

Losing And Gaining

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[0 : 0 0] Let's turn for a little to the chapter we read in Philippians chapter 3. I'm looking at these well-known verses from verse 7 to 11, chapter 3.

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 in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

As we know, Paul was a real Jew. There was a time in his life when Paul depended upon his Jewishness as being that which would make him right with God.

He was as orthodox a Jew as you could get. He was, as he tells us, he gives us a wee bit of his personal history, that he was circumcised on the eighth day.

[1 : 3 1] He was of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, as to the law, a Pharisee. So he was right in there, as it were, into the very elite, a major part of the Jewish community.

He always thought that his Jewishness was a passport to heaven. But of course, there came a time when Paul met, or Saul as he was then, he met with Jesus, or more accurately, Jesus met with him.

And from that moment, the Jewishness that he depended on, which he saw as a passport to heaven, was something straight away that he realized wasn't.

And that nothing but a personal encounter, a personal union, relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ was the only way to heaven.

As Jesus himself said, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven. Well, the apostle Paul, back as he was, as Saul, didn't know that, he didn't understand that.

[2 : 3 9] And he looked on his own righteousness, he looked at his own attempts to keep the law, as that which would make him right with God. That God, the more he would try and keep to the law.

That's why the Pharisees, they built law after law upon God's law. So that they would be, they made life almost intolerable.

Because they had built this system of little man-made laws on the top of God's law to try and make absolutely sure that all the time they were trying to, trying their hardest to keep to God's law.

And they thought by doing that, the better that they could keep to God's law, by adding all these laws, the more that God would accept them. And so Paul was basing his Jewishness, his Jewish background, on his, as it were, his right as passport to heaven.

But when he met with the Lord Jesus Christ, that went. And he realized that his background, although it was a great privilege, didn't open an automatic door to heaven for him.

[3 : 46] And you know, the same thing can be true often for ourselves as we, if we grow up within the church or grow up within a Christian community or within a Christian family.

We can look on the privilege that we have as an automatic passport, as it were, into heaven. We can assume that because we've attended church, because we have a Bible in the home and read it and such like, then that automatically, that opens the door to heaven.

But while these are great privileges and great opportunities and great blessings, unless we come to a personal union, a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, then that doesn't open the door to heaven for us.

This is the only way, as Jesus himself says. Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life. So we mustn't underestimate the great privilege, because I'm sure, and it might not be the case for everybody, but for most people who come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, they have often come from a Christian family or they have been brought up within the church.

There are many, of course, that that's not the case for. There are many people who didn't have that kind of background. But it's a wonderful privilege, and it's a wonderful starting point, and it's a great blessing.

[5 : 12] But as we say, until we come to that actual personal union for ourselves, then it doesn't guarantee us anything.

And that's what the Lord Jesus keeps telling us. So Paul, actually, when he looked back at all the things which he thought really guaranteed his place in heaven, where he really thought that everything was absolutely fine for him, when he saw all these things, as we mentioned it, he says in verse 5, all these particular things, these were the things in his own mind, in Saul's own life, where he saw that he was a somebody, that he within the Jewish community was somebody.

He was, in fact, he tells us elsewhere that he sat at the feet of the great Gamaliel, this great teacher of the law. And so Paul, as he was then Saul, would have prided himself on his learning, of his knowledge of the law, of his adherence to the law.

And he thought that this righteousness that he had in keeping to the law was that which was putting him in a good standing with the Lord. When Jesus came into his life, he saw, actually, these things don't mean anything.

As we said, they were privileges, but they didn't count. And that's why he said, I actually count them as refuse. It's just like the stuff you take and throw it to the bin. These things don't, they didn't count.

[6 : 41] That which I based my standing on, my popularity on, thought I was a somebody, I came to realize I'm a nobody. And this is one of the great things that Paul came to understand.

