

**“Chapter 2013, Page 6 of 365”**  
**By Bob Heirtzler**  
**Sunday, January 06<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

Today’s message is the past, present, and future, and Parrish already started it. Sonya already shared earlier in the service about it. The prayer was totally awesome that Sister Jennifer prayed; it was just right along with the message. She doesn’t know what I was planning today. All the music today fit perfectly with the establishing of this year.

I was thinking about the past, just to go over 2012, we all went through Christmas, New Year’s, Thanksgiving, Veteran’s Day, Halloween, Labor Day, Memorial Day, Easter, and I know not to forget Valentine’s Day, President’s Day, and all the other holidays of last year, but we also went through all of our birthdays, and anniversaries; we went through many victories when God answered prayer, and, of course, many aggravations, many “Where is God?” moments, many trials, and tests, and decisions, and ups and downs, but here we are here today: the present. God got us here today.

So far, some of us have already dedicated something to do this year for God, sort of like a New Year’s resolution, but we know that God wants us to do something every day for Him. I work with people that made those resolutions and I’m determined to help them make it. One wants to quit smoking, one wants to quit drinking... and they told me about that, and that was theirs, and I’m going to help them with that, the best way I can. Without stepping on toes, but just to encourage them along the way.

I also realize that God was in everything that we went through last year. He was there. Everything. It was like the bright light was always on with Him. Things that we did in darkness, He saw; things that we did in the light, He saw; everything. Things you read or didn’t read. Every prayer; God saw.

Now we’re standing here today on the firm Word of His Grace and His love, and we’re standing solid on God. Last year’s blessings and victories in God brought us to today, but we still need new ones for today. We can’t depend on the past, because those are of the past, and we have to have new ones every day. Jesus said in the Lord’s prayer.

*Matthew 6:11 Give us this day our daily bread.*

He said, “...our daily bread.” That’s a reference to the Old Testament story about how that God fed the Children of Israel manna every day from Heaven (Exodus 16:14-30). They went out and there it was, and on the sixth day, they went out and got enough for two days, and on the seventh day everybody rested. That tells us, church, that we have to seek God on a daily basis; to receive the daily bread from Him. It also teaches us, in Psalms 118:24:

*Psalms 118:24 This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.*

So today is the day; not yesterday, not tomorrow (tomorrow’s not promised yet). Today is the day.

I heard someone talk about the Glory Days. I remember when I was a kid, my dad took me into the barber shop, and sat in the chair, and that’s when the old guys sitting around in a circle, smoking their pipes (that was when smoking was allowed) or their cigars, and talk about

the good old days, and it used to be nice in the good old days. My dad posed a question to them, “What are you going to do about changing it now?” They didn’t know what to say. My dad said, “If you’re just going to talk about the past, how’s that going to help you out today?” My dad just said that, you know, and it stuck with me. I go into restaurants and we all go into restaurants, or we go into our workplaces, and we see the old people talking about, “I liked it better when...” “...when this person was in charge,” or “...when this thing used to happen.” People are still dwelling on those moments. They don’t want to let go, and move forward. Does that make any sense.

In the song, “Glory Days” (I don’t remember who the singer is), in the music video, it talks about how this guy used to pitch a ball, and he can’t do that anymore. That’s the only part I remember out of the video. That’s the only moment of glory he has was that time, and that has nothing to do with today. He always had to think back to that moment to get encouraged by it, but he had nothing for today.

I was thinking about Paul; he talked about his glory days, and most of our scriptures re from Philippians chapter 3 today. This is about Paul’s glory days. He could have bragged about this; let’s find out if he did.

*Philippians 3:4-6* ...an Hebrew of the Hebrews.

He really believed that what he was doing... He was an Hebrew of the Hebrews, he was a highly educated man (I believe his teacher was Gamaliel—he’s the same person that said, “How can you go up against God if God is with them (Acts 5:34-39)? Understand, Paul thought he was doing the right thing by bumping us Christians off. He thought he was doing God’s will. He could brag, “I was so religious at that time, I can brag about it.” But, you know what he said after that?

