

PULPIT COMPANION

THE POWER TO
LEAVE AND
EMBRACE WHAT
IS AHEAD

PHILIPPIANS 3:13-14

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JANUARY 4, 2026

09:45 AM

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What if the greatest obstacle to our breakthrough isn't what lies ahead, but what we refuse to leave behind?

This powerful message invites us aboard Flight 2026, where forward faith becomes our boarding pass to God's promises. Drawing from Philippians 3:13-14, we're challenged to embrace Paul's radical posture: forgetting what lies behind and straining toward what lies ahead. Paul wasn't advocating for amnesia but for freedom, the kind that refuses to let yesterday's achievements or failures define today's identity.

We discover that faith isn't just about believing; it's about leaving. Like Abraham, who received a directive without a map, timeline, or destination, we're called to move on God's voice alone. The Hebrew phrase 'lek leka', go for yourself, reminds us that uncertainty isn't abandonment but confirmation of our calling.

This year demands we release the guilt God has already forgiven, stop replaying old scenes, and refuse to let regret run our present relationships. We're challenged to examine: are we dressed for where we're going in 2026, or still wearing yesterday's guilt, fear, and disappointment?

Forward faith strengthens our core so we can stretch beyond comfort zones, press past exhaustion, and pursue God's upward call with holy intensity. The invitation is clear: let go of the weight, stop managing life from a deficit position, and trust that delayed fruit doesn't mean denied purpose.





SCRIPTURES FROM PULPIT AI

Explicitly Mentioned Scripture References:

1. **Philippians 3:13-14** - Main text (English Standard Version quoted)
 - "Brothers, I do not consider that I've made it my own, but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind, and straining forward to what lies ahead. I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."
2. **Isaiah 43:18-19** - Referenced regarding "Remember not the former things"
 - "Behold, I'm doing a new thing"
3. **Hebrews 11:8** - Quoted directly
 - "By faith, Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out not knowing where he was going."
4. **Genesis 12:1-3** - Quoted directly
 - God's call to Abram to leave his country, kindred, and father's house
5. **1 Corinthians 9:24** - Quoted directly
 - "Do you not know that in a race all the runners run? But only one receives the prize. So run that you may obtain it."

Alluded to or Thematically Referenced:

1. **Matthew 17:20 / Luke 17:6** - Faith the size of a mustard seed (alluded to near the end)
2. **Ephesians 4:22-24** - "Put off the old...put on the new" (referenced in closing)
3. **Matthew 25:21** - "Well done, good and faithful servant" (mentioned multiple times)





DEVOTIONAL

Day 1: Releasing Yesterday's Weight

Reading: Philippians 3:13-14; Isaiah 43:18-19

Devotional: God is doing a new thing, but you cannot carry yesterday's baggage into tomorrow's blessing. Like Paul, we must learn to forget what lies behind, not to dishonor our past, but to disconnect our identity from it. Yesterday's achievements don't define your future, and yesterday's failures don't disqualify you from God's purpose. The question isn't whether you've made mistakes or experienced success; it's whether you're willing to let go of both to embrace what God has next. Stop replaying old scenes. Stop letting regret run your present relationships. God has forgiven what you're still holding onto.

Today, identify one thing from your past, guilt, success, or pain, that you've been clinging to, and intentionally release it to God in prayer.

Day 2: Moving Without a Map

Reading: Genesis 12:1-3; Hebrews 11:8

Devotional: Abraham's forward faith teaches us a revolutionary truth: God gives directives, not directions. He didn't give Abraham a map, timeline, or destination, just a command to "go." This is how God develops trust in us. We want GPS coordinates before we step out, but God often reveals after we respond. Uncertainty is not abandonment; it's often confirmation of your calling. You don't need all the answers to move forward; you need faith and alignment with God's instruction. Stop waiting for complete clarity before you obey. Stop enabling others by giving them maps instead of directives. God is nudging you out of your comfort zone in 2026, not as punishment, but as preparation.

What area of your life has God been nudging you to trust Him more deeply? Take one step of obedience today without demanding to see the full picture.





