

## Summary

This sermon focuses on the concept of pressing forward in faith, drawing from Philippians 3:12-14 where Paul speaks of pressing toward the mark for the prize of God's high calling. The pastor uses the Garden of Gethsemane as a central metaphor, explaining that it was a place of olive pressing where Jesus experienced the ultimate pressure before His crucifixion. The message emphasizes that while praise and worship are important, prayer is the foundation that must come first. Pastor Chris challenges the congregation, particularly the men, to commit to serious prayer and to understand that God uses pressure in our lives to shape us and extract what He wants from us, just as olives are pressed to produce oil. The sermon concludes with the powerful truth that God transforms our pressure into power for the next level of our spiritual journey.

## Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, we come before You this morning with open hearts and minds, ready to receive what You have for us in this time together. We ask that You would speak to each person here according to their need and help us to be receptive to Your voice. Lord, prepare our hearts to understand the importance of pressing forward in our faith journey, even when we face difficulties and pressure. Help us to see that You are working in every situation for our good and Your glory. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

## Ice Breaker

What's one activity or hobby that you can easily spend an hour doing without even realizing how much time has passed?

## Key Verses

- Philippians 3:12-14
- Matthew 26:36-46

## Questions

- Paul says he presses toward the mark for the prize of God's high calling. What does 'pressing forward' look like in your daily life as a Christian?

- Jesus asked His disciples to pray with Him for one hour, but they fell asleep. Why do you think we often struggle to commit time to prayer, and what can help us overcome this?
- Pastor Chris mentioned that this generation loves praise but needs to learn prayer. How can we balance both praise and prayer in our spiritual lives?
- In Gethsemane, Jesus said 'not my will, but thy will be done' while under intense pressure. How can we apply this attitude when facing our own difficult circumstances?
- The sermon describes how olives must be pressed to produce oil. Can you share about a time when God used pressure in your life to bring about something good?
- Pastor Chris challenged the men specifically about prayer and leadership. How can we encourage accountability and spiritual leadership in our families and church?
- What does it mean that 'God turns pressure into power' in your personal experience? How have you seen this principle work in your life or the lives of others?
- The message emphasizes not giving up when facing trials. What practical steps can we take to 'keep pressing' when we feel like quitting?

## Life Application

This week, commit to spending focused time in prayer daily, even if it's just starting with 15-20 minutes. Find a specific area of pressure or challenge in your life and instead of avoiding it, ask God to show you how He wants to use that situation to shape you and develop your character. If you're a man, consider joining or starting a prayer group to support other men in their spiritual growth.

## Key Takeaways

- Prayer must be the foundation before praise - we cannot skip the pressing place to get to the blessing place
- God uses pressure in our lives as a press to shape us and extract what He wants from us, just like olives are pressed to produce oil
- We must press forward and not give up when facing trials, following Paul's example of pressing toward the mark
- Men are specifically called to take spiritual leadership through committed prayer for their families and church
- God transforms our pressure into power for the next level of our spiritual journey

## Ending Prayer

Father God, we thank You for this powerful reminder that You are working in every pressure and trial we face. Help us to embrace the pressing times in our lives, knowing that You are shaping us and preparing us for greater things. Give us the strength to press forward when we want to give up, and the wisdom to see Your hand at work even in difficult circumstances. Lord, raise up men and women of prayer in this church who will commit to seeking Your face regularly. Transform our pressures into power and help us to press toward the mark of Your high calling. We surrender our will to Yours, just as Jesus did in Gethsemane. In His precious name we pray, Amen.