

I. Introduction

- A. Imagine you are on the deck of a ship in the North Atlantic. The sky is a bruised, angry gray. The wind whips across your face, stinging your skin with salt and ice. The sea is a churning chaos of massive, rolling waves, and you are holding on just to stay upright.
- B. And then you see it. A flash of color in the churning gray below. A head bobbing in the water. A person, fighting for their life, about to be swallowed by the storm.
- C. Every rational thought in your head sounds the alarm: 'Don't do it. It's a death sentence.' Voices from your past shout their warnings. A lifetime of experience tells you it's too dangerous. The water is freezing. The waves are relentless.
- D. But there's another voice inside you. A gut-level call you can't ignore. *This person needs rescue. No one else can do it. Only you.*
- E. So you jump.
- F. The shock takes your breath away. The frigid water hammers your chest. Your head goes numb. You fight to stay afloat. Every muscle strains as you battle your way toward your target.
- G. Your limbs grow heavy. Your lungs burn. Your only focus is that desperate figure ahead, sinking and rising, sinking and rising. *No one else can do it. Only you.*
- H. After an eternity, you're there. You grab a collar, anything. You pull their head above the crushing waves. The person is gasping, sputtering, unable to speak. Weak, yes, but alive ONLY because you refused to stay safe.
- I. And in that moment, you see a face. And another level of shock takes hold.
- J. Because you know that face. It's older than you remember, etched with the lines of struggle you haven't seen, but it is unmistakable. Swallowed by howling winds and raging seas, you know.
- K. That tragic soul is you.
- L. That eternal soul trapped in a situation it did not want is you. But it's an older you. It's future you. That person in the icy waters is your Future Self. It is the person God calls you to be... it is the collection of your potentials, your possibilities, your gigantic destiny just waiting to be actualized... your Future Self is out there, right now, drowning in the raging seas of unexplored potential and unopened blessings from God and the unresisted pull of your risk-averse past self.
- M. A voice inside you accuses: *you put them here.* But a greater voice rises above... and you can take them out of here. Because the only person who can rescue you tomorrow is you today.

II. Series Introduction

- A. My talk today is part of a series. The series is called: **Quit Telling Yourself I Can't.**
- B. What we're doing is taking one of the sections of the Bible, a little book called Philippians, and going through it one section at a time. Because this is how God talks to us today.

III. Scripture

- A. *"Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do [Present Self], forgetting those things which are behind [Past Self] 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 [Future Self]."* (Philippians 3:12-14)
- B. 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, a person made of memories, experiences, and a specific story about your life. Your Past Self is your main bodyguard. It craves predictability. It guards your comfort zone. More than anything else, your past self wants a safe, familiar, comfortable way of life.
 - a) Which is awesome when you are in danger and fighting to survive.
 - b) But when you are an adult, your past self becomes the Nanny from hell who never lets you go.
 3. And then, there is your Future Self. That is the person God is calling you to become. This is the you with your full potential unlocked. This is your truest, deepest identity unleashed, realized, actualized.
- C. My talk today is part 14 in the series, and my talk today is called:
 1. **Quit Being Okay with Your Mediocre, Spiritually Average Present Tense Self**
- D. Because your Future Self is drowning and is waiting for you to jump.
- E. So how do you rescue Future You? You don't do it by accident. You do it by living by a code.
- F. Today, Paul is showing us The Champion's Code. It's a set of non-negotiable realities for your Present Self, and it's built on Three Pillars.

IV. The Champion's Code - Three Pillars

- A. **Pillar #1 - CLEAR VISION: The single most powerful force in your life is a vivid, God-defined vision of your Future Self.**
 1. If you're in a race, you have to know where the finish line is. You have to know where you're going.
 2. The Apostle Paul understood this. He wasn't just running aimlessly. He says in verse 14, "I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God."
 3. He had his eyes locked on a goal, and the goal was a prize. And the prize was the upward call of God.
 4. What does that mean?
 5. It means the powers of your future self in heaven brought down to earth into your present self today.
 6. Actually, it means more than that.
 - a) It means you are a transcendent being, more than flesh and blood and bones. More than matter and energy. You have a supernatural core. God implanted eternity in your heart. You're not made just for earth, but for heaven.
 - b) Your calling is upward. It is above and beyond. It is eternal. It is vast. It is beautiful, powerful, radiant, glorious, beyond comprehension, dazzling even to angels.