And so he discovered that in Christ he had everything. Out of Christ he had nothing. It was Jim Elliot who was martyred, the missionary, and he said one of the great quotes, He is no fool to give up what he cannot keep in order to gain what he cannot lose.

And that is so true. It's no fool to give up what you cannot keep in order to gain what you cannot lose. And in a sense that's what, how the Apostle Paul would say to Jim Elliot, you bang on.

That's exactly how it is. What we cannot keep and you swap it for what you cannot lose. So what has Paul gained? Well, the first thing he says, he has come to know Christ.

And in fact he says of that knowledge, Indeed I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. And so this is what happened when the moment that Jesus came into Saul's life, everything changed.

[8 : 05] And it changes for everybody. Now, a lot of people will never have a dramatic confession like Saul of Tarsus did. And the thing is, a lot of people actually look for that kind of confession.

There's a lot of people within the sphere of the church. And they go week after week and month after month and year after year. And they're still looking for this like blinding flash from heaven.

And where they have this extraordinary experience. And unless they have that, then they think there cannot be salvation. I would say that these moments of dramatic conversion are actually quite, I shouldn't say rare.

But I would say that the majority of people come to faith through a gradual opening up of their understanding. Of the light coming to slowly dawn in upon them.

They often come to faith after maybe a long period of seeking. Where there's been an interest in their heart for a long time.

[9 : 08] Maybe over years. They've been searching and seeking. Sometimes that seeking has been intense. Other times it's waxed and it's waned.

It's sometimes come and it's sometimes gone. But it's still there. And then they come to this place. Where it's like their eyes are opened. And they come to see Jesus. And they're able to lay hold upon him.

Some people it is dramatic. A friend of mine he went to had no interest in the gospel at all. And he was dragged. Literally dragged to church by his wife. And he had no, as I say, he wasn't, used to even hide the car keys so his wife couldn't get to church.

He just had no, didn't, didn't know. And anyway, he was, his wife managed to persuade him there were special services. And there was no more reluctant person going into the church that day.

But his eyes were opened during that service. To see Jesus. And he was, he was saved. And he came out of church almost like the man that was in the, in the, in the temple who was born.

[10 : 13] You remember the man with the lame who was leaping and praising God. He was just, his life was changed just in that service. Now that does happen. But as I say, very often it is more a gradual dawning of the light.

But of course, maybe what we don't grasp is that actual regeneration from God's point is in a moment. That we are born again, as it were, in a moment.

But the outworking of that can take a long time from our point of view, from our own experience. And, but as we say, for, for the, for Saul, it was dramatic.

Because it, it couldn't, you couldn't have had a more extreme picture of somebody who hated Christ and hated the Christian with a passion.

And we mean a passion. He hated his, Saul's great aim was to obliterate Christianity from the face of the earth. He was a, he was a, he was a real Jew.

[11 : 17] And as far as he was concerned, Jesus Christ was an imposter. He was somebody who had come making the most outrageous claims of being the son of God.

He wasn't the Messiah in, in Saul's eyes. And as far as Saul was concerned, he was delighted that Jesus had been put to death on the cross.

And when Stephen was martyred, you remember how they laid their clothes, those who were stoning Stephen, at the feet of a young man, Saul. And whether it was a splash of Stephen's blood or whether it was what he saw, it inflamed within him a passion to destroy Christianity of the face of the earth.

And he was on a mission, remember when he was converted, he was on a mission down to Damascus to capture, to take in Christians.

And it tells us he was breathing out slaughter. In other words, his very breath, his whole mission in life was to destroy Christianity. And it was on that mission, on that journey, that Jesus interrupted his life.

[12 : 26] And Jesus, remember just from heaven, this blinding flash of light. And from that moment, you remember how the voice came, Saul, why are you persecuting me?

And Saul, of course, became a changed man through that revelation that he had of Jesus, where he came to submit before the power and the authority of Christ.

And that change in his life was so radical. Because remember when Ananias was sent to go and see Saul, Ananias said, I can't go and see that man. That's the Christian's enemy.

