



“Past as Hero”
1st in the “Autopsy of a Deceased Church” Series
Philippians 3:7-16
July 23, 2017
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Introduction: Just as people should get physical checkups when they turn 50, churches also can benefit greatly from doing a spiritual checkup.

1. Knowing Jesus Christ Trumps Everything Else in Life.

A. Paul’s past gains are considered a loss (7)

B. Paul’s Current circumstances are considered a loss (8)

C. Paul’s Real Gain is Found in the Righteousness of Christ. (9-10)

D. Paul Would Sacrifice Anything for the Future Glory with Christ (11)

2. Paul Pursues the Goal

A. Paul pressed on towards his God-given purpose while forgetting the past (12-13)

B. Paul pressed on toward the goal (God’s purpose in Christ Jesus) (14-15)

C. Paul maintained growth he already had. (16)

Response: Are we focusing forward and upward, or are we looking back and yearning for what was there – the good old days?

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS:

1. Why does Paul consider his resume to be rubbish (v.8)?

2. Paul compares his quest for heaven to a race. What are the similarities?

3. How can looking back distract us from the tasks we have at hand in our personal lives? In our church?

4. What things are behind you that you need to forget in order to press on towards the goal?

5. Take the following test and answer each question for yourself:
 - a. Would you rather dream about the future or fix the present?
 - b. Would you rather design a new program or improve an existing one?
 - c. Would you rather do the right thing or do things right?
 - d. Would you rather be innovative or effective?
 - e. Would you rather develop ministry for future members or develop ministry for members who are already here?

As you reflect on your answers, the first part of each question focuses on the future, while the second part has a focus more on the present by looking at the past. Though there is value in all of them, which direction does your mind naturally incline towards?

6. Studies have also shown that those who were once considered regular attenders, came to church 3-4 times per month whereas the studies today show that to be 1-2 times per month. How has this impacted you?

7. Read Haggai 1. What did God ask of his people? How did God respond to those who neglected the building of the temple? How does the church of today reflect what was going on then?

8. Read Hebrews 11 – what is the common theme for the heroes of the faith?

9. Look at Hebrews 11:13-16 and discuss it in light of churches that die holding onto the past.

