

# That I May Know Him

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Date: 08 March 2020

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[ 0 : 00 ] The following sermon is made available by Lakeside Bible Church in Cornelius, North Carolina.

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There was a time in Paul's life when all that he wanted was to be the best Jew that he could possibly be.

In fact, his entire life was consumed with religious performance that he sincerely thought was capable of making him righteous in God's eyes.

[ 1 : 02 ] But after experiencing the risen Christ on that road to Damascus in Acts chapter 9 that we just read, he realized that his life was spent laboring relentlessly for a salvation that's actually impossible to earn.

It's at that moment that he began to understand that despite his zealous commitment to God through Judaism, his death would still result in condemnation and ultimately separation from God for all of eternity.

Rather than be honored by God for doing his best, Paul realized that he would actually be rejected by God for not being good enough.

And upon this realization, he trusted Christ, and he left behind all of those achievements that he had been working for, for 30 years of his life perhaps.

He left it all behind. So what was once an all-consuming pursuit to do the best that he possibly could, to build up his list of religious achievements and good works, now his own all-consuming pursuit and passion was to know Christ.

[ 2 : 22 ] And to know Christ in a greater way, and then to share this gloriously freeing gospel with others. And that's ultimately what this entire chapter of Philippians 3 is all about, the glorious gospel of Jesus.

Having spent half of his life following a lie, Paul became passionate about exposing that deception. Exposing the deception of the Judaizers and to the legalism that was beginning to creep its way into the church.

And he focused on pointing the Philippians to the true gospel. Now as we've studied in the last couple of Sundays, in verse 2 he gives a warning to the church, specifically a warning against the legalists, the Judaizers.

And then in verse 3 he gives a comprehensive description of what true Christianity actually is. Now he's turning to his own personal testimony as a way of providing a defense of the truth of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus alone.

The truth is sometimes the most effective way of sharing the gospel and helping people to understand the truth of the gospel is by simply sharing with them the impact that the gospel has had on you personally.

[ 3 : 43 ] What was at one time one of the most faithfully committed Jews of the first century was now one of the most faithfully committed Christians.

And these verses help us to understand what made the difference for Paul. In fact, we can really ask that question as we jump into these verses. What is it that made Paul go from being so committed to Judaism to now being so committed in the other extreme to Jesus Christ and Christianity?

Well, let's look at it together. In verses 4 through 6 we see, if you want to write this down in your notes, the futility of self-righteousness. The futility of self-righteousness.

Look with me again at verse 4. Paul says, Though I might also have confidence in the flesh, if any other man thinks that he has whereof he might trust in the flesh, I have more.

And then he goes through and he provides this description. Circumcised the eighth day of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the law, a Pharisee, concerning zeal, persecuting the church, touching the righteousness which is in the law, I was blameless.

[ 4 : 56 ] You can almost sense an expectation on Paul's part here that the Judaizers that he had just warned against might accuse him of being envious of them in some way.

That's often how things like this go. Someone experiences something or they have achieved something in their life, and if there's a group that rejects that achievement, it's easy to pass it off as if, well, they just don't understand.

They just don't have it. Perhaps as this letter was read to the Philippian church, and maybe even other churches that would have been in that area, perhaps Paul anticipated that some of the Judaizers would say he's only envious of us because he hasn't achieved what we've achieved, and saying he's only rejecting us because he's not a Jew like we are, or whatever it was.

Paul was both a Jew and a Roman. That's what was interesting about his life, and perhaps there had come a time where some of these Judaizers were unfamiliar with his testimony. Maybe they truly didn't know what his life was like before, and they just passed him off as being lazy or insecure, stating that it's easier to reject their teaching than to live up to it.

Of course, that's just conjecture on my part. It could be that Paul just simply thought that this was the most appropriate defense to reveal the nature of his own life prior to conversion.

[ 6 : 20 ] In any case, he launched into this series of religious achievements that would have made him one of the most elite Jews in all of Judaism.

This wasn't just he was really good at following all the rules. This was Paul was one of the best of the best when it came to being a Jew and leading the nation of Judaism there in Jerusalem. And doubtlessly, it would have put some of these prideful Judaizers to shame to hear exactly what he had to say. But the purpose of it was not to boast in what his life was like prior to salvation.