*Philippians 3:7-8* ...all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ

He counted it as a pile of cow manure out in the middle of a field. All that knowledge that he had, all the stuff he went through, it belonged out in the field. He had to let all of that go to win Christ. Remember that story of how Paul was getting permission to wipe us out? He was knocked off his high horse and he immediately knew who it was that knocked him off his horse (Acts 9:1-6). “Who art thou, Lord?” He knew exactly who it was.

As we read on here, he says:

*Philippians 3:9-11* ... not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law...

He realized he had to let go of his past to reach for the high calling, to reach for the prize, to reach for Jesus. Some of us had a religious background before we got saved; we didn’t want to let go. We’ve got to let go of all of our teachings. I was raised to believe that there were three Gods; I had to realize that there was not three Gods. I realize that there’s just one. I used to talk to Jesus to talk to His dad to talk to my dad not to give me a spanking. That conversation never happened, though, because I always got the spanking. That’s the way I was raised, though. I used to keep the Holy Ghost as far away as possible, though, because I did not like ghosts. I’ve seen things that I can’t explain, and I stay as far away from that as possible. When I realized that

Jesus was God, and the Holy Ghost, wow! I read the Bible for years but never saw it in the Word. Someone just sat down and shared that with me.

The hardest scripture for me was Philippians 3:12-14:

*Philippians 3:12-14 ...I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

We have to press forward this year. We have to press forward to find what God really wants us to do. God laid it on my heart to get thicker in the Word, get stronger in the Word. I have an opportunity—I work with seventy people; it's about to be a thousand people on May 1<sup>st</sup>, because our offices are moving. I'm going to have a bigger fishing pond. All kinds of fishing. I want to be ready for that day, but I'm not going to wait until April 30<sup>th</sup> to do it. I've already started.

I like what Parish had everyone do, talk about our future. I really what he said that a lot of us are sharing what we want this year in God. A song came into my mind that you hear a lot at ice-skating rinks and roller rinks: The Hokey Pokey. "You put your right foot in; you put your right foot out, you put your right foot in and you shake it all about." I'm not going to do the Hokey Pokey, no. God wants us to put our right foot in. He does not want us to take it back out. He wants us to put our right foot in, followed by the left foot. Followed by the right foot. And followed by the left foot. And keep moving forward in God. God has done so much for us, church. Up to this point in our lives; from the day we got saved, from the day we got birthed. Every one of us have been born, and up until this day, God has kept us from evil, kept us from harm, and blessed our families. We owe it to God to give it back to Him. As Pastor Paine said, I want to make it to Heaven, running through that gate a bloody mess. I've thought about that; every battle that we fight, you know? We've got to fight all the way to the end.

I've got a couple of quotes. I saw this movie, "Cowboys and Aliens," and I got a couple of quotes out of it: One was, "God don't care who you were, son, He only cares who you are." God don't care about our past, right? He just wants to know where we're at today. We ask God to forgive us of things that came up that He already forgave us before. That's Satan preying on our minds. You've got to acknowledge that, you've got to let it go. Wait a minute, I was forgiven of that, you know? The other quote was, "Whether you end up in Heaven or Hell isn't God's plan, it's your own." I said, "Yeah, God wants me to make it to Heaven, but it's still my choice." I want to make it to Heaven.

What I like is, what does fellowship do for us? Someone mentioned that we're a fellowship group, that means we need to fellowship.

*Philippians 3:15-16 ... let us mind the same thing.*

The fellowship groups that we have throughout the week, when we break out the Word of God, it's important that we think the same thing. If a brother or a sister comes and they're thinking some other thing, that's a good time to sit down and go over what the Word of God says. Let the word of God speak. I've been corrected so many times. I thought the wise men showed up the night Jesus was born in the stable, then I realized, they showed up, later on, in a house (Matthew 2:11). For years I thought the wise men showed up in the manger scene, you know; I didn't realize that they came to a house. That's a good thing to know.