7. "Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me." (Philippians 3:12)
 - a) Let's break this down. He wants to lay hold of something. He wants a present possession of something. What is that something?
 - b) He says it is "that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me."
 - c) Translation: go out and lay hold of everything Jesus had in mind for your life on the day that he saved you.
8. What are those things?
 - a) **IDENTITY: everything the Bible says that describes who you are.**
 - b) **RICHES: all the blessings and provision God has promised to give you because you are his child.**
 - c) **PRIVILEGES: the rights and honors that you possess as a citizen of heaven and royal child of God.**
 - d) **POWERS: supernatural abilities and powers you never had before you were saved... prayer, access to God, blessing, etc.**
 - e) **STATUS: your exalted rank in the pecking order of heaven, something that will enthrone you forever and ever.**
 - f) **PROMISES: a Venmo account with everything you need for every circumstance of life, pre-deposited and waiting for you to turn to God and spend it.**
 - (1) "And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:19)
9. **When you add up your identity, plus riches, plus privileges, plus powers, plus status, plus promises, you wind up with the profile of a person who is glorious, triumphant, and free.**
 - a) There is a word in the Bible for the sum of all these riches in Christ. I'll come back to this at the end.
10. And I am telling you that is the person Jesus had in mind for you on the day that you got saved.
11. And I am also telling you that THIS is your high calling of God on your life. This is what Paul is pursuing. This is what he's going after.
 - a) This defines him... no matter what anybody says.
 - b) This guides him... no matter who tries to push him off course.
 - c) This exalts him... there is no view of self-actualization, no view of psychological health, no teaching or philosophy of humanism or human flourishing that begins to come close to the exalted status of a Christian pursuing a FUTURE SELF as profiled in the written Word of God and integrated into your soul by the Holy Spirit.
12. Which person is your present self facing, your PAST SELF... or THIS FUTURE SELF? Who's calling the shots? Who's running your life? Who's setting your goals?
13. When you reach for the stars, God has ordained that the stars reach down to you. That's what I'm saying.
 - a) In your mind, your God is too small, your salvation is too boring, your dreams are too wimpy, your goals are timid, and your prayers are too average... because your past self has you on a leash.
 - b) How about today is the day you get set free?
14. So how? How do you make sure that this glorious Future Self is the one calling the shots, and not the Nanny from hell who wants to keep you safe and small?
- B. Pillar #2 - Warrior Focus: The central focus rising above everything else is your Present Self sending blessings to your Future Self starting today.**
 1. Paul gives you the two-part battle plan for this focus in a single, breathtaking verse. He says:
 - a) "...but one thing I do: forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead..." (Philippians 3:13)
 2. He says, "this one thing I do..." Most of us say, these thousand things I dabble in.
 - a) Paul says, this one thing I do.
 - b) He's talking about his Present Self sending blessings to his Future Self.
 - (1) **Emotionally... you heal your psychology tomorrow by getting into rehab, recovery, and deliverance today.**
 - (2) **Financially... you enrich yourself tomorrow by savings and tithing today.**
 - (3) **Spiritually... you pack spiritual muscle on yourself tomorrow by Bible study, prayer, fellowship (community), service, and giving today.**
 - (4) **Relationally... you send love and support into the future by investing in friendships and dating and marriage and family and relationships today.**
 - (5) **Culturally... you change the world tomorrow for yourself and your kids by connecting to your family of faith today... the church on fire for the Gospel is the hope of the world.**
 - (6) **Militantly... you push back the powers of darkness in your life tomorrow by renouncing them today and wearing your armor daily.**
 - c) What is the one thing? Focus. Focus on your future self. Magnify your future self. Understand the powers of your future self. Live for your future self.
 - d) For most people listening to me today your future self is drowning in an angry sea because your focus is too tied to your past self.
 3. That is the secret. That is the focus. He plays defense, and he plays offense:
 4. **DEFENSE: "Forgetting what is behind."**
 - a) When you hear the word "forget," especially in the context of a warrior, your first instinct is to think of a violent act of will. You think of shutting a door, locking it, and throwing away the key.
 - b) You think of fighting your past, shouting it down, and trying to bury it. But you have tried that, and you know it doesn't work.