The purpose in him sharing this testimony is to prove the futility in one's own goodness and sincerity as a means for earning salvation.

If Paul, being far more righteous than these other Judaizers that had crept their way into the church, if he being far more righteous than they had found his own pursuits worthless, how much more then should they consider their pursuits to be without value in terms of eternity?

[ 7 : 34 ] If even Paul could not earn salvation, surely they who had fallen far short of his accomplishments could not earn salvation either. So Paul shares seven of his religious qualifications that he found out were actually disqualifying.

And I'm gonna group them into two different categories for us to understand. We'll just go through them quickly. The first category is pedigree. The second category is sincerity. In fact, it may be helpful for you to write that if you've got your scripture journal with you.

Write down the first one in verse five, we see Paul's pedigree. Now, I've heard that there are two great days in the life of a boat owner.

Anybody own a boat or you've owned a boat before in the past? I've heard that there's two great days in the life of a boat owner. The day that he buys a boat and then the day that he sells the boat are the two best days in his life.

Now, I've never owned a boat, but I have made a transaction that I feel like helps me to somewhat understand that statement. About a year and a half ago, I bought our family a very overpriced puppy.

[ 8 : 46 ] Many of you have met her if you've been over to the house. She's a German short hair pointer and we named her Getty after our favorite hymn writers, actually. And I remember, Ashlyn will remember this too, being so excited as we drove to Rocky Mount, North Carolina is where we picked her up.

Our friend, actually last week, Marissa Wright was here that helped us with the piano last week while Michaela was gone. And it was her husband, actually, Austin. His family breeds German short hair pointers and he had convinced me to buy one of these puppies from his dad from this new litter

that they had.

And so Ashlyn and I drove all the way to Rocky Mount, North Carolina to go pick up this puppy. And we were excited about it, weren't we, Ashlyn? We were so excited. I had all of these dreams for Getty. I had this dream that she was gonna help me with my marathon training, that I was gonna run with her and she was gonna help me with that.

I had these dreams that she was gonna help teach my girls good responsibility and how to have chores and things to do around the house to help. Julie and I would stay up late at night watching YouTube videos on how to train dogs.

And we fully believed that we would have the capabilities of training this notably energetic yet intelligent breed of dog to obey our every command.

[10:09] The problem is, as it turned out, I'm not a very good dog trainer. Getty's not very fun to run with and the girls absolutely hate picking up poop out of the front yard.

When we went and picked up Getty, Mr. and Mrs. Wright provided us with a copy of Getty's Pedigree. It's a document, if you're familiar with it, it's a document that traces back her heritage and her lineage that helps us understand what we should expect in terms of her health.

If we wanted to train her to be a show dog, we would have to have certain documents that would prove that she was a purebred, German, short-haired pointer and all of these kinds of things.

And so we're given this pedigree, we're given this and it's supposed to let us know exactly who she is, what she's like, what it's supposed to be as far as her background is concerned. And it tells us that Getty is as good as it gets when it comes to GSP pedigree.

Now the first four descriptions that Paul gives in relation to his Jewish pedigree shows us that Paul, as far as his lineage and his heritage was concerned, in being a true Israelite, was as good as it gets.

[11:25] In fact, it would be very difficult to find somebody that was more qualified in this sense of having a good Jewish pedigree. Let me just mention the four things quickly that relate to this pedigree.

The first thing that he says is that he was circumcised the eighth day. Now the literal translation of this means that he was an eight-dayer. It meant that he was circumcised by his parents seven days after his birth in strict compliance with the Abrahamic covenant.

You can read that in Genesis 17 or in Leviticus chapter 12. And the point is, Paul was an insider as far as the nation of Israel was concerned. He was an insider from birth.

From the very beginning, he was treated by his parents, he was raised by his parents in exactly the way that the law said a child was to be raised.

And that began with him being an eight-dayer. Now the second description that he says is that he was of the stock of Israel. He was of the stock of Israel. This had to do with his national race.

[12:33] Now it was possible for a non-Jew to be an eight-dayer. But Paul came from a pure line of Israelites. It wasn't just that he was a proselyte to Judaism, that his parents had just wanted to move him into this identification with Israel.

