your Future Self to really live, your Past Self has to let go.
5. And the bodyguard will do anything to stop that from happening.
 - a) It will activate your anxiety system.
 - b) It will power up your addiction system.
 - c) It will trip you up.

- d) It will hypnotize you to sleep.
 - e) It will label you.
 - f) It will panic you.
 - g) It will distract you.
 - h) It will remind you how good you have it, so why rock the boat?
 - i) It will make you eat junk, drink yourself to oblivion, numb yourself with drugs or porn, anything other than to feel the fear of taking the risks to become the person you dream you could be.
6. Who is your past self?
- a) **Your Past Self is the Inner Nanny calling the shots in your life to preserve you, protect you, and soothe you.**
 - b) But it will not let you be fully you, and that is the problem.

B. What power do you have over your past self?

1. We've already read verses 13-14, but I need to back up. Because in verses 3-7 Paul puts on a clinic showing you the power you have over your past self:
 - a) *"For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ."* (Philippians 3:3-7)
2. This is Paul going through his Past Self's identity and his past self's pedigree.
3. This is the spiritual equivalent of a man who went to an Ivy League School, became a Navy SEAL, and started a billion-dollar company. The best of the best.
4. He lists all this stuff—his identity and pedigree and superiority of his past self—and then he says, **"those things that were gain to me, I have counted loss for Christ."**
5. Then, in the next verse he says...
 - a) *"Yet indeed I also count all things loss..."* (Philippians 3:8)
6. It's not just the gain, it's not just the good stuff... it's everything. Good stuff, bad stuff, shameful stuff, all the stuff.
 - a) I count all things as loss.
7. This is a clinic to show you the power you have over your Past Self. There's a huge secret here hiding in plain sight.
8. So what power do you have over your past self?
 - a) It is the single most important power you possess for your own growth.
 - b) **You possess the power to take dominion over the story you tell yourself about your past.**
9. Let me explain. Most of people live their lives based on a faulty assumption.
10. You assume that your Past Self gets to be the official interpreter of your Past Self.
 - a) You assume that because your past is fixed and unchangeable your interpretation of your past is fixed and unchangeable too.
 - b) So you never give it a second thought. This is what happened to me, this is what it did to me, this is how it messed me up, and this is *what* I'll always be. This is *who* I'll always be.
11. And what is the result of this? You get stuck.
 - a) You get a life of sameness, of minor improvements here and there, but you never experience a profound upgrade in your existence.
12. Why? Because the bodyguard of your Past Self will never, ever write a new script. Its only job is to preserve the sameness of the life you've adapted to today, even if it's just okay, or even if it's boring, or meaningless, or even if it's really bad, but you know it could be worse, so let's not rock the boat.
 - a) Paul is showing, and I am preaching, to get you to reconsider the story you tell yourself about your past so that you can change your present and turbocharge your future.
13. Look at Paul. He was successful, respected, and secure in his identity. He could have lived out his days as the celebrated champion of his old story.
14. But Paul puts on a clinic to show you there is another way.
15. He uses the superpower crammed into that one word: "counted."
16. In the original language, that word is *hēgeomai*. It literally means "to lead." And when it's used in a cognitive, psychological sense, it means to lead your mind, your will, and your emotions to a specific conclusion.
 - a) It is not a passive thought.
- (1) **Counted = leadership over your own inner world.**
17. If you don't take leadership over your inner world, your past self will.
 - a) You will let the memories, the wounds, the successes, and the failures dictate your thinking and your feelings. Your Past Self is in the driver's seat.
 - b) And your Past Self keeps you in the right lane, chugging down the highway at 40 mph while your future self is in the back seat begging you to hit the gas.
18. Paul shows that you have the authority to lead your mind to a new interpretation of your past.
19. He looks at the raw data of his life—the heritage, the education, the performance, the persecution—and he doesn't let his Past Self narrate the story. He exercises his dominion and leads his own mind to a new verdict. He says,
 - a) "That story of success? The one that told me I had already peaked? The one that made me a proud, violent defender of a system? I now lead my mind to the conclusion that this story is a liability. It is loss. It is garbage."