DEVOTIONAL

Day 3: Stretching Beyond Comfort

Reading: Philippians 3:13 (second half); 1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Devotional: Forward faith requires stretching, like a runner leaning toward the finish line with muscles extended and lungs burning. This stretch isn't passive hope; it's active alignment in pursuit of God's purpose. Your faith should have the intensity of a chase, not the casualness of a stroll. God didn't save you just to help you cope in life; He saved you to help you advance. If you're still stuck where you were last year, you're surviving, not thriving. Stretch your prayers beyond survival mode. Stretch your expectations beyond what you've seen before. God is already working in places you haven't reached yet. Don't shrink back when God changes what's familiar, your job, relationships, or routines. These disruptions are divine setups for your next level.

Today, identify one area where you've been playing it safe, and ask God to stretch your faith beyond your comfort zone.

Day 4: Pressing With Purpose

Reading: Philippians 3:14; 2 Timothy 4:7-8

Devotional: Paul uses the word "press", *dioko* in Greek, meaning to pursue aggressively, to chase with intensity. The same energy he once used to persecute the church, he now channels toward pursuing Christ. Your faith is not a casual jog; it's a purposeful sprint toward an eternal prize. You're not running for applause, popularity, or temporary success, but for God's "well done, good and faithful servant." Forward faith is purposeful, you press not just to finish, but to win. This requires leaving behind extra weight: unforgiveness, comparison, old labels, and yesterday's disappointments. You cannot run effectively while carrying baggage. God is redirecting your running this year, stop chasing validation and start seeking meaning; stop chasing approval and start chasing God.

Delayed fruit does not mean denied purpose. Write down your spiritual goal for 2026, what prize are you pressing toward?





DEVOTIONAL

Day 5: Dressed to Press Forward

Reading: Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:9-10

Devotional: The critical question for 2026: Are you dressed to press for where you're going, or are you still dressed for where you've been? Many believers are wearing yesterday's guilt, last season's fear, disappointment's heavy coat, or regret's chains. But God's Word declares we must put off the old and put on the new. You cannot advance into what God is doing next while clinging to what defined you yesterday. This year demands a wardrobe change, exchange fear for faith, guilt for grace, doubt for determination. Press past exhaustion, delay, disappointment, and cultural pressure. Press forward together with other believers who are learning to trust God again. The God who carried you through yesterday is already waiting ahead of you in tomorrow.

This year will be marked by faith that presses forward and faith that presses past. Today, declare out loud: "I am leaving 2025 faith behind. I am walking in 2026 forward faith. I press toward the mark!"

Closing Prayer for the Week: Father God, give us 2026 faith, forward faith that releases the past, stretches toward Your purpose, and presses with holy intensity. Help us move without needing all the answers, trust You in the unfamiliar, and dress ourselves in the new thing You're doing. We will not be defined by what knocked us down, but by our ability to bounce back for Your glory. In Jesus' name, Amen.





SMALL GROUP GUIDE :

Faith Forward - Forward Faith

Opening Prayer:

Begin by asking God to help the group move forward in faith, release what's behind, and embrace what He has ahead.

Key Scripture:

Philippians 3:13-14 (ESV)

Icebreaker Question

Question: If you could leave one thing from 2025 behind and never carry it into 2026, what would it be? (Keep it light - could be a habit, a worry, or even a fashion trend!)

Sermon Recap

The sermon challenged us to develop "forward faith" - faith that doesn't just believe but gives us power to leave what was and embrace what's ahead. Using Paul's words in Philippians 3:13-14 and Abraham's story in Genesis 12, we learned that God calls us to press forward with purpose, releasing the past and stretching toward His calling.





SMALL GROUP GUIDE: Faith Forward - Forward Faith

Discussion Questions:

Part 1: Releasing the Past (15-20 minutes)

1. The sermon stated: "You cannot advance into what God is doing next if you're clinging to what defines you."
 - What past achievements or failures are you tempted to let define you?
 - How does holding onto these things keep you from moving forward?
2. Paul said to "forget what lies behind." This doesn't mean dishonoring the past, but disconnecting our identity from it.
 - What's the difference between remembering the past and being controlled by it?
 - Share an example of when you've successfully "forgotten" something and moved forward.
3. The sermon challenged: "Can we have enough forward faith to stop letting regret run our relationships today?"
 - How have you seen past hurts or mistakes affect present relationships?
 - What would it look like to "play it forward" instead of replaying old scenes?