- c) Fighting an agitated past only makes it more agitated. It's like giving a bath to a cat; you only get exhausted and nobody wins.
- d) This is the paradox of the spiritual warrior. The way you truly conquer your past is not by fighting it, but by making peace with it.
 - (1) The only way to silence the Nanny from hell is to heal the wounds that make her scream.
- e) You, your Present Self, must turn around and face the person you used to be.
 - (1) You must bring the grace of the cross to its failures.
 - (2) You must apply the forgiveness you have received from God to the person in your nasty history.
 - (3) You must thank it for the lessons it taught you, even the painful ones, and bring the profound, unconditional love of your Father to its deepest scars.
 - (4) Only then, when your past is beginning to heal, can it be at rest.
 - (5) Only then can you sever the anchor chain and have it stick.
 - (a) Peace is the only thing that makes forgetting possible.
- f) That's the defensive move.
- 5. But you can't just play defense. You have to go **on offense**. That's **"Reaching forward to what is ahead."**
 - a) The Greek word here is the picture of a runner at full stretch, every muscle straining, every fiber of their being reaching for the finish line. It is not a casual stroll. It is a determined, willful, chosen, focused, forward lean into your destiny.
 - b) This is the action of the rescue. This is you in the water, ignoring the sting of the cold, ignoring the size of the waves, and straining with every ounce of your being toward that drowning figure—your Future Self.
 - c) This is the "one thing" Paul is talking about. It is the singular, all-consuming focus of a champion.
 - d) That is Warrior Focus. And it is the only way to make your Clear Vision a reality.
- C. **Pillar #3 - Relentless Pursuit: Your Future Self requires a relentless pursuit of the riches of grace by means of grace for a lifetime.**
 - 1. You have a vision. You have a focus. But now you must act. You must move. You must hunt down your destiny.
 - 2. Twice in this passage, Paul uses the single most intense verb he can find. He says, **"I press on... I press on toward the goal."**
 - a) The Greek word is diōkō.
 - 3. This is not the word for a casual stroll.
 - a) It is the word a hunter uses for his prey.
 - b) It means to chase, to pursue with extreme intensity, to run after with everything you have.
 - c) It is the picture of a lioness hunting down a gazelle.
 - d) It is relentless, single-minded, and it does not stop until it has laid hold of its prize.
 - 4. BUT if that's all this was—a call to just try harder, to grit your teeth and swim against the current with all your might—Christianity would be the most exhausting, crushing religion on the planet.
 - a) It would be a gospel of burnout.
 - b) Because you know, and I know, that your own strength is not enough. You know what it feels like to be tired. You know what it feels like to fail. You know that the waves crashing down on you are bigger than you are.
 - 5. So where does this relentless, supernatural, inexhaustible fire come from?
 - 6. Paul gives you the secret. He hides the source of the explosion in the second half of the verse. And it will change everything for you. He says:
 - a) **"...I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me."**
 - 7. Do you see it? Do you see the scandal of the gospel in that one little phrase?
 - 8. There you see your future self, struggling in the icy seas. There you see that person overwhelmed and getting sunk. You're about to go in to save them.
 - 9. But please don't miss what this Scripture is saying...
 - a) **Somebody Else jumped into the water long before you ever gave it a thought.**
 - 10. Before you ever stood on the deck of that ship, before you ever saw your Future Self drowning, someone else was already neck deep in the icy seas. Someone else was already swimming for you.
 - 11. When you were the one drowning—drowning in your sin, drowning in your shame, drowning in the demonic gravity of your Past Self—Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, left the safety and the glory of heaven's deck, and He jumped into the icy, chaotic, hellish waters of this world to rescue you.
 - a) He is the one who pressed on.
 - b) He is the one who had a Warrior Focus, setting His face like flint toward the cross.
 - c) He is the one who had a Clear Vision of all that you could be by the power of His grace.
 - d) And on that cross, when He was being crushed by the waves of all of humanity's sin, He reached out His nail-scarred hand, and He laid hold of you.
 - e) And He has never let you go.
 - 12. You are not the hero of this story. You are the one who was saved by the hero.
 - a) Your pursuit is the echo of His pursuit of you.
 - b) Your love for your future is the shadow of His love for you.
 - c) Your reaching is the grateful, explosive, unstoppable reaction to the fact that you have already been reached.
 - 13. This is the fire! This is the fuel! You're not the only one sending blessings into your future. Your Savior is, and he loves you more than you know with a boundless, unending, relentless love that will never, ever let you go

