

“Beyond the Horizon”
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Worship at the Waterfront

Readings:

Hebrews 11:13–16

¹³ Abem, Enoch, Noah and Abraham died in faith without having received the promises, but from a distance they saw and greeted them. They confessed that they were strangers and foreigners on the earth, ¹⁴ for people who speak in this way make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. ¹⁵ If they had been thinking of the land that they had left behind, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶ But as it is, they desire a better homeland, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; indeed, he has prepared a city for them.

Philippians 3:12–14

¹² Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal, but I press on to lay hold of that for which Christ has laid hold of me. ¹³ Brothers and sisters, I do not consider that I have laid hold of it, but one thing I have laid hold of: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal,

toward the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

Part 1 – Facing the Horizon

- Keep your eyes on the horizon for a few moments.

There is something remarkable about a horizon.

- No matter how long we look at it, it always remains beyond our reach.
 - We can move toward it.
 - We can orient our lives by it.
 - But we cannot possess it.
- The horizon reminds us of something we often forget:
 - we are not in control.
 - We make plans.
 - We imagine the future.
 - Yet life has a way of interrupting both.
 - A phone call.
 - A diagnosis.
 - A goodbye.
 - A new beginning.
- The future has always belonged to God, not to us.

- Perhaps that is why Scripture so often tells the stories of people who lived by promise rather than possession.
 - Abraham never fully possessed what had been promised.
 - Moses never entered the land he was leading the people toward.
 - The people mentioned in Hebrews 11 fixed their eyes on a promise they had not yet received.
- Their lives were defined not by arrival, but by trust.
- Faith is not knowing what lies ahead.
 - Faith is trusting the One who does.
- The horizon reminds us that tomorrow is hidden, but it is not empty.
 - The God who called Abraham, led the Hebrews through the wilderness, and remained faithful through every generation
 - is the same God who calls us forward today.
- We often try to replace trust with certainty.
- But Jesus did not invite people to understand everything.
 - He invited them to follow.

- The horizon remains beyond us.
 - And maybe that is the grace we need.
- Our future has never depended on our ability to control tomorrow,
 - but on the faithfulness of the God who already holds it.

Part 2 – Facing the Hill

- Please take a moment to turn your chairs so that you are facing the hill behind you.
Look at what is now before you.
 - A few moments ago, you could see for miles.
 - Now your vision is much shorter.
 - The horizon has not disappeared.
 - It has simply been hidden.
 - There is still a horizon after this hill.
- Much of life feels like this.
 - Most days, we see only what is immediately before us.
 - A difficult conversation.
 - A medical appointment.
 - Financial uncertainty.
 - A strained relationship.

- A decision that refuses to become clear.
- When our vision narrows, our fears often grow.
 - We begin to believe that what stands before us is all there is.
- Yet Scripture reminds us that what is nearest to our eyes is not always what is truest.
 - Joseph's prison was not the end of his story.
 - Elijah's cave was not the end of his calling.
 - The cross was not the end of Christ's work.
- Sometimes we must climb the hill before us before we can see the horizon again.
 - And that's not always easy.
 - The cars, cyclists, pedestrians
 - The distractions and important things we need to tend to can also keep us from our pursuit
- The hill limits our sight,
 - but not God's faithfulness.
- One of the greatest temptations of the Christian life is to confuse the limits of our vision with the limits of God's work.

- They are not the same.
- Paul reminds us in Philippians 3:12–14 that he keeps pressing forward, not because he has already arrived, but because Christ Jesus has made him his own.
- So we keep walking.
 - Even when the road narrows.
 - Even when the horizon cannot be imagined.
 - He remains faithful.

Part 3 – Facing the Horizon Again

- Please turn your chairs once more toward the water.
 - Look again toward the horizon.
The horizon is exactly where it was before.
 - While we were turned away, it never moved.
- Life often changes more quickly than we expect.
 - A season ends.
 - Another begins.
 - Questions remain unanswered.
 - Plans are rewritten.

- Yet the deepest foundation of our lives is not found in changing circumstances,
 - but in the presence of Christ.
- Sometimes all we will see are the hills.
 - Then we need to remember that there is a horizon after the hill.
- This is what we most need to remember.
 - God has never promised that we would understand every step before taking it.
 - He has promised that we would never walk those steps alone.
- Our confidence does not come from seeing farther down the road.
 - It comes from the presence of Christ with us.
- The Christian life is not simply a journey toward God's promises.
 - It is a journey with the One who has promised,
 - "I am with you always."
(*Matthew 28:20*)
- So we continue forward,
 - not because every question has been answered,

- but because the One who calls us is faithful.
- His presence goes before us,
 - remains beside us,
 - and will never leave us.
- Amen.