Part 2: Stretching Forward (15-20 minutes)

1. Abraham's story teaches us that "God gives a directive, not a map, timeline, or destination."
 - Why do you think God often doesn't show us the full picture before asking us to move?
 - Share a time when you had to step forward without knowing the destination. What did you learn?
2. The Hebrew phrase "lek leka" means "go for yourself" or "go toward the future I've prepared for you."
 - How does this challenge our desire to control outcomes?
 - In what area of your life is God asking you to trust Him with the next step rather than demanding to see the destination?





SMALL GROUP GUIDE : Faith Forward - Forward Faith

Discussion Questions:

3. The sermon said: "Uncertainty is not a sign of abandonment but rather the confirmation of one's calling."
 - o Do you agree or disagree? Why?
 - o How can we distinguish between godly uncertainty (stepping out in faith) and foolish uncertainty (not seeking wisdom)?

Part 3: Pressing Forward with Purpose (15-20 minutes)

1. Paul uses the word "press" (dioko) - to pursue, chase aggressively, follow with intensity.
 - o On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate the intensity of your faith pursuit right now?
 - o What's the difference between "strolling" in faith versus "pressing" in faith?
2. The sermon asked: "Are you dressed to press for where you're going in 2026, or are you still dressed for where you've been?"
 - o What does it mean to be "dressed" for where God is taking you?
 - o What old "clothing" (mindsets, habits, fears) do you need to take off?
3. "Delayed fruit does not mean denied purpose."
 - o How do you typically respond when God's promises seem delayed?
 - o What helps you press on when progress feels invisible?

Key Takeaways

- ✓ **Forward faith releases the past without being ruined by it** - We must dismantle the myth that yesterday's achievements or failures define who we are today.
- ✓ **Forward faith stretches toward what God is calling us into** - Like Abraham, we must move on the strength of God's voice, not on what we can see.
- ✓ **Forward faith presses forward with purpose** - We don't drift into maturity; we run toward it with intention, leaving baggage behind.





SMALL GROUP GUIDE :

Faith Forward - Forward Faith

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge: Choose ONE area to practice forward faith

Option 1: Release Exercise

- Write down one thing from your past (regret, achievement, hurt, label) that's been defining you
- Pray over it, asking God to help you release it
- Physically tear up or burn the paper as a symbol of letting it go

Option 2: Stretch Exercise

- Identify one area where God has been nudging you to trust Him more deeply
- Take one concrete step forward this week without having all the answers
- Journal about the experience

Option 3: Press Exercise

- Evaluate what "baggage" you're carrying that's slowing your race
- Choose one thing to put down this week (unforgiveness, toxic relationship, bad habit, fear)
- Ask someone in the group to hold you accountable

Group Prayer Focus (10-15 minutes)

Pray for each other in these areas:

1. **For Release** - That God would help us let go of what's behind and stop replaying old scenes
2. **For Direction** - That we would hear and obey God's directives even when we don't have a map, timeline, or destination
3. **For Strength** - That we would press forward with intensity and purpose, not shrinking back in fear
4. **For Healing** - For those carrying wounds from church, relationships, or past failures
5. **For 2026 Faith** - That our faith would be forward-focused, not stuck in yesterday's patterns





SMALL GROUP GUIDE: Faith Forward - Forward Faith

Closing Thought

"The calendar shifted. When you write a letter or send out a memo or email, it's going to have one thing on it different than last year. It's going to end with 2026. God told me, 'I don't want your 2025 faith. I want your 2026 faith.'"

Question to take home: What does 2026 faith look like for you personally?

Before Next Week

- Read Hebrews 11:8-10 (Abraham's faith journey)
- Reflect on this question: "What area of your life has God been nudging you to trust Him more deeply?"
- Be prepared to share one way you practiced forward faith this week
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Additional Resources

- **For Further Study:** Genesis 12:1-9, Hebrews 11:1-16, Isaiah 43:18-19
- **Worship Songs:** "Way Maker" by Sinach, "The Blessing" by Elevation Worship
- **Book Recommendation:** The Purpose Driven Life by Rick Warren (Chapter on moving forward)

Remember: Forward faith is not a slogan; it's a summons. Press on!

