

Philippians 3:7

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[0 : 0 0] I will turn back with me now to the second reading we had, that's in the book of Philippians, Epistle to the Philippians and chapter 3.

Paul's Epistle to the Philippians and chapter 3. I'd like us to consider the words we have in verse 7 here. But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him.

Not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith, that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Whatever gain I had, I counted as loss. I counted as loss because of the value of knowing Christ Jesus.

[1 : 3 0] Paul's letter to the Philippians is a letter, I think first and foremost, a letter of joy. He uses the word rejoice in it so often. But it's also a defense of the gospel.

And Paul's anger comes through here in the first few verses of this chapter. His anger is directed at a group called Judaizers.

And these Judaizers, they're trying to mislead the Christian believers there with regard to salvation and what's required with salvation. And it's quite interesting to note what Paul calls them as well.

He's very direct and he's very straight to the point. He says, look out for the dogs. He says, look out for the evildoers. Paul's seal for the gospel.

Paul's love for Christ. And Paul's love for the cause of the Lord was so strong that he had no qualms whatsoever about calling these people who were trying to misdirect the Christians, dogs and evildoers.

[2 : 3 8] These Judaizers, they believed in Christ but they wanted something else as well. And this is what annoyed Paul.

Because they wanted people to follow the Old Testament law. They wanted people to follow traditions. They wanted people to follow different things over and above God's word. They had this Christ plus, if you like.

And especially, they believed that the converted Christian Jews should be circumcised and continue to have that physical circumcision. And Paul had no time for this whatsoever.

His anger directed at them is very clear for us all. And he makes very plain that there is no Christ plus. It's solely by faith in Christ alone.

And he says that to us through words we have at the beginning of the chapter here where he tells us that, he says, we are the real circumcision. That is, the spiritual circumcision.

- [3 : 42] And Paul explains this spiritual circumcision with three very brief descriptions here. He says, first of all, our belief is by faith in Christ.
- And we believe, we worship by the Spirit of God. And secondly, that the believers glory in Christ Jesus and in him alone.
- They're satisfied with their hope that they have in Christ and his finished work at Calvary. And thirdly, that they, as believers, true believers, have no more confidence in the flesh whatsoever.
- No more confidence in any man-made rules that is all about Christ and his word and faith in his death and resurrection at Calvary. So, Paul makes it very clear there against any who try to mislead people away from the Christian faith.
- Paul makes the defense of the gospel here crystal clear. And that's how he opens this chapter. And that's what it all means to him. This meeting that Paul had with Christ Jesus on that Damascus road changed his whole life.
- [4 : 53] This man, Paul, he was a scourge of Christianity. He was there putting his name and giving permission for Christians to be beaten, to be thrown in jail, and even to be murdered.
- And he was quite happy. He was so zealous for that cause, believing that all he was doing at that time was right and correct. He had no time whatsoever for Christianity.
- He didn't believe in the risen Jesus. And he wouldn't have anything to do with his Christians. He saw it as his mission at that time. We've got to get these Christians.
- We've got to go after them, and we'll persecute them one by one until we get rid of this and keep following our own testament law. With all of that, I just want to look very briefly with you at three points of this passage.
- Paul's past life, to consider that for a short while. And then secondly, to consider Paul's conversion. And then thirdly and finally, the difference that it's made in his life now.
- [6 : 00] And how we can maybe relate all of that to ourselves in here today as well. So we have, first of all here, Paul's past life. And he gives us quite a description here of his own past and how he was.
- He goes on to relate his own personal experience. Now, I think for all of us, when we can relate personal experience, then we know what we're talking about, don't we?
- Because it's actually ours, and we can convey exactly how it was with us. And Paul says, look at me. And look at the way that I was before.
- And we see it here in verse 4. Paul's saying, you know, here I am. I'm fully exposing myself. Here I am showing myself that all the confidence I had was in myself, in my flesh, what I could do, and the way that I thought of things.
- This is the way I was. And the way Paul's looking at it here, it's almost like he's giving us his testimony, or a part of his testimony here. He's kind of looking back, and it's like he's reviewing a spiritual inventory of the way things were with him.
- [7 : 20] And it's like maybe, you know, the words we have today, it's a personal portfolio of Paul himself. It's like he's drawing back a curtain to show us and to fully describe his own past ugly religious life.
- I'm not talking about a life of Christianity, but it is religious life. And he's doing this to warn and to encourage the Philippians not to trust in their own good ways, in any way, shape, or form.
- And he's doing that for us as well here today. The Word of God is telling us, don't trust in yourself. Don't trust in your own works. It's only in Christ Jesus that we can trust. And Paul shows us himself.