It also mentions in 1 Corinthians 1:10:

*1 Corinthians 1:10 ...be perfectly joined together in the same mind...*

Here again, the same mind, again. We need to be on the same page. Wasn't there a couple in the Book of Acts, Priscilla and Aquila, that had to sit down with Apollos and show him a more perfect way? (Acts 18:24-26) Some of us might think one way or the other; it happens, you know? It really happens when you sit by yourself and don't get fellowship. That's why it's important to have fellowship, so we can learn together, just like the example of the wise men. Was I wrong with what I was saying? I thought I was right all those years. But, now, I was set in the right way. God has a calling on us, church, in 2013, to be stronger. To be more like Jesus and less religious. To let go of the religious past, and to be more Christian. Sometimes we hang onto things that, well, God doesn't really care about that. God does care about where we stand today; where we are today. On December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2013, where are we going to be? It really depends upon us. Some are going to excel through this; some might not excel at all. We need to walk in the light, and fellowship with one another, so that the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sins.

*1 John 1:5-7 ...the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*

I thought about verse seven, here we are in the light, and some of us might sin. That's why we have a prayer meeting, to get things right. We can pray with somebody that God would cleanse us from the sin. They don't need to know what our sins are; we don't have to share with each other that, just, "Hey Brother Malcolm, I really messed up and I need prayer right now." Or Brother Jesse, or Sister Jennifer, anybody. "I need prayer, I've got to get this right now." We've got to keep to that fellowship. I really appreciate Brother Greg Greshen's texts each week, and Brother Mike Alford's, and others that just text a Scripture to me, it seems that they just come at exactly the right time. Brother Parrish shares a little greeting sometimes. It's right on time, you know?

*1 Timothy 1:12 ...He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry;*

God put us into this ministry. We have to have ministry in our ministry, and our ministry is where we go every day. On a daily basis, that's our ministry. Whatever job you have, whatever grocery store you go into, whatever coffee shop you drink at or gas station. Maybe this year will be the year that you don't go through the drive-thru and actually go in and meet people. That might be a good thing. That's what I'm going to do, meet the people that's behind the voice, you know? Maybe you're not getting anywhere that certain place you go, so go somewhere else. If you're getting gas at this one particular spot, and you're not getting anywhere with people there, then maybe go somewhere else. I ran into a brother yesterday, and it really encouraged me. We just saw each other for a minute, said "Hi," and went on about our business, but that was enough to really encourage me.

We had a breakfast last week, and there was a brother there that has not been around in years. He came in and he was just lit up. A lot of people were there, and not everybody spoke to him, but they all brought God. Brother Parrish gathered a few people around and had a prayer with him; he was bawling his eyes out by the end of that prayer. God's got a calling on his life; it might be on the shelf right now, but it's there. God wants to use you here you're at. I'm

thankful to be here today; I'm thankful for a pastor that shared the Word of God with me (over a game of checkers actually). I had never seen the Scriptures opened up that way before in my life. I'm thankful for this ministry; I'm thankful for our leadership--I'm thankful for our founding pastor, I'm thankful for Pastor Paine, our general pastor, I'm thankful for Pastor Wilson, our fellowship pastor, and Brother Kenneth, our fellowship leader, who wanted so much to be with us today, but he's on the Air Force base today, but his wife and daughter are with us today. I'm thankful for all of you being here today. It's encouraging to see each other and to lift each other up. You know, I've called and asked for prayer from some of you, and no one has ever told me no. That's just awesome.

*2 Timothy 4:5           ...make full proof of thy ministry.*

We need to thank God that He put us in the ministry, and now we need to make full proof of our ministry. It's really up to us what we do the rest of this year. Do we pack this room out until we're overflowing out into the hallway? It's really up to us to divide up and go out and look for people. You can't depend on the guy preaching; you can't depend on somebody else. I used to say, "Well, Brother Parrish can do that, I don't have to worry about it," or, "Jason can do that, I don't need to worry about it." Then I realized, Uh-huh, I've got to do it. So the last thing I want to share is, "Let's have a strong year in God. Let's do the best that we know how, and take all the knowledge and the things that we have received from God up until this point in time, and apply them, today. Some of us have luggage that we need to let go; find that time to let it go. You know, when I let go of my luggage, I felt like I was in a slingshot, pulled all the way back here (backing up several steps to the wall at the front of the room), and I was holding onto whatever that was behind me, and that thing was stretched out all the way, and when I let it go, I was released. I didn't know a guy like me could fly through the air that quick, but things started happening to me like this (snapping fingers rapidly). I'm telling you, God started adding things quickly when I let those things go. Church, I love you; I love each and every one of you, I do. Thank you for listening; God bless you."

GREAT LAKES