20. This is the power you have. You can stop letting your past interpret your past.
 - a) When bad stuff happened to you in your past, you locked in an interpretation of it on that day.
 - b) But what if you were a child on that day? What if you weren't mature enough to interpret it well? What if somebody lied to you on that day, but you didn't know it then? What if your replays of that event conjure up the interpretations and emotions of a vulnerable, weak, basically clueless, impressionable kid who was powerless on that day?
 - c) Well, then that is the story you will tell yourself again and again and again and again till you're nearing retirement and your life is sadly stuck in a broken past, like a junker of a car running down the road for decades that nobody has ever taken time to fix.
21. I'm telling you that you can dethrone that old voice. You can, right now, in an act of your will, unplug your future from your past.
 - a) **You possess the God-given power to liberate your Future Self from the tyranny of your Past Self.**
22. **How?**
 - a) **Take dominion over the story you tell yourself about your Past Self.**
23. You can look at the story of your trauma and lead your mind to the conclusion that it doesn't define you, doesn't own you, doesn't limit you, and isn't permanent.
 - a) This is not about denying reality.
 - b) You do not have the power to change your history. Whatever happened happened. That day, that event, that season of life was real. You can't change it. You can't deny it.
 - c) Don't deny your losses, your traumas, your hurts. Don't minimize them. Don't make excuses for the people who hurt you or the people you hurt. Reality is reality.
24. You're reframing history in a larger frame than you could when you were a kid. In this frame, you're not alone. In this frame, you now have power and you have God.
25. It's about taking your rightful place as the leader of your own inner world and declaring how, starting today, everything that happened to your past self will be put in service of a future self that is glorious beyond words.
26. **Viktor Frankl**, a psychiatrist who survived the Nazi death camps, saw men stripped of everything—their homes, their families, their very names. He himself lost his father, his mother, his brother, and his wife. Yet he discovered the one thing the Nazis could not take: the power to choose what it all meant. He called this "the last of the human freedoms." Even when your history is written by your oppressors, Frankl realized, you retain the God-given dominion to write the script of your own soul.
27. He wrote:
 - a) "Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way." [Man's Search for Meaning, Viktor Frankl]
28. This is not just a declaration of defiance—it's a spiritual manifesto. The soul retains its sovereignty.
29. Joseph, after being beaten bloody by his own brothers, thrown in a pit to die, trafficked into slavery, falsely accused, and thrown in prison... Joseph reframed everything when he said:
 - a) *"But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive."* (Genesis 50:20)
30. It's never too late. It's never too soon. You're never too old. You're never too young.
31. Today is a very good day for this. I want to show you how this works.
 - a) Who is your past self?
 - (1) Your Past Self is the Nanny calling the shots in your life to preserve you, protect you, and soothe you.
 - (2) But it will not let you be fully you, and that is the problem.
 - (a) I'm going to give you a new definition in a minute...
 - b) What power do you have over your past self?
 - (1) You have the God-given power to liberate your Future Self from the tyranny of your Past Self.
 - (2) Take dominion over the story you tell yourself about your Past Self.
 - c) So, one more question: How?

C. How do you use this power?

1. How do you, in the real, messy, painful moments of your life, actually take dominion over the story you tell yourself about your past?
2. I want to show you. This is not a theory. This is a battle plan. This is how you fight.
3. You do it by taking the pen of faith, dipping it in the ink of God's grace, and you write a New Script. You declare war on the old narrative. You look the ghost of your Past Self in the eye and you tell it, "You don't get to be the narrator anymore."
4. Let me show you what this sounds like.
 - a) **Reframing Loss**
 - (1) **Old Script:** "What I lost is gone forever, and a part of me is gone with it. My life is now defined by that emptiness."
 - (2) **New Script:** "What was taken from me created a space that only God could fill. My loss became the hollow place where I discovered that Christ is my true portion and my ultimate gain."
 - (3) **Verse:** Psalm 73:26 – "My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever."
 - b) **Reframing Trauma**
 - (1) **Old Script:** "The trauma I experienced shattered my world and my sense of safety. I am forever living in its shadow, waiting for the next bad thing to happen."

- (2) New Script: "The event that shattered my world did not shatter my God. In the valley of the shadow of death, I learned I was not alone, and my scars are not a sign of brokenness, but a testament that I was wounded and yet I healed, held by a Shepherd who will never leave me."
- (3) Verse: Psalm 23:4 – "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me."

c) Reframing Addiction

- (1) Old Script: "I am an addict, and this is who I will always be. I am a slave to my cravings, and my life is defined by this constant, exhausting battle."
- (2) New Script: "My addiction was the brutal master that ruled my life, but its power was broken by a greater power. The battle for my sobriety is now the arena where I witness God's delivering grace daily, and my identity is no longer 'addict,' but a child of God who has been set free."
- (3) Verse: John 8:36 – "So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."