He talks about, you know, he tells him, don't boast. And he says, if anyone had any reason to boast, it was me. Look at the way that I was brought up here.

Look at the qualifications or the credentials that I had. Followed all that was required in that old religious system. I was circumcised on the eighth day in accordance with God's law of the Old Testament.

[8 : 33] Look at my family line. And my family was totally committed to the law. Totally committed to following the word of that old covenant and that old way.

Totally committed throughout the whole of my family. And this surely confirms my true Jewishness. I was a real Jew.

And I was so proud of that. I was so proud that I was a Jew. And that tells me that I was of the people of Israel.

And that was God's chosen people. That was the tribe that was above all other people. I was of the people of Israel. I was a full-blooded Jew.

And not just that. But I was of the tribe of Benjamin. I was of the tribe of Benjamin. That's the tribe of Israel's first king.

[9 : 33] King David. That is the name of honor. So that tells me. And if you look at me and the way I was.

I was a Hebrew of the Hebrews. A Hebrew of the Hebrews. A Hebrew son of Hebrew parents. I was a real thoroughbred.

That's what Paul is telling us here. And I spoke all kinds of different languages. I knew all of these things. What was my attitude to the law? He goes on to say here.

I was a Pharisee. That's what he tells us. I was a Pharisee. And I was self-righteous according to all that I did myself.

And as to the zeal that I had. There was none like me. I was doing all of these things. I persecuted the church. And boy he's telling us.

[10 : 30] Did I not do a good job? Look at the way I went about. Beginning of Acts chapter 9 tells us. He went for written permission. He was the man. He was like a modern day terrorist.

Just going around and murdering. And throwing in jail. And persecuting whoever was believing. In something that he didn't believe in. Paul was a man.

And Paul would have been held in very, very high esteem. And Paul would have been a man of wealth. Because of all of these things as well. And a man of honor.

And Paul would have been a man who was greatly respected. By other people. Just by other people. He would have been greatly respected.

By other people. People. People. They judged Paul. And they judged the way he was. With a kind of legalism. And a legal righteousness.

[11 : 28] It was all based on human standards. And they would have concluded that Paul was a great man.

Because of all of these things. This doesn't mean. Of course. To say that. Paul didn't sin before. But what it does mean is that.

He did all the right things that were expected of him. By other people. And. I guess there's a lot of people today. Who are very like that.

And who come right into. That category. Who are in exactly the same position. As Paul used to be. Living a clean life. And.

People who. Who do everything that. That's expected of them. By other people. Well thought of. By a lot of people. And.

- [12 : 27] Respected. In their community. In their neighborhood. Respected. In their community. Respected. By a lot of people. People. People who do. Everything. Right. Well you know. Good as that is. It won't get anyone. Into heaven. It won't get anyone. Into heaven. It won't save anyone. Paul. Thought it would.
- Many people. Today. Still think it will as well. Think their own good works. Will save them. And get them into heaven. But I ask the question. In all of that.
- And if you're in here today. And perhaps in that situation. I ask the question. Where is Christ. In all of that. Where is Christ. In all of that.
- You see. The word tells us. Very clearly. That without Christ. We have nothing. Without Christ. We have nothing. And that.
- [13 : 23] Is the truth. Of the gospel. So it leaves us. With a question. Then. What do you need? And let's turn. Secondly. To this. Paul goes on. To tell us here.
- Paul. Paul. Was converted. Paul. Paul. Paul. Met Christ. And Christ. Met with him. And look at the way. That it affected him. As we read there.
- In Acts chapter 9. Paul was. Making his way. Towards Damascus. To carry on. This mission. That he had. Of persecuting Christians. And persecuting the church.
- And on the way there. He was stopped. In his tracks. This man Paul. Who thought that. He was earning. His own way.
- Into God's favor. And into heaven. He thought that. By doing it all. Through his own good works. In his own way. That he thought. That was right. And.
- [14 : 20] He. He. Met with Christ here. On this Damascus road. And. Look at the first reaction. He was instantly. Brought to his knees. Instantly.
- Brought to his knees. When he was brought. Face to face. With God. In the person. Of Jesus Christ. Paul fell. To his knees. And he was given.
- To realize. In that. Very moment. That. Everything. That he did before. Everything. All these. Acts of treachery.
- That he had carried out. In his life before. That they were all worthless. They were self-centered. And he realized. When he met Christ. That day. That they were worth nothing.
- It was all about himself. And it was all about. These old traditions. And it was all about. The old laws. That he kept.
- [15 : 18] He was given to realize. That this Christ. That was before him now. Was nowhere in the picture. In all that he was doing before. In reality.
- As we have in our text here. It was worth nothing. It was just like rubbish. To Paul. In fact. Some other. Some other. Versions of the Bible.
- It was done. That's what Paul thought. Of his previous life. Compared to. What he has now in Christ. 30 years old. It was just rubbish. And worthless done.
- You see. When. When. Paul. Pulled away. All these layers. Of tradition. And when he pulled away.
- All the layers. Of self-righteousness. And all. Everything that had to do. With himself. What he realized. To his horror. Was that there was nothing there.
- [16 : 13] In and of himself. What a shock. That must have been to him. In just the same way. As it is to every Christian. When they're brought. Face to face.
- With Christ. At that moment. They realize. Absolutely nothing. Of themselves. What a shock. Having lived. All their lives. Trying to earn their way.

