

I. Introduction

- A. *"I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind."* (Philippians 3:14-16)
- B. For decades, the four-minute mile was the Mt. Everest of track and field.
- C. It was considered a hard-and-fast human limitation, backed by science. **But a young medical student named Roger Bannister believed the barrier was mental, not physical.**
 - 1. On May 6, 1954, on a wet, windy track in Oxford, he did the impossible. He broke the tape at 3 minutes, 59.4 seconds.
 - 2. But here's the most incredible part of the story: 46 days after Bannister broke the "impossible" barrier, another runner, John Landy, did it too.
 - 3. And in the years since, over 1,400 runners have conquered a feat that was once considered a physical impossibility.
- D. What changed?
 - 1. The barrier had to be broken in the mind before it could ever be broken in the real world.
- E. For too long, the Church has been living under the shadow of a spiritual four-minute mile. Christians have accepted a set of "realistic" limitations on what a Christian life is supposed to look like.
 - 1. We've been told that radical joy, world-changing impact, and a deep, personal adventure with God are for the spiritual superheroes, not for normal Christians. For super-saints, not for the rest of us messed-up believers.
 - 2. The barrier is spiritual: only really moral, decent, put-together Christians can reach the pinnacle of faith.
 - 3. The barrier is emotional: I'm too broken, too flawed, too damaged to ever make a difference for God.
 - 4. The barrier is psychological: if you knew my past, if you knew my family of origin, you would know why God could never use a person like me.
- F. Then comes this man named Paul, a leader of the first generation of Christians, telling the world he is pressing toward the mark for the prize of the upward call of God.
 - 1. He had a past. He had to deal with guilt and shame. He wrestled with moral issues. And here he is, talking about a race, and the irony is that as he writes he is a prisoner of Rome and chained to a Roman guard.
 - 2. So what? Paul's bold stance is a declaration that the barrier is a myth. It is a call to be a Roger Bannister—to have a faith so audacious that when you break through, you make it possible for everyone around you to break through, too.

II. Series Intro

- A. We've been studying a book in the Bible called Philippians. We've been going verse by verse. The name of this series is:
 - 1. **Quit Telling Yourself I Can't**
- B. My talk today is number 16 in the series. We're here in Philippians 3:14-16. And my talk today is called...
 - 1. **Quit Having Low Expectations of Yourself and Your God**
- C. Today, I want to pull together a lot of the threads I've been teaching throughout this series. We've covered a lot of ground, and to pull together a lot of the themes I want to talk about High Expectation Goals.
- D. So, let's get going with...

III. Ten Truths About Having High Expectation Goals With God.

- A. **The PRIZE is the maximum actualization of your massive potential as a child of God! The PRIZE is your Future Self, fully and gloriously alive.**
 - 1. When Paul talks about pressing toward the prize, he's not talking about "heaven." And that's a glorious destination, but that's not the prize he's talking about.
 - 2. The prize is not just where you're going; it's who you become along the way.
 - 3. Paul gives you the secret in verse 12. He says he presses on to "lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me." I want you to burn that phrase into your mind. This isn't about a goal you set for yourself. This is about you grabbing hold of the very thing Christ had in mind for you on the day He grabbed hold of you.
 - 4. Inside of you, right now, live three different versions of you. There is your Present Self—that's you, in this moment. There is your Past Self—a person made of memories and experiences. And then, there is your Future Self.
 - 5. On the day Jesus saved you, He didn't just see a sinner who needed forgiveness. He saw a warrior who needed to be armed. He saw a masterpiece covered in mud. He saw your Future Self—a you that is courageous, vibrant, generous, and full of unshakeable peace. He saw your maximum potential, a person so full of His light that you could change the world around you.
 - a) THAT is the prize.
 - b) The prize is the explosive, beautiful, breathtaking moment when you finally become the person Christ knew you could be all along. The prize is the maximum actualization of your God-given potential. It is your Future Self, fully realized.
 - c) It's you, filling out the shirt-sleeves of Christ. It's the love of Christ overflowing in you. It's you feeling and knowing and believing that you are richly blessed, highly favored, and deeply loved.
 - 6. This is your first high-expectation goal: to stop settling for being a slightly better version of your old self and to start pressing into the masterpiece Christ destined you to be.
- B. **The WEAPON is you setting bold, audacious goals that feel impossible unless God gets involved.**