So even as a pagan child, he was circumcised seven days after his birth. That's not what happened with Paul. Paul's line, his lineage was of true-blooded Israelites.

In fact, the term Israel and Israelite that Paul uses here was an inside term, which Jews referred to themselves as.

Others would have referred to them as Jews, but only Jews called themselves the children of Israel. So it was significant what Paul's saying here. He says, I'm an eight-dayer.

I am of the true stock of Israel. Thirdly, he says, I'm of the tribe of Benjamin. Now there was significance to this, because Benjamin was the only tribe that had stayed loyal and faithful to Judah in the divided kingdom.

[13:41] Eventually, when Judah went into captivity with Babylon, Benjamin went into captivity with them. After 70 years, when they came out of captivity, Benjamin came with Judah and helped to resettle the nation in Jerusalem.

Israel's first king was a Benjamite. His name was Saul. Perhaps his parents had even named him after Israel's first king being a Benjamite.

So in addition to his pure bloodline, Paul was from one of the most respected tribes. Do you see how he's beginning to build this pedigree? I'm an eight-dayer.

I'm of the true stock of Israel. I'm from one of the most respected tribes in Israel. And then he gives us a fourth one that kind of reemphasizes and summarizes it all. He says, I'm a Hebrew of the Hebrews.

Now, this reemphasized Paul's lineage as being elite. Though he was born outside of the Holy Land in Cilicia, his parents were sure to raise him as a faithful Jew in Jerusalem.

[ 14 : 48 ] He was not only an eight-dayer. His parents had not only fulfilled everything that the law had said parents, Jewish parents were supposed to do with their children.

But when most of the Jews in this culture were Hellenized by Greek culture, Paul was raised with Hebrew as his first language. Not only was he raised with Hebrew as his first language, he was sent to the best Jewish school in Jerusalem.

Acts 22 says that he sat at the feet of Gamaliel, who was a famous rabbi of the day. He was a Hebrew of the Hebrews.

Not only was his lineage and his pedigree short, but his parents had painstakingly taking every effort possible to have him in the best Jewish schools, listening to the best rabbi available at the time.

He did everything that he was supposed to do. He was an elite Jew. And the emphasis of this pedigree showed that Paul was not a mere proselyte to Judaism as many of the Judaizers might have been.

[ 15 : 55 ] His family wasn't saved, or not saved, but his family wasn't converted to Judaism later on in his life. They had always been Jews. He was as good as it gets when it comes to national heritage.

And this meant something significant to these Jews who cared greatly about their heritage and their lineage. But the second thing that he says, or the second category at least, is sincerity.

Sincerity. Now you see this in the last phrase of verse 5, and then again in verse 6. The first four traits had to do with pedigree. The last three had to do with Paul's passion in following God through Judaism.

And listen to this description that he gives. The first one that he says in verse number 5, he says, Now the Pharisee movement, or denomination in Israel, came during the intertestamental time.

There was a 400-year gap between the last prophecy in the Old Testament to when John the Baptist came on the scene in the New Testament. 400 years where God was silent with his nation.

[ 17 : 08 ] And during that 400 years, the nation of Israel had abandoned and turned away from the true worship of God like they had done many times before. And so for noble reasons, there was this movement started from within Israel that was known as the Pharisees.

Now the word itself means separated ones. They were separatist. That's what they were. And they were immeasurably committed to following the law and had even developed hundreds of their own traditions that they taught alongside the law as if it was just as important.

And they followed them to the extreme. Unfortunately, what started as a noble task, their zeal was negated by their belief that lawful obedience could earn salvation.

At the time of the New Testament writings, there was only, according to Josephus Flavius, there was only 6,000 of these men that even existed in the world. Only 6,000 Jews that were willing to commit themselves in this way to the law and to these other traditions.

Not only was Paul one of these elite separatists, but he came from a line of Pharisees according to his own testimony in Acts 22. Now many people believe that not only was he a Pharisee, but they believe that Paul was also a member of the Sanhedrin.

[ 18 : 40 ] And we don't have this explicitly stated in the scripture, but it's very possible that he could have been. The Sanhedrin was a group of 70 men, elite leaders among the elite leaders of the nation of Israel.