He's the number one enemy. He's going to try and destroy us. But remember how the Lord said to Ananias, he's praying. He's a different man.

And, of course, the church took a wee while to accept Saul on board. And no wonder, because of what he had been. But his whole life was given.

[13 : 29] The very cause that he was trying to obliterate was now the very cause that he was trying to enlarge and to grow and develop.

And so, when Paul was converted, everything became crystal clear. Nobody could ever come to the Apostle Paul and say to him, you know, Paul, you've got it wrong.

He would say, you've got it wrong? No, I haven't. I 100% know who Jesus Christ is. He has come into my life. I have met with him.

You cannot fool me and tell me that I've been deceived. You cannot fool me and tell me that it's just a weird imagination. That it's my mind playing tricks.

That this Christianity is, this whole faith business is, that it isn't real. It is as real as anything. And it's here that the great advantage came to Paul.

[14 : 28] And that's the great advantage of people who've been brought up within the church, who've been brought up with the scripture. Is that Saul, as he was then, was somebody who had studied the scripture.

He knew the Old Testament inside out. But his understanding of the Messiah was all wrong. Because so many of the rabbis, and that's always a danger with prophecy.

Particularly biblical prophecy. That you're, with what's in the future. That in our attempt to work out what it is, we come to really strong, established, what we believe are facts.

Now, sometimes the prophecies can be very vague. But once they're fulfilled, then they become crystal clear. And you say, oh yeah, that's what that is.

And that is, the problem is that, although the Old Testament was full of the Messiah of Christ, they had a wrong perception.

[15 : 30] Or at least so many of them had. Of the kind of person he would be. They thought he was going to be like a military ruler. A great political figure. Somebody who was going to come and release them from whatever tyranny they might be under.

So that once again they would become the great dominant nation. Like they were under the days and the days of David. He was going to be the son of David. So they had this idea.

And this grew and grew. And became greater and greater. So when Jesus came, initially there were thoughts. This might be him. They wanted, remember at the very beginning. In the time of all the miracles.

And when amazing things happening in the life of Jesus. They wanted to take him and make him king. But as time went on, Jesus' way was so radical.

And so different to what they expected. He wasn't even keeping to their man-made laws. As far as they were concerned, he was reckless.

[16 : 34] They were saying, you cannot be a man of God. Because Jesus wasn't adhering to their man-made laws. Yes, he was honoring God's law. But he wasn't tied into all the extras.

They were going crazy. And they found him a threat to their own power. To their own popularity. To their own rule within the communities.

And so they decided they've got to get rid of Christ. They saw him just as a person. And his teaching. Although they had to agree that nobody taught with the authority. They said, this man teaches with an authority that the scribes and the Pharisees don't have.

But his teaching was so different. He was. It was just. Everything was so new. And his ways were radical and revolutionary.

And so they dismissed Christ. But what happened then. For the like of Saul. Once he was converted. All the Old Testament teaching kicked in.

[17 : 41] And he began to understand. Because as the light dawned into his heart. Then everything began to open up. And it's the same for you and for me. If we have had that background.

Where so much of the truth has been part of our life. But it has never become personal. Once a person comes to faith. Then you begin to flourish. And you begin to see everything coming together.

And everything beginning to make sense. And so the Apostle Paul had. He had seen. He had come to see Christ. And he was also remembering the witness of the Christian.

He had seen the Christian in their life. And he had seen the Christian in their death. And all these things of course had made an impression upon him. But the wonderful thing for the Apostle Paul.

Is that when he got to know the Lord Jesus Christ. The knowledge that he got of Christ was such. That he just wanted more and more. And from being.

[18 : 42] You see this is the great difference. About knowing about a person. And coming to know that person. When I was a young boy. There were only two things I was interested in school.

One was P.E. And the other was Scottish history. I had quite a passion for Scottish history back then. When I was a boy. And I loved all the stories. And the characters.