1. So how do you lay hold of this prize? You don't do it by playing defense. You go on offense. And your primary weapon is a God-sized goal.
 - a) I'm talking about a goal so big, so audacious, that it feels impossible. A goal that, if you were to say it out loud, would make the "realistic" people in your life nervous.
 - b) And I have to believe that a lot of people just heard a quiet whisper in their hearts: "Who are you to dream that big? That's arrogant. That's prideful. Humble people have small, quiet goals."
2. I know that voice, because I grew up with that voice in Church. Let me tell you what that voice is. It is the lie of a religious spirit that has confused a small life with a holy one. It is the deception the enemy uses to keep you in your cage, because he knows that a Christian who is truly alive to their potential is the most dangerous force on the planet.
3. It's the voice of legalism, which tells you that God only blesses the goals of perfect people. It's the fear that if you aim high and fail, you will have failed God. That is a lowly, suffocating thought about the God of grace who is not looking for your perfect performance, but for your audacious faith.
 - a) And if you're still not convinced, if you're still clinging to the false label of "I'm disqualified," then you need to look at the man writing these words. Paul is in prison. He's chained to a guard. His execution is a real possibility. Yet from that place of absolute limitation, he is still pressing, still aiming, still dreaming of regions beyond. If a prisoner on death row can set a world-changing goal, then your label of "too old," "too broken," or "too busy" has just been stripped of all its power.
 - b) It is never too late in the game for you to aim higher.
4. This is me inviting you to be unreasonable, be ridiculous, be irrational, and be wild for the sake of Christ and the gospel.
5. And the reason I can say that is because of the third truth about bold goals with God.

C. The ENABLEMENT is salvation, in which God gives you your dominion back.

1. You might hear "set bold goals" and think, "Who am I to do that? I'm not in control of my life. I'm just a product of my past, a victim of my circumstances."
2. Let me tell you what that feeling of powerlessness is. It is the ghost of your old life rattling its chains. It is the lie that you are a victim, and it slaps the false label of "Slave" on your soul. It is the fallen world's programming designed to keep you passive and resigned to a small story.
3. But I am here to tell you what happened at the moment of your salvation. God didn't just give you a pardon; He held a coronation.
 - a) He reached back to the Garden of Eden and restored the very thing Adam lost for you: Dominion. You were created in the image of God to be a king, a queen, a co-regent with Christ, to exercise agency and freedom in this world. Sin wrecked that. It put you in chains. But the cross shattered those chains, and the resurrection handed you the scepter back.
 - b) *"Those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ."* (Romans 5:17)
4. Do not let a religious spirit tell you that your own dreams are selfish. That is a legalistic lie that keeps you small. It's a lowly thought about a God who is an artist, not a taskmaster. He doesn't want robots; He wants sons and daughters who are alive with sanctified passion. Part of your restored dominion is you choosing your life, getting in touch with the desires of YOUR heart, and knowing what YOU want.
5. Jesus said, you shall ask what YOU DESIRE, and it shall be done for you. (John 15:7)
6. Pick up the scepter Christ handed you and start making some royal decrees over your life.

D. The MIRACLE is that God heals your mind, will, and emotions so your dreams can come to life.

1. For many people hearing my voice today, the reason you don't dream big is because you are living in a war zone. Your mind is a battlefield of anxiety, your heart is a tangle of past traumas, and your will is paralyzed by self-doubt. You can't even imagine a big future because you're just trying to survive today.
2. I want you to know that when it comes to Christianity, the basic foundation of everything is salvation. Salvation lays the groundwork for every good thing in your life. That's first, get saved.
3. But once you're saved, one of the next operations God does in your life is healing, and by healing I mean wholeness, and by wholeness, I mean mental health, emotional health, and psychological health. That has been a major theme through this whole series.
4. This is the battle between your Past Self and your Future Self, and your Present Self is the hero God has sent to the rescue.
 - a) Your Future Self is where your big, beautiful dreams are waiting to come to life.
 - b) But your Past Self is the bodyguard of your comfortable, familiar way of life.
 - c) Whatever wounds, whatever dysfunctions, whatever addictions, whatever malfunctions are happening in your life are happening because a little kid from your past saw those things as a SOLUTION to a threatening and frightening situation you were stuck dealing with.
5. I'm not judging you. That's not your fault. You can't help what happened to you. You had to cope. You had to survive.
6. But now, I want to invite you to move beyond those things. Why? Because your past self will smother your future self with a broken and dysfunctional love. It will activate your anxiety, power up your addictions, and trip you up with old habits—