Into God's favor. They realize. That was just. Worthless done. That was just. Rubbish. Fit for the rubbish heap. And nothing else. And the only thing.

That matters. Is Christ. And to have him. And that person. Relationship. With him. That's. The place. That Paul. Was taken to.

That's. The place. That. That Paul. Was led to. By the Lord. For. A special reason. That Paul.

[17 : 08] Found himself. At that moment. Safe. And secure. In Christ. And isn't that amazing. For anyone. To be found.

To be found. Safe. And secure. In Christ. It's just amazing. Every Christian. Today. And any. That I've ever lived.

They have. That same experience. They have. That same security. They have. That day to day. Precious. Personal. Relationship. With the Lord.

Jesus Christ. Christ. You see. Christ is the answer. To. All of the questions. That you might have. About life. Questions like.

Why am I here. On earth. In the first place. Is there a God. And. What's the purpose. Of. This earth. And. This whole human race. Well.

[18 : 01] Christ is the answer. We're told that. Our main priority. Is to glorify God. To enjoy him forever. To worship him. In Christ Jesus.

And to have no other gods. Before him. So no matter how well. You think you're doing. No matter how good.

Or. How comfortable. Anyone's life. May be. Just now. If you don't. Have Jesus. As your personal savior. Then you have nothing.

You have nothing. If you die without him. You will go to a lost eternity. And. Does that in itself.

Not tell you. How much. And. You need him. And how urgent. It is. That you come to him. And that you draw near to him. And the marvel is.

[18 : 56] That. He wants you. To call out to him. He wants you to cry out to him. He wants you to go to him. He's waiting for you to turn to him.

To turn away from the way you are just now. And to turn to him. And to seek after him. And to cry out to him. With your whole heart. He says. Ask. And it shall be given to you.

Seek. And you will find. Knock that door. And that door shall be opened to you. The word tells us that we need to be born again.

And that is we need to be renewed. By the spirit of God. And God is just longing. To hear you. Cry out to him.

Today. Right now. To cry out to him. For mercy. As we sang there. He is a God of mercy. And he is just longing. To pour out. His love. Upon you.

[19 : 53] Look at the effect. Of God's love. The love of Christ. In the life of Paul. Look at the instant effect. Just as it is.

With every true believer. And so we have. All of this here.

With Paul. We see Paul's life. In Christ thirdly. What it means to him now. See.

Paul never forgot. What he was like before. He never forgot. His past life. He never forgot. His feelings. His wrong thinking.

He never let it buy him. And that kept him steady. That kept him. That helped. I think to keep him. On an evil. An evil curse.

[20 : 51] In his own life. Here we are. As I mentioned. 30 years on. In Paul's life. And Paul is.

He's summarizing. His experience here. And he's telling us. How. Quite literally. That Christ. Took a hold of him.

And took a hold of his life. For his own purposes. He took control of his life. And. And Paul's telling us. That he was now.

Totally. 100%. Instantly. Committed. To the Lord Jesus. Through his meeting with him. In that Damascus road. And he began.

To lead his life. In. In a totally different direction. Did a whole. 180 degree turn. And started. Off. In a whole new direction. Totally committed.

[21 : 46] To the Lord. He was. As the word tells us. This new creation. This new creature. In Christ Jesus. Being led now.

And guided. By the Lord. Through his spirit. This relationship. That there is. Between Christ. And the Christian. You know.

That it's. It's just so personal. And. It is. It is just. So real. That Christ. Is active. In that person's life. Every single moment.

Of every single day. And it's a marvelous turning. And what Christ. Is doing is. As he did with Paul. Here. Throughout all of his years.

As we read in the New Testament. Through his epistles. And in Acts. And so on. He's doing with. All of his own people. As well. What he's doing is. He. He begins. And carries on.

[22 : 42] And he's shaping them. And he's framing them. And he's using them. In this earth. He's making them ready. Bit by bit.