And they basically ruled the Jews in a spiritual sense. They cite Paul's persecuting authority, the fact that he was chosen and allowed to persecute the church in this way as showing a sign of authority that could have only come from the Sanhedrin.

The fact that Paul was single and had chosen to be so was an indication that he very well could have been a part of the Sanhedrin. He had committed himself to the fullest extent to be distracted by no other relationship.

And then his role in the martyrdom of Stephen, they cite all of these things as evidence. The bottom line is he was as committed as you could possibly be to the law and to Judaism.

Touching the law, I was a Pharisee. Here's the second thing he says. Concerning zeal, persecuting the church. I heard this week that zeal consists of two components.

[ 19 : 52 ] One is love and one is hate. Zeal is to love something so much that you hate everything that is against it.

And Paul loved the law so much that he loathed everything that seemed to be against the law, especially Christianity. And so Paul had taken it upon himself to lead a group of persecutors that were wreaking havoc among the early church.

He was a murderer. He was taking men and women out of their homes, delivering them to Jerusalem, putting them in jail, standing them in trial before the Sanhedrin.

And if they stayed committed to the doctrines of Jesus Christ, they were stoned to death. This was all led by this man. So when he says concerning zeal, as far as my passion and my sincerity for the law and my sincerity and passion for Judaism, I persecuted the church and I did it extremely.

Although this persecution was immoral and sinful, it wasn't illegal. He'd actually been tasked with this by the high priest to carry it out.

[ 21 : 05 ] It wasn't an underground operation. And Paul truly believed that what he was doing in leading this persecution was actually pleasing to the Lord. That it's what God wanted for him, that it actually made him right with God.

And then finally he says, touching the righteousness, which is of the law, I was blameless. Now Paul didn't believe himself to be sinless.

That would have gone against the Pharisaical belief. But he did see himself as objectively blameless. And he was. When it came to the Pharisees' interpretation of the Old Testament law and of their traditions, Paul was above reproach.

He was unable to be accused. He lived an exemplary life that consisted of good works and religious commitment.

Kent Hughes said, Paul speaks of his blamelessness as an objective fact, as incontestable as his circumcision, his membership in the tribe of Benjamin, and his persecution of the church.

[ 22 : 16 ] All of these tangible things that Paul said, you can't deny that I'm these things as far as my pedigree. I can prove it to you. He says with that same confidence and same objectivity, I was blameless according to the law.

Now here's the point of all of that. If it was at all possible to earn salvation, Paul could do it. If anybody could, it would be Paul.

But even Paul said that his list of accomplishments was not able to make him righteous before the holy God. He learned that the grace of God only could save him.

And he was concerned with exposing the deception of this teaching to these churches, especially Philippi. Now many people today believe that their religious pedigree and sincerity can get them to heaven.

The prevailing thought of the day is that a good God would never send good people to hell, but rather he will instead be gracious and lenient to those who try hard and do their best.

[ 23 : 31 ] But that's not at all what the Bible teaches about God or salvation. The biblical teaching is that God is perfectly holy.

And in that holiness comes justice. And in that perfect justice is zero tolerance for sin. He doesn't grade on a curve.

No one will stand before the judgment hoping that God will be lenient because they just did their best.

Now while a Christian heritage is not inconsequential, salvation is not inherited or passed down from generation to generation. I can't give it to Ashlyn and Harper the way that I can give them other material possessions.

It doesn't work that way. Neither does sincerity equal salvation. Many people are sincerely wrong. There's no such thing as being close enough.

[ 24 : 37 ] No points are awarded on the basis of passion and effort. It's either all Christ or nothing. So Paul says there is futility in self-righteousness.

The second thing quickly, he talks about the surpassing worth of knowing Christ. That's in verses seven through nine. The surpassing worth of knowing Christ.

Now in these verses, Paul utilizes accounting terms to illustrate the futility of self-righteousness, but the value of knowing Christ. Now I want you to picture if you would, Paul pulls out his spiritual

ledger.

He's talking about gain and loss, debits and credits using accounting terms. Now according to Paul, before his conversion, when he pulled out his spiritual ledger, on the debit column was a list of all of his sinful deeds.