anything to keep you "safe" inside the fortress and stop you from taking the risks needed to become the person you dream you could be.

7. And here's the big truth you need to lay hold of. God is utterly and completely committed to both your salvation and to your inner healing.
8. And the great mistake that Christians and churches make is to rush people from salvation to sanctification (Christian living) while forgetting that the first part of Christian living has to be emotional healing from the traumas, abuses, and losses of your past.
 - a) *"And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."* (Philippians 4:7)
 - (1) You can trade your shields for God's shields.
 - b) *"for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for [the] good pleasure."* (Philippians 2:13, literal)
 - (1) One of the most important healing works of God in your life is the restoration of your broken will.
9. God is making your heart a safe place again, a place where the desires and beautiful dreams growing in you can finally break through the soil, fully and freely, without being choked out by the smother love of your past self.

E. The SECRET of motivation is Progress Orientation over Perfection Orientation.

1. When you set a goal, there are two ways to measure your progress.
 - a) The first is to look forward at the GAP between you and your goal. This is called Perfection Orientation. Perfection Orientation is the enemy's favorite tool to crush your spirit. It is the voice of legalism that whispers, "You're not there yet. You're not good enough." It is guaranteed to deflate you.
 - b) But the second way is to look backward at how far God has brought you from your starting line. This is called Progress Orientation. And this isn't just a modern psychological trick; this is God's ancient secret for fueling the faith of His people.
2. There's a powerful example of this in the Old Testament. The people of Israel are terrified. The Philistine army, a war machine, is assembled to crush them (1 Samuel 7:7-14).
3. But the prophet Samuel cries out to God. And God answers not with a whisper, but with a ROAR. The Bible says God "thundered with a mighty sound" and threw the Philistine army into a panic. Israel wins a total, miraculous, impossible victory. (1 Samuel 7:10-11)
4. But what Samuel does next is the important lesson. He doesn't just move on to the next battle. He stops. He takes a massive stone, sets it up for everyone to see, and he gives it a name.
 - a) He names it Ebenezer.
 - (1) *"Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen, and called its name Ebenezer, saying, 'Thus far the LORD has helped us.'"* (1 Samuel 7:12)
 - b) Ebenezer is two Hebrew words stuck together. Ebenezer means "Stone of Help." It's a monument to forward progress. And he makes a declaration that should be burned into your soul: "Thus far the LORD has helped us."
5. This is a hugely important secret. Paul is giving you the very same command in verse 16: **"...to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk..."** He is telling you to set up monuments in your heart. He's telling you to create psychological Ebenezer stones in your heart. He is commanding you to fuel your future with the evidence of God's past faithfulness.
6. Look at those 27 months of sobriety. Look at that 4 month streak of Bible reading and prayer every single day. Look at that new business system, that new boyfriend or girlfriend, look at that prayer so clearly answered, that excellent grade on that paper, and that when you started you couldn't do any pushups and yesterday you did 75 in one set.
7. If you want to achieve big goals, you've got to stop letting your past wins evaporate. Remember. Recall. Journal. Say thank you to God. Collect the tokens, the coins. Tell the stories.
8. That is how you fuel your future.