And the Wallaces. The Bruce. The Black Douglas. There was all these people. And I would try and read up everything that was possible. And even when there were then. There were people like Nigel Trant.

They used to write these books. There was a mixture of fact and story. And I used to love these kind of things. But knowing about a person.

And actually knowing the person. Are two totally different things. It's the same with. I suppose with any of the. People that were always hearing speak.

[19 : 38] I mean you can. You can hear. Politicians. You can hear. Sportsmen and women speak. And you can see them. And. Them playing. And such like. And you hear them. And.

Maybe watching. People. On television. And they become. You think you're beginning to get to know them more and more. But you still don't know them. They're there. You're here. But it's not until you actually.

Meet with a person. And then. Spend time with a person. And the more time you spend with a person. The more you get to know them. But even sometimes.

When you get to know a person. As time goes on. You begin to see other aspects. And other. Things about their nature. And character. And sometimes we say. I never saw that side to him before.

Or I never saw that side to her before. But you know. When you come to know Jesus. That's an automatic desire within your heart.

[20 : 34] Is that you'll want to know more and more about him. That's the way it works. And that's how it was for Paul. The more. Having met with Jesus. And having got to know a little about him.

He then began to get to know more. And more. And more. And the knowledge that he got of Jesus. Became such that he. It surpassed anything else. He just. He was overwhelmed with all that he had come.

Come to know about him. And so that's what he says about. And that's why in verse. In verse 8. He says. I count everything as lost. Because of the surpassing worth.

Of knowing Jesus. My Lord. But then he goes on in verse 10. To say. That I might know him. That doesn't mean of course. He's starting all over again.

At the beginning. He's simply. Adding to what he's already said. I've come to know him. And knowing him is worth. Everything. All the things that I had before.

[21 : 31] Are nothing compared to. Knowing Christ. But you know. The one thing. The one thing. I want to do in life. Is get to know more. And more. And more.

And more often. And you know this. You will never ever be disappointed. With your knowledge of Christ. We disappoint one another. As I said. As the more you get to know people.

You begin to see. Sometimes. The dark side of people. The other sides. That maybe. Aren't as obvious. Straight away. Because we. We all have dark sides.

We're all. We're not. We're sinners. We all have. Our old faults. And failings. And. The more you get to know someone. The more. These things. Become. Become evident.

Not that we're making judgments. About people. Because we're not to judge. But it's just. It's part and partial of life. But the reverse is through with Jesus. Because the more you see him.

[22 : 25] The more wonderful he becomes. There is no dark side to him. There is nothing. In any shape or form. That. Is perverse. Or twisted. Or.

Just. You say. Well. That's. That's. That's. There's a characteristic there. I'm not too keen on. No. It's flawless. And it's beautiful. And it's precious.

And you want more and more of this. And that's how. How the apostle was. And. Then. The thing was. That. Where Paul. Then realized.

Is that. In order to get to know Jesus Christ. He was dependent upon this. Being found in him. Not having a righteousness of my own.

That comes from the law. But that which come through faith in Christ. The righteousness from God. That depends on faith. In order to experience. A deep. Meaningful.

[23 : 20] Lasting. Relationship. And fellowship. And intimacy. With the Lord Jesus Christ. We have to be done with. Once and for all. Our own righteousness. And that.

Is hard. There's two levels to it. There is a first level. Where we're depending on our own righteousness. For salvation. And we all do. Until.

We come to a place. Where we see. You know something. My own righteousness. Doesn't work. Where the Lord brings us. To the place. And to the point. Where we come to discover.

That it's Christ alone. That will do. That our own worth. Is worthless. But even after becoming a Christian. We're still depending on our own righteousness.

So often. And we think that this is what will. What will bring us to. A growing relationship. To the Lord. No. No. It is his righteousness.

[24 : 16] Both. At a level of justification. And at a level of sanctification. His righteousness. Is a basis for our standing before him. But it's his righteousness.