He lists all the things that he had done wrong, all the bad thoughts he had had, anything he would have considered sinful was listed in that debit column. But in the credit column was everything in verses five and six, his pedigree and his sincerity.

[ 25 : 47 ] And in Paul's mind, so long as his credit column outweighed his debit column, he would make it into heaven and earn eternal life.

And this is how many people view salvation. As long as their good column exceeds their bad column, they believe that God will accept them. Paul said after being confronted by the risen Christ in Acts chapter nine, everything that he counted as a credit was actually revealed to him to be a debit.

The good works and religious commitment that he thought was helping him was actually damaging to him. It was pulling him away from the only thing that could possibly give him credit.

And so therefore, when he came to know Christ, all of those things in verses five and six, all of those accomplishments, all of those achievements, he scratched out and moved from the credit column over to the debit column.

He said they were good things and maybe I had great zeal and maybe the Lord was using me in some way or another, but those things were actually pulling me away from Christ. They weren't pushing me towards Christ. They were actually a debit.

[ 26 : 54 ] They were working against me, Paul says. The only real credit anyone could have comes from the surpassing value of knowing Jesus Christ.

Now there's only one thing listed in Paul's credit column and that is the righteousness of Christ that comes by faith. But in order for Christ to be in his credit column, he had to let go of all the other things that he had formerly thought should be there.

Let's read the verses together. Look at verse seven. Paul says, what things were gained to me, those I counted loss for Christ. I had to let go of those things in order to gain Christ.

And then he reemphasizes it and he says, yea, doubtless, I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, or as your scripture journals probably say, it says, the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but dung that I may win Christ and be found in him.

And being found in him, Paul says, is not my own righteousness which is of the law, but it is that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness of God by faith.

[ 28 : 20 ] The only way that Christ could be in his credit column, the only way that he could actually gain salvation and eternal life is if he let go of all the other achievements and cling solely by faith to the righteousness that comes by faith through Christ Jesus.

Now Paul equates in this passage salvation with this phrase, knowing Christ, or the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. Now the Greek word here does not refer to an intellectual knowledge, but an experiential knowledge.

It's not enough to know about Christ, but one must know him personally. This kind of knowledge indicates that intimacy that is found in a personal loving relationship.

It's equivalent to the Old Testament usage of knowing someone in marriage. It's not that you know about your spouse, but you know them intimately through your personal fellowship with them.

The Judaizers knew all about Jesus. They knew everything there was to know about him intellectually, but they did not know him experientially.

[ 29 : 40 ] And in that sense, they were no different than the demons in James chapter 2 and those standing in judgment in Matthew chapter 7. In fact, let me read those verses to you.

James chapter 2 in verse 19 if you want to write down the reference. James says, thou believest that there is one God? Good, thou doest well, but even the devils believe and tremble.

James says, a purely intellectual knowledge of Jesus Christ is not enough. Even the demons know about Christ, they have better theology than we have.

They know everything there is to know about Christ, but that doesn't mean that they belong to Christ. And then as we read a couple of weeks ago in Matthew chapter 7, Jesus said, many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name?

We have preached about you, Jesus. And in thy name have cast out devils. We have demonstrated power in your name, Jesus. And in thy name done many wonderful works. All of these things, we put your name and Christian on the name of our non-profit organization.

[ 30 : 49 ] And then I will profess, Jesus says, I never knew you. Again, that same term. And then he'll say, depart from me, ye that work iniquity, evil worker, not good worker.

Now what's the difference between knowing about Christ and knowing Christ? You have to answer that question. The demons know about Christ, but they will not submit to Christ.

Those in Matthew chapter 7 know all about Christ and even take on the label of Christian, but they're not trusting only in Christ. The difference between knowing about Jesus and knowing Jesus is submitting to him as Lord and trusting only in him for salvation.

That's the difference. It's not enough just to know about him. You must know him. And until you're willing to trust Christ alone, apart from your works, you cannot experience him in an intimate, personal relationship.

Listen how Jesus taught this in a parable in Matthew 13. Two parables actually. In fact, write down that reference. Matthew 13, 44 and 45. Jesus said, again, the kingdom of heaven, which is a reference to salvation, again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hidden afield.