F. The SURPRISE is that your God-sized dream is easier than your manageable plan.

1. This is the surprise that will change everything for you. This is the truth that feels like a lie, but it is the very logic of the Kingdom of God. Let me teach you something: Your big, audacious, God-sized dream is actually easier to build than your small, safe, manageable plan.
2. This sounds completely insane. Your whole life, you've been fed the lie of linear thinking. It's the idea that the path to a big outcome is just a longer, harder version of the path to a small one.
3. But that is the logic of the world, not the logic of grace. A God-sized dream isn't just a bigger destination; it forces you onto a completely different pathway. Let me explain why this new path is easier.
 - a) First, a God-sized dream forces you onto a new pathway of **POWER**. A manageable plan—building a shed in your backyard—runs on your power. Your energy, your strength, your weekend. But a God-sized dream—building a cathedral—is designed to overwhelm your personal power supply. That overwhelm is a feature, not a bug. It forces you to abandon your own toolbox and plug into sources of POWER beyond yourself. That's people. That's expertise. That's helpers. And above all, that's God. If you keep doing stuff where you don't need God, you'll never find out what God can do.

- b) Second, and this is the key, a God-sized dream forces you onto a new pathway of **STRATEGY**. A manageable plan allows you to keep using your old, inefficient methods. You just have to do what you're already doing and just grind a little harder. But a God-sized dream makes your old strategies mathematically impossible. It creates a holy crisis that forces you to innovate. You don't cross an ocean by building a slightly bigger rowboat and rowing twice as hard. That's the world's way, and it leads to burnout. To cross an ocean, you have to abandon the rowboat strategy altogether and learn to build a sailboat. Or a steamship. Or an ocean liner. Or a jet airplane. Or a rocket ship. It's an all new strategy.
 - c) Third, a God-sized dream forces you onto a new pathway of **IDENTITY**. A manageable plan allows you to remain the same person. But a God-sized dream requires you to become a different person to even attempt it. The goal itself becomes the Mentor's tool for your transformation. It forces you to become a person of deeper prayer, more audacious faith, and more profound dependence. It is easier because you are not just trying to do something different; God is using the dream to make you someone different—the very person capable of stewarding such a vision.
- 4. Small plans, small life, no surprise. Big plans, big life, big surprises.
- G. Conclusion
 - 1. We started today with Roger Bannister on a wet track in Oxford, staring down a barrier that the entire world told him was unbreakable. He proved that the four-minute mile wasn't a limitation of the body, but a lie in the mind. And when he broke through, he didn't just get a world record; he created a new reality for every runner who came after him.
 - 2. So I look out at this room, filled with people empowered by the Holy Spirit, and I have to ask: **What spiritual four-minute miles are waiting to be broken right here, today? What impossible barriers are about to fall, not just for you, but for everyone you will inspire?**
 - a) Somewhere in this room are the heroes of a marriage that everyone, maybe even you, has given up on. You are one decision away from showing us what resurrection looks like in a relationship.
 - b) Somewhere in this room are the heroes of a lifelong, secret addiction. You are about to shatter those chains and run into a freedom so profound it will lead a hundred others out of their own prisons.
 - c) Somewhere in this room are the heroes of crippling anxiety and depression. You are about to step into a peace that surpasses all understanding and become a lighthouse for every other soul lost in that same storm.
 - d) Somewhere in this room are the heroes of a prodigal child. Your relentless, grace-filled, never-give-up love is about to break through a hardened heart and bring them home, creating a blueprint for other parents.
 - e) Somewhere in this room are the heroes of a God-sized dream—a business that will fund missions, a ministry that will heal the broken, a book that will change a generation, a movement that will shake this city. The world calls it impossible, but God has called you to "Go."
 - 3. The barrier is a myth. The limitation is a lie. Your Past Self does not get the final vote on your future. Your God has set a prize before you—your Future Self, fully alive and free.
- IV. Prayer
 - A. Father, in the name of Jesus, I lift up every single person under the sound of my voice.
 - B. Right now, I ask you to shatter every spiritual four-minute mile in this room. Break the chains of low expectations, of past failures, and of the lies that have held them captive for far too long.
 - C. I pray you would ignite in their hearts a holy fire—a God-sized dream that feels impossible without You. Let them see themselves the way You see them: as sons and daughters destined for glory, not defined by their past.
 - D. "And now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us—to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever."
 - E. Amen.