At work within him. Which is. The means. By which. By faith. That we get to know more. And more of him. It is letting ourselves go.

And our own efforts. And our own works. And all that we are trying to do. You know. It comes back. As we term it. The covenant of works.

That which from the very beginning. Is within us. Where we think. That we can earn. From God. We come to the place. And we can do it as Christians.

Where God owes us. It's almost like we say. Look Lord. At how good I have been. You owe me. God owes us nothing. But we have that mentality. And it is.

[25 : 11] It's to let go of that. And to seek. To be found. In Christ. In having his righteousness. Within us. Working within us.

Where we lose ourselves. In him. Because that's what we've got to do. Lose ourselves. And that's a problem. Because we don't want to lose ourselves.

So often. We want to. We want to keep control. We want to have our hand. On the reins. We want. Even. It's still. There's the me. My. The Lord says. No you've got to. I said.

Well almost empty yourself. And be found. In me. And Paul discovered. That's the key. That's the key. To this fellowship. That's the key. To the intimacy. That's the key.

To coming to know more. And more. And more. Of Christ. Being found in him. Where you have this. The fellowship. The knowledge of Christ. Christ. And Paul then.

[26 : 04] Of course. He discovered. That the righteousness of Christ. And now he. In verse 10. He talks about. The fellowship. Of the Lord Jesus Christ. And he says. We're just rushing through.

The time is going. That I might know him. And the power. Of his resurrection. And we said. As we said already. This knowing. It's. We're wanting to. To know more and more.

Now you see. Sometimes when a person. Is converted. When they come to faith. In Jesus Christ. They're content. With that. They're.

What we might term. The thirtyfold. Remember how Jesus said. That when the good seed. Falls into ground. Into good ground. That it bears fruit.

And he said. Some will bear. Thirtyfold. Some will bear. Sixtyfold. Some will bear. A hundredfold. In other words.

[26 : 59] There will be. Some Christians. And. They never seem. To be making. Great strides. In their Christian life. They seem. To be more content. Well. They know.

That they've been. They've passed. From death. To life. They know. That their feet. Are on the rock. That is Christ. But they're content. With a little knowledge. With a little faith. With a little love.

There doesn't seem. To be. Ever an urgency. About them. That the kind of Christians. That are just getting by. And they seem. Seem just to. Live their lives. On this. One plane.

All along. For the apostle Paul. That was unthinkable. He just. Once he had come. To discover. Christ's feet. Were on that rock. He just wanted.

To know more. And more. And more. So Paul. Went from the thirtyfold. And it wasn't long. Until he was a sixtyfold. And then it wasn't long. Until he was a hundredfold. Bearing a hundredfold fruit.

[27 : 57] Because there was this. Determination with him. And this passion within him. To know more. And more. And more. And the more he wanted to know. And the more he. He managed to. To know.

The more he grew. Grew in grace. Grew in the knowledge. Of the Lord. Jesus Christ. And then he says. That I might know him. And the power of his resurrection. You see.

Christ is our risen savior. And through his rising from the dead. That power. Has been given. Over to us. You see. There was. Both the death.

And the resurrection of Christ. Is essential for our faith. And it is that power. Of the risen Christ. That works within our lives.

And we cannot. Be changed. Without this power. We can't change ourselves. And that's what goes on. Day by day. Where we war.

[28 : 51] With sin. Sometimes we lose. Sometimes sin. Is the ascendancy. And some days. We feel so. Un-Christ like. And some days. We're saying. The Lord.

Lord. Have mercy upon me. I said. But. On we go. On we go. On we go. Day after day. Remember how it says. In Peter.

We are kept. By the power of God. Unto salvation. We've been kept. We can't keep ourselves. See. The. When you. When you. When you. Begin to follow the Lord.

Through the working of his spirit. Within us. That. Power. Of the Holy Spirit. Coming within us. Is what keeps us going. If I can use it reverently.