- 5. I worked on this for a while this week, and I've written up 35 situations where you can reframe your past and reclaim your dominion over the story you tell yourself about your Past Self. Would you like them?
 - a) Loss, abandonment, past glory days, abuse, disability or chronic illness, false accusation, unfair treatment, failure, betrayal, rejection, a "wasted" past, deep regret, trauma, a prodigal past, criminality, poverty, addiction, past hatred of God, sexual promiscuity, bitterness, being orphaned, isolation, attempted suicide, sexual abuse, a peak career achievement, a past spiritual high, adultery, occult or satanic involvement, depression, mental illness, being born wealthy, self-hatred, letting your team down, epic failure, and wanting to be someone you're not.
- 6. Because every new script you write is anchored to the single greatest act of reframing in the history of the universe: the Cross of Jesus Christ.
- 7. **At the cross, God took the ultimate Old Script of human history—a story of sin, failure, shame, and death—and He rewrote it. He took the violence of man, the betrayal of friends, the injustice of the state, and the agony of the Son, and He reframed it into a New Script of forgiveness, redemption, transformation, grace, and eternal life.**
- 8. When you make these declarations, you are declaring what is true based on the finished work of Christ, even when your emotions scream the opposite.
- 9. This is the hard courageous work of mental health that happens one declaration at a time.

IV. Conclusion

- A. I said I was going to give you a new definition of your Past Self... no longer a nanny... but this:
 - 1. So you listen to me, Devil. You listen, World. You listen, all you abusers and accusers of the ghost of who I used to be. You want to know who I am now?
 - 2. You thought the ABUSE would shatter me, but it only shattered my illusions and drove me into the arms of a God who will never let me go.
 - 3. You thought the FAILURE would be my final name, but it only became the brutal, holy ground where I died to my own strength and was resurrected in His.
 - 4. You thought the SHAME would silence me, but it only taught me how to sing the song of the redeemed at the top of my lungs.
 - 5. You thought the ADDICTION had me in chains forever, but you made a fatal miscalculation. You forgot that my God is a blacksmith. Those chains you thought would bind me? They have been melted down in the fires of His grace and forged into the very key I will use to unlock other cages.
 - 6. So you look at me. You look at this history you tried to write. I am not your victim. I am not your pet. I am the battleground where God Almighty won the war. My scars are not my weakness; they are the roadmap of His mercy. My past is not a monument to your power; it is the undeniable proof of His.
 - 7. I am His living, breathing, walking, talking miracle of defiant, triumphant grace. And I am coming to take everything you thought you stole... and with all that, I'm taking back my whole generation for Christ and the Gospel.

V. Prayer

- A. Father, Victor, King! I come before you not in weakness, but in the thunder of the victory You have already won! You are the God who shatters chains and rewrites stories.
- B. And I thank you for the truth we have heard today. I thank you that our past is not a prison, but a launchpad. I thank you that the blood of Jesus is more powerful than the ink of our history.
- C. And so right now, with every head bowed but with every spirit rising, I want to lead everyone here in a declaration of freedom. This is the moment you take dominion. This is the moment you serve notice on the ghost of your past.
- D. Let's make this the war cry to your King:
 - 1. Father, by the authority of Jesus Christ, I take dominion over the story of my past.
 - 2. I am not my failure. I am not my success. I am not what was done to me. I am a new creation.
 - 3. I declare that my past will no longer be the anchor that holds me back. It will now be the testimony that propels me forward.
 - 4. I am not a victim. I am not a prisoner. I am a child of the living God, and I am free.
- E. And so I pray, Father, UNLEASH YOUR PEOPLE! Send us out of this room not only as survivors, but as warriors. Not as curators of a dead past, but as architects of a glorious future. Fill us with your Holy Spirit to live this truth out loud, to walk in this dominion, to be the living, breathing, walking, talking proof that you can take any story and redeem it for your glory.
- F. We pray in the name of the Crucified and Risen One, Jesus,
- G. And all of God's empowered people said...
- H. AMEN!