V. Conclusion

- A. So what now?
- B. Fast forward. The storm is over.
- C. Imagine it. The sky is not bruised; it is brilliant. The sea is not chaos; it is glass. And you are standing on a shore, the warm sun on your face.
- D. And you are not alone. There is someone standing next to you.
 1. They are strong. They are radiant. There is a peace about them that is unshakable and a joy that is undeniable. They are living a life that is richly blessed, highly favored, deeply loved, abundant, full, and free.
- E. And you know that face.
- F. It is your Future Self. Rescued. Realized. Actualized. Glorious and free.
- G. Your Future Self turns to you—the you sitting in this seat right now, the you who is tired and tempted to settle, the you who is afraid to take the risk. You see a look in their eyes of profound, unending gratitude.
- H. Your future self is speaking to you:
 1. Thank you.
 2. Thank you for the day you decided I was worth the fight.
 3. Thank you for the day you admitted you couldn't handle life alone.
 4. Thank you for darkening the doors of a church.
 5. Thank you for praying a prayer of salvation... and for accepting Jesus and his everlasting life.
 6. Thank you for having the courage to face the past... for bringing it peace so it would finally let us go.
 7. Thank you for walking into that room you were terrified of.
 8. Thank you for having the conversation you'd been dreading.
 - a) For sending the application.
 - b) For asking for the date.
 - c) For finishing the education and training.
 - d) For getting into counseling.
 - e) For tying the knot.
 - f) For the countless sacrifices of raising a family and making a home.
 - g) For getting sober.
 - h) For starting the business.
 - i) For praying the prayers.
 - j) For giving your life for something that matters.
 - k) For wanting everyone you know to find the treasure you found when you found Christ.
 9. Thank you for the day you got angry at 'good enough' and declared war on average.
 10. Thank you for all the times you wanted to quit but kept kicking anyway.
 11. Thank you for the day you heard the upward call of God in Christ Jesus... and caught a vision of the person I could be today... and you unshackled me, and here I stand. Whole and free. Thank you.
- I. One last thing...
 1. **I said when you add up your identity, plus riches, plus privileges, plus powers, plus status, plus promises, you wind up with the profile of a person who is glorious, triumphant, and free... and that there is a word for all of that added together in the Bible.**
 2. That word is "righteousness." And right here, in verse 9, Paul says he relentlessly orients his present self toward his future self so that...
 - a) *"I may be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith."* (Philippians 3:9)
 3. This is how I am found, known, and seen. And everybody knows it.
 4. Is this the future self you want? Is this the person you want to be?
 5. May I pray this for you? Will you receive that?

VI. Prayer

- A. Heavenly Father,
- B. In this moment, the air in this room is thick with destiny. We can feel the battle between the past and the future raging in our own hearts.
- C. And so, right now, in the mighty name of Jesus, we declare war.
 1. We declare war on the tyranny of the past. We command that spirit of mediocrity and complacency to be broken off the lives of your people. We silence the voice of that inner nanny that has kept your sons and daughters safe, small, and shackled.
- D. I declare over every person in this room:
 1. You are not a victim; you are more than a conqueror! You are not a mistake; you are God's masterpiece! You are not weak; you have resurrection power living inside of you! You are not average; you have an upward call to glory!
- E. And so now, Lord, I pray for courage. Let the sound of their Future Self crying out for rescue be louder than the voice of their fear.
- F. Let them leave this place not as they came—not as survivors, not as settlers—but as rescuers. As champions. On fire.
- G. In the strong, victorious, and glorious name of Jesus Christ, we pray.
- H. Amen.