It's a petrol. Within us. If we were. If we were. Engines. It's a petrol. Within us. If you don't have petrol. In your car. If it's a petrol car. You can't go anywhere. If you don't have a battery.

[29 : 46] In your car. You can't go anywhere. Father. Well at a spiritual level. That is the power. It is the dynamite. It is the same dynamite. That comes into our lives.

Remember the apostle was saying. I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. It is the power of God. Unto salvation. It is the dynamite. That comes into your heart. And blows apart.

All the rebellion. And stubbornness. That has refused Christ. And it is blown apart. Bringing Christ into your life. Well it's that same power. That continues.

At work. And without that work. We would have given up long ago. We would have gone back. We would have. We would have closed the book. And gone away. And said. No. I can't do it.

Well we can't. But it's his power. That continues to enable us. And so. That's where the apostle is saying. I need more and more of this power. That I might know him. And the power.

[30 : 40] Of his resurrection. And it's this. Same power. Of his resurrection. That will bring about. Our resurrection as well. There's the. Resurrection.

In the sense of new life. When we're born again. But we also believe. There will be the resurrection. Of our body. After we're laid into the grave. The day will come. That just as Jesus. Rose from the dead.

So will we. And then the fellowship. Of his suffering. That I might share his suffering. Becoming like him. In his death. It is inevitable. But that there is suffering.

In the Christian life. Because. Part of the qualification. For being a Christian. Is taking up our cross. Denying ourselves. And following him.

And that inevitably. Brings. Suffering. Even supposing. There was no. Even supposing. You never had any physical suffering. Or even supposing. You never.

[31 : 35] Got. Harassed. For following Christ. Or any of these things. The very inward. Suffering. Through. The battles. With temptation. With the battles. With ourselves. With our fallen.

Human nature. That in itself. Brings so much suffering. Within our life. Because the picking up. Of that cross. And following Jesus.

Often brings us. Into conflict. With ourselves. With who we are. Before. You became a Christian. Then you just went. You went with a flow. Of how you felt.

And what you. Well obviously. There were. There were parameters. There were boundaries. In your life. But. It was by and large. You just. Were free and easy. Now this is a great conflict.

Within the Christian life. This struggle. And sometimes. The old seems to. It gets in there. And. Oh my. You see. I'm not making. I'm not making head roads here.

[32 : 31] I'm struggling. I'm really struggling. As a Christian. I'm battling. And I don't seem. To be getting anywhere. Well that's part. Of the suffering. This is part of.

What it is. To be a Christian. The whole area. Of temptation. And inward conflict. And all these things. Along with. Along with. With everything else. And becoming.

Like him. In his death. But you know. There's. The identity. With Christ. In scripture. Is quite extraordinary. Bible tells us. All these things. Are told to us.

In scripture. So you see. The identity. When you are found. In him. Then all these things. Will be true.

Of you. They're. They're true already. And some of them. Are still pertaining. To the future. I hope today. That we all. Know. This Jesus.

[33 : 50] As our own. Personal savior. To be found. In him. There's nothing else. Compared with it. Pray that. You will know.

Jesus. As your own. Personal savior. Let's pray. Lord our God. We. We pray that. We will know you. More and more. We give thanks. For your patience.

With us. We have to confess. Lord. That. Having come. To know you. And the desire. That we have. To know you. Even more. That there are times.

That we live. As if that was not. Our desire. But we give thanks. That. There is plenteous. Redemption. With you. And that you are the Lord. Who.

Leads us on. That your patience. With us. Is incredible. It's amazing. Amazing grace. But it's amazing. Patience. That the Lord. Shows with us. We give thanks.

[34 : 44] Oh Lord. For. Your dealings. With us. And we pray. That you will lead us on. Lead us on. Gently. Lead us on. In the right way. And we pray. That you will bless. Every single one of us.

Take us. Away from here. And to where we're going. In safety. And forgive us our sin. In Jesus name. Amen. Amen.