[ 32 : 17 ] The man, when a man hath found this treasure, he hides it and then for joy goes and sells all that he has to buy that field. In other words, a guy's coming along, he finds a treasure in a field and he finds that that treasure is way more valuable than anything else that he has.

So he goes home and he sells all of his goods and he sells his house. He has nothing left and he goes and he takes it and he buys that field in order that he can gain that treasure. And then in verse 45, he gives another parable.

He says, again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant man or a retailer seeking goodly pearls who when he has found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all the land or sold all that he had and bought it.

So this retailer comes through, he's got a thriving business, he finds this one pearl of great price and he sells his business and everything that goes along with it in order to get this one pearl.

And Jesus says, that's exactly what salvation is. You can have all of these things, you can have all of these religious accomplishments, you can have all of these things you're trying to achieve, things that are making you happy right now that you think will bring you joy in life but when you finally come to understand the treasure that you can find in me, you'll give up all of that stuff in order to have me instead.

[ 33 : 33 ] That's exactly what Paul is saying salvation is. All of these things I had worked for, Paul said, all of these achievements I had had were nowhere near the surpassing worth of knowing Jesus Christ.

And then he takes it a step further in verse number eight, he says, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but dung or rubbish or excrement that I may win Christ and be found in him.

Think about Paul's life before conversion. He had everything that a man like Paul could ever want. He had power, he had authority, he had friendship, wealth, honor, fame, accolade, everything that this world pursues.

Paul had it and he had it at a young age. He was not an old man at this point. He had done so well in his pursuit of Judaism that he had accrued everything that a person could ever want in Judaism. He had it all. But when he trusted Christ, all of that became loss and he suffered the loss of it all. Instead of friendship, what Paul now had was abandonment.

[ 35 : 01 ] Even some of his closest companions in the ministry, aside from just a few, eventually abandoned him. Instead of wealth, he was poor and he relied on whatever he could make in making tents or whatever gifts some of these churches would pass his way.

Instead of honor, he was tortured, imprisoned for four years and put to shame. But he said, all of those things that I once lived for, I now count as trash.

in order to know Christ and be found in him. You may look at that sacrifice and think it's not worth it. It's not worth that kind of loss. It's not worth losing my family.

It's not worth losing my friends. It's not worth losing my job. It's not worth losing my money or my hobbies. You may say, the cost that Paul paid that Jesus calls us to is way too great.

But think about what unbelievable treasure Paul had found in Jesus that he was willing to continue in that type of suffering for Christ's sake.

[ 36 : 19 ] No one was forcing Paul into this. Think about what he gave up. What kind of value is there in Christ that not only would he suffer that loss, but he would remain in that suffering for the rest of his life willingly.

Why? In order that he might know Christ. Jesus said in Mark chapter 8, if any will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

And then he says, for whosoever will save his life shall lose it. Everybody that tries to hang on to all the stuff, living your life for the wealth and the fame and the friendship and all the other things.

Save up all of that stuff. Eventually you're going to lose it. You can't keep it forever. Eventually it will all be gone. But whoever will lose his life, give all of that up in order to follow me, Jesus says.

For my sake and the gospels, the same shall save it. What they will end up getting in eternity is far greater than anything they're trying to hold on to now, Jesus says. And then he asks this question that I'm sure you've heard before.

[ 37 : 35 ] What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, gets everything that he wants, but he loses his own eternal soul? And then Jesus says, what are you willing to give in exchange for your soul?

What is it in this life that's so worth holding on to that you're unwilling willing to let it go in order to truly follow Christ? That's the question Jesus asked.

There's not a thing in this world that could ever compare to the surpassing value of knowing Jesus, the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord.

Paul traded those pleasures in order to stand before God, not having his own righteousness, but having the righteousness of Christ. And we have to ask the question then, are we willing to give up all in order to follow Christ?

Have we found in Christ the treasure that's hidden in the field and the pearl that's of great price? And if we haven't, what is it that you see as more valuable that would prevent you from following him or trusting him?

[ 38 : 55 ] There's the futility of self-righteousness. There's the surpassing worth of knowing Christ. And then quickly and finally in verses 10 and 11, there's the ongoing pursuit of Christ.

Look at what Paul says. That I may know him. This is what he wants more than anything now. This is his passion. This is his pursuit. I want to know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings being made conformable unto his death if that by any means I might attain into the resurrection of the dead or eternal life.