Not just to live out their life. For him here. And to worship him here on earth. But to spend. The whole of eternity. With him. That's the work that Christ is doing. That God is doing.

Through his spirit. In every single Christian. Isn't that amazing? That we. We. Who believe. And have faith in Christ. Have been shaped and framed. It might not seem like it to us. But that's what's going on.

That's the ongoing work. Of sanctification. That we've been shaped. And framed. Being made more like Jesus. And being prepared. To spend. The endless ages of eternity.

With him. That's resurrection power. Working. Through Christ. And in coming to know Christ.

[23 : 38] More. And more. And Paul. Understands. All of this now. And that's how Paul. Can say. Well. Look at what I have now. Look at this precious relationship.

I have with Christ. I look back. Oh. That's just. Rubbish. That's just. Fit for the rubbish heap. Worthless to me. All that matters to Paul.

And all that matters to every Christian now. Is Christ. And it comes down to. That question that you can ask. To any Christian. Would you want to.

Live on this earth. For even one moment. Without Christ now. And everyone would answer in harmony. No way. I need Christ. Every moment. Of my existence. And I wouldn't want to be with him.

To be without him. For even. A moment now. So that's how Paul. Looks back. And is able to say. I count all these things. But lost. And.

[24 : 37] Christ is his goal. And. The work that Christ has given him. To do. Is his goal. And. All that matters now. Is that. That he is with Christ. That Christ is with him.

And that he is pressing on. Towards the mark. Of this. High calling of God. In. Christ Jesus. His Lord. Every principle.

That he had before. Good as they were. In their own way. There were nothing. Compared. To knowing Christ. And having Christ. As his.

Saviour. So there we have. Here we have Paul. Taking stock. Of his life. If you like. And. All he's concerned about now. Is having Jesus.

And being found safe. In. Christ Jesus. The new Paul. He experienced. The love of God. He experienced that.

[25 : 34] In Christ Jesus. And. He realized. The true value. Of this love. That only Christ. Can offer. And.

What Paul did. Is. Something that. Is good to take note of. When Jesus began. When Jesus met with him. And. Began working in his life. He committed to Jesus.

Right there and then. Right there and then. And he lived his life. For Christ. From that moment as well. And how he shared it.

Didn't he share it. Just as we had in that. Address for the young people there. The more we share God's love. Then the more it spreads out. But we go back to that. Fountain of grace.

Day by day. Just to draw more. From him. That he's so willing to give. That we'll share. That we will know him. Know his love. And share Christ.

[26 : 31] With other people. And how Paul shared it. He gave. His whole life. To winning souls. For Christ. That was his commitment.

To the Lord. God. And that was his. Framework of reference. If you like. For his life. It was all to do. With the love of God.

That was shed abroad. In the heart. Of this man Paul. And it's the same. For every Christian. It's the love of God. That is shed abroad. In the heart. Of each and every one.

Of his people. That's what stops them. In their tracks. His love. His mercy. His compassion. And his willingness. Just to share. So that we can share.

Paul now. Possesses Christ. As his own. And that's all that matters. And Paul says. As he nears the end of his ministry.

[27 : 27] Here in Philippians. I count all things. As loss. For the. For the infinite. Value. Of knowing. Jesus Christ.

As my. Lord. And master. That's Paul's testimony. And that's a testimony. Of every Christian. And I think.

Just as a closer service. I just want to mention. How the hymn writer. Sums it all up. So well. We're told.

I stand amazed. In the presence. Of Jesus. The Nazarene. And I wonder. How he could love me. A sinner.

Condemned. And unclean. How marvelous. And how wonderful. And my song shall ever be. How marvelous.

[28 : 25] And how wonderful. Is my Savior's love. For me. Paul. knew that. Every Christian. Knows that love. First hand. May truly be. That.

Each. And every one of us. In here today. Would be able to share. In that love. And fellowship. In Christ Jesus. Let's pray. Amen. We thank you.

Father. For. The marvel. Of the change. That. Your gospel. Makes. In the life. Of each. And every individual. We truly pray.

That. Your people. That. The lives. Of each one. Would be. Dedicated. Holy. To the Lord. Jesus Christ. And to your mission.

Of sharing. Your word. That souls. Might be one. For Christ. We pray. That for any. Who are in here. Today. Father. That. You would work. Marvelously in them.

[29 : 25] If they're yet. Without Christ. That they would come. To know you. And that they would come. To realize. That. There's nothing. That. Any of us. Can do. To earn our way.

Into your favor. Or to qualify. For heaven. Except by faith. In the wisdom. Lord Jesus. So bless. Our time together. We pray. May your name. Be glorified.

In all that was said. And done. And forgive us. Now. For every sin. In Christ. Amen.