

Speaking to the soul



Perfection

I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me. Philippians 3:12

Perfection is a word that makes most of us shudder because we are so well aware that we fall very far short of it. But the danger with that kind of response is that we give up even trying. We accept, reluctantly, that we are the people that we are, and everybody else has just got to get used to

it. I've heard people say that they have a bad temper because that's exactly how their father used to be. Or they blame their impatience on their bad back. Paul fully acknowledged that he had a long way to go on the road to perfection, but he was determined to travel further on that journey and not to excuse his shortcomings. Wonderfully, God accepts us just the way we are, but he loves us so much that he doesn't want us to stay as we are. He longs that we should change and take steps forward towards perfection.

“Perfection is attained by slow degrees; it requires the hand of time,” commented Voltaire, the French philosopher. I find that a helpful observation, but he missed out the vital factor of Christian faith. By ourselves we will never make much progress. But when we commit ourselves to Christ we discover that, as Paul says, the very reason that he took hold of our lives was to make us perfect. And that's the reason why Paul was so determined to put all his energies into making progress. Like a runner who is always checking their times to ensure that they are making good progress, so too Paul was focusing on becoming everything that Christ wanted him to be. That's our challenge today. We aren't perfect but we must strive each day, in the strength that God gives us, to become more fully the people Christ want us to be.

QUESTION

What progress are you making towards perfection?

PRAYER

Lord God, thank you that you lovingly accept me just the way I am, but that you love me so much that you want me to change each day. Amen