

Galatians 6:10 *“Therefore as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those of the household of faith.”*

**January 3, 2016**

**REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS---**

- **Ronnie Lowe, Eyvonne Frankln, Doris Knowles, Terry Langley, Roger Key, Sue Whitehead, Tim Parker, Carl Franklin, John Ozley, Sara Ozley, Aladene Jacks, Kynethia Kelley, Amanda Kelley, Myra Garrison, Jimmy Parker, Stefani, Kate Miller, Johnny Richardson, Conner Rice, Tim Craven, Mickey Aldridge, Beverly Craven, Tuesday Pierce, Faye Wilkinson Goodwin, Sarabeth Upton, Rhonda Knowles.**
- **Sawyer Jones, Jeremiah Hughes, Robert Langley, Ana Reichelderfer & all of our servicemen and women** who are defending freedom. **Our nation** and its leaders. **Those that preach and teach the gospel**; especially those who labor under hardships. **Ben Brownfield, Shannon Brown, and Terry Tatum** (Christians' at Donaldson) and **Robert Gibson and Walter Aldridge** (released Christians who are struggling).

**BLACK CREEK UPCOMING EVENTS:**

- **Donaldson Bible Classes** Suspended due to quarantine.
- We will conduct the **prison chapel service today** at Donaldson.

**Area Gospel Meetings:**

No Notices Received



**Those Needing our Prayers.....**

**Ronnie Lowe** is doing better.

**Roger Key** is still experiencing pain. Home health therapy is scheduled to begin this week.

**Amanda Kelley's** heart is out of rhythm and she is scheduled for a heart ablation on Jan 7<sup>th</sup> (Thursday)

**Ginger Kelley's** mother was buried Thursday. Please remember the family in your prayers.

**Becky Oglesby** (Melanie's friend who has breast cancer) is scheduled for a PET scan Thursday).

**John Ozley** is making progress and getting stronger.

**Doris Knowles** condition has not changed

**Sara Ozley** continues to need prayers.

# Black Creek Banner of Truth

Black Creek church of Christ

1235 Alliance Rd; Alliance, Alabama

436-4477

*“You have given a BANNER to those who fear you, that it may be displayed because of the TRUTH. “ Psalms 60:4*

Editor:

Van Cooper

**Schedule of Services**

**Lord's Day**

**9:30 A.M. Bible Classes**

**10:30 A.M. Worship**

**4:00 P.M. Worship (3 PM on the second Sunday of every month)**

**Wednesday**

**7:00 P.M.**

**Elders**

Philip Jacks 436-3055

Truman Wallace 483-7016

Van Cooper 491-9695

**Deacons**

Jeff Swindle 475-3043

Matt Carter 491-0414

Roger Key 491-3723

Mike Wood 522-5703

**Evangelist**

Sammy Bynum 368-3511

**Who We Are:** The Black Creek Church of Christ is simply a group of Christians dedicated to serving God. We believe the Bible to be the inspired Word of God and it is to be our sole guide. We are committed to preaching the gospel of Christ, which is man's only hope for eternal life.

We are interested in helping anyone who is searching for the way to God. We welcome the opportunity to privately study the Bible with you. If you would contact us, we would be happy to meet with you. In addition, you are invited to visit one of our public assemblies (information is above). At our public Bible studies, we have classes for adults and children of all ages. If we can help you in knowing more about God and His Word, then please visit, call, or write us.

**(Visit us on-line at ( [WWW.blackcreekchurch.com](http://WWW.blackcreekchurch.com) )**

## Press On

It is only natural that as the calendar turns to a new year that we reflect back on the blessings of the previous year, that we measure the success we achieved in following our resolutions, and that we contemplate the goals and plans we have for the new year. What I would like to do in this season of introspection is offer you the words of the apostle Paul in Philippians 3:13-14: “But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining toward what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

### Forgetting What Lies Behind

Earlier in Philippians 3 Paul warned about the danger of false teachers, and by his description of them, we can deduce that they were seeking to impose circumcision and other works of the Law of Moses as a means of right standing before God and membership with His people (Philippians 3:2-3). But if the Law of Moses and identity with physical Israel were the markers of true covenant fellowship with God, Paul would have had more reason to boast about spiritual status than anyone before his conversion (3:4-7). But in comparison to the surpassing value of knowing Christ, all of those achievements and entitlements were a liability – a disgusting counterfeit to the righteousness that comes from

God through faith in (or possibly the faithfulness of) Christ (3:8-9).

And it is those sorts of things – physical pedigree as a Jew, dutiful performance of the rituals of the Law, ruthless pursuit of those who deviated from the ancestral tradition – that Paul has in mind when he says is “forgetting what lies behind.” Paul’s words here could also just as easily include his achievements as a Christian. Paul was mindful of his prior labors – that’s one of the reasons he is writing this letter (1:5; 4:14-16). But he would have been the first to say that whatever he accomplished as an apostle he did by the grace of Christ, so that Christ alone received the glory. “I can do all things through him who strengthens me” (4:13). Since he knew that his work was empowered by God, there was no room in Paul’s heart for complacency or conceit, no possibility of resting on his laurels while dwelling on the glories of the past.

There is value in taking stock of where you have been. In other places in his writings, Paul does this very thing (such as in 1 Timothy 1:12-17). But there is also danger. Dwelling on your failures can paralyze you with defeatism. And mulling over your successes can lull you into self-righteousness and self-satisfaction. Paul’s self-reflective moments quickly gave way to focus on Christ and His mission. Christ gives hope that even if you are the “foremost” of

sinners, you can be forgiven (1 Timothy 1:15-16). And Christ’s overflowing grace and love provide an inexhaustible supply of motivation to labor harder, to live holier, and to love greater.

### Straining Forward to What Lies Ahead

There is an important reason Paul wants to forget what is behind. He is in a race, and no runner wastes time by looking press on backwards. A runner has laser focus on the finish line, and the prize that comes with winning. That is the very picture Paul uses here. Like an athlete who is exerting every fiber of muscle to get to the finish line, Paul is “straining forward to what lies ahead” (3:13). And what lies ahead is the “prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (3:14). 2016 is an Olympic year, so later this summer we will see various athletes climb up on a high platform to receive gold medals. In Paul’s day, victorious athletes were called up to the box in which the most prominent dignitaries sat and received a laurel wreath from the head of the contest. Paul’s singular ambition – “one thing I do” – is to be called up to God to receive the “heavenly prize” (NLT).

And what it is this prize? He refers to it in various ways in this chapter. “Knowing Christ Jesus my Lord”; “that I may gain Christ”; “be found in him” (verses 8-9). But in verse 11 he spells out exactly what it is he is striving for – “that by any

means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.” What Paul wants is to be transformed by Christ and like Christ in the resurrection to enjoy an eternal life with Christ (3:20-21).

That prize of glorious, eternal, and intimate fellowship with Christ is Paul’s holy obsession. And in this text he says is he passionately pursuing it. “I press on” (v. 14). The Greek term translated press (diōkō) is the very same expression Paul used in 3:6 where he described his previous life as a persecutor of the church. Whereas Paul once zealously pursued Christians, now he pursues Christ and “the power of his resurrection” (3:10). His prize is Christ, and so “to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (1:21).

As you recollect the events of the past year, you undoubtedly will recall successes and failures. To the extent that these reminiscences drive you to greater appreciation for Christ, this is a good thing. Similarly, good stewards make careful plans for the future, so as you look ahead to the upcoming year, it is wise to set goals and make plans. Just make sure that all of your aspirations are a means to the only end that counts – the upward call of God in Christ Jesus – and press on. **by Shane Scott**