Once Paul had tasted of the goodness of Christ, he wanted more and more and more and more. Verses 10 and 11 reveal Paul's ongoing pursuit of Christ.

The man that was once consumed with self-righteousness was now utterly consumed with Jesus. But these verses aren't speaking to the process of sanctification.

Paul hasn't got there yet. He's going to get there in verses 12 to 16. That's what we'll study next Sunday. He's not talking about sanctification, this pursuit of righteousness after salvation.

[ 40 : 03 ] He's talking about the salvation and the benefits that Jesus brings in salvation. He wants to experience those things. He's passionate about knowing Christ in that way.

And there's three of them that he mentions here. Power, partnership, and life. Let me just mention them quickly. First thing he says, I want to know the power of his resurrection. The power of his resurrection.

Now the resurrection was the ultimate display of the power of Jesus Christ. If we were going to reference his power, it was seen ultimately and in its greatest extent in his resurrection from the dead.

Now Paul had realized in his pursuits for salvation, there was no power within himself to gain salvation. He couldn't be good enough. He couldn't do enough religious things.

He had all the zeal, all the partnerships, all the things that you could ever want. And it wasn't enough. He realized in himself there was no power for salvation. So he says, all I want to know is Christ and the power that he has to bring salvation.

[ 41 : 06 ] I want the power of Christ. I want the power of his resurrection. The only thing that can actually bring me life. The only thing that can actually bring me salvation. Paul said that I may know him and that kind of power because in me is no power at all.

I need the power of Christ and I want it, he says. Then he says the fellowship of his sufferings. This is partnership. This is partnership. He wasn't saying that he desired to suffer.

Nobody wants to suffer. What he was saying is that in Christ he had someone who understood the suffering that he would experience. Rather than go through the difficulties alone, Paul partnered with Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit in suffering.

This is a benefit of salvation in Christ Jesus. Not only do we experience his power, the only power that can save, but he then partners with us.

And when we have to let go of all those other things and we suffer the loss of all things in order to gain Christ, we are partnering with him. We have fellowship with him. It's the same word that Paul used in chapter 1 when he thanked the church at Philippi for partnering with him in the gospel.

[ 42 : 26 ] He said, I have this partnership with Christ now. Christ is with me. Everybody else may abandon me, but Christ is with me and he has strengthened me and he is helping me. And he said, I want to know Christ in that way.

And then the last thing that he has or mentions is being conformable unto his death or becoming like him in death is what that means. And then he says, in becoming like him in death, I am brought life through the resurrection of the dead, through his resurrection.

And this is a little weird. I really think these two phrases work together, but as verse 11 especially is a little bit difficult as far as piecing the words apart and really grabbing and understanding. Here's what I think it is.

Paul explained it this way to the Galatians in Galatians chapter 2. You know the verse. He said, I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless, I live. Yet not I, but Christ lives in me.

In the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. When Paul says I'm crucified with Christ, he's not talking about a literal crucifixion. Paul was still living.

[ 43 : 33 ] Of course, he hadn't been crucified. He was talking about putting to death the old man, the old way, the old sin in order to be given new life in Christ Jesus.

And in putting to death the old man and his sin, he was crucified with Christ in that way. He became conformed to the death of Christ and only by conforming to the death of Christ, spiritually putting himself to death, was he able to attain the resurrection of the dead, the eternal life that only Christ can give.

And Paul said, that's all I want to know. I just want to know Christ. I want to know his power. I want to know his partnership and I want to know the life that only he can bring. What a wonderful testimony that is.

I'm thankful that God gives us this here in Philippians 3. Not only as an inspiring look at the life of a man who loved Christ probably more than any of us ever have, but to be moved by the grace of God in his life, to see exactly how awful Paul was, yet God loved him and gave him this power and gave him this partnership and gave him this life.

And that's exactly the salvation that God offers us. it doesn't matter what your past is like. It doesn't matter how many good works you've trusted in for salvation up to this point.

[ 45 : 16 ] If you'll just let go of those things and follow him, he will save you and you will reap those benefits too. Only he has that power. Thank you for listening to this sermon made available by Lakeside Bible Church.

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