

What do you really want?

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[0 : 00] We're no longer in the Psalms. You'll be hyperventilating ever since I've been here. It's been the Psalms in the evening. So we're in the New Testament. We've moved the morning passage through to the evening.

I was reluctant to do that because the studies in Philippians are fundamental and foundational. That's why I choose this, this book, the book of Philippians, about what it means to be a Christian, what it means to shine for Jesus.

And that's what we're going to look at in a few moments or so. Philippians chapter 3, and we're only looking at two verses. It's not going to be a long sermon. Famous last words, isn't it?

It doesn't mean anything, but it won't be. I'm going to try and, yeah, we'll get this done. Only we're looking at two verses, verse 10 and verse 11. But the context is the first nine verses, which we looked at a few weeks ago.

Paul is looking at what it means to be right with God. And now this evening as we're looking at what it means to walk with God. So Philippians 3, verse 1. Further, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord.

[1 : 04] It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, for it is a safeguard for you. Watch out for those dogs, those evildoers, those mutilators of the flesh.

For it is we who are the circumcision, we who serve God by his Spirit, who boast in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh.

Though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If someone else thinks that they have reason to put confidence in the flesh, I have more. For it is for God by your Lord.

So I have been, as I have said, for God for everything. For the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews, in regard to the law, a Pharisee.

As for zeal, persecuting the church. As for righteousness, based on the law, faultless. But whatever were gains to me, I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.

[2 : 05] What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things.

I consider them garbage, 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 is through faith in Christ, the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.

Verse 10 and 11. I want to know Christ, yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so somehow attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

We'll end our reading at the end of verse 11. There's enough in those two verses for a conference, but we're just going to pick these things up and we'll look at them together. Just to give use to Philippians chapter 2, the passage we read earlier, and we'll just ask for the Lord's help as we come to understand this together.

Father, we come to your word now, Lord, as we've been singing praise to you. Father, we pray that now you will speak to us, thrill us, Lord, by your work of grace in our life, help us to understand that a bit more.

[3 : 28] Challenge us, perhaps, Father, as Paul tells us here, what his desires were. So, Father, we pray that we might align our hearts and our desires with his this evening.

We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. I'm going to begin this sermon by something deeply spiritual. Here it is here, coming up on the screen.

There we go. Never thought I'd start a sermon with the Spice Girls. Wannabe. Not my genre of music, not my favorite pop group. That song, Wannabe, goes something like this.

If you want to be my lover, you've got to get with my friends. Make it last forever. Friendship never ends. Some of you know that. You're smiling away.

The song doesn't start in that way. It starts in this way. I'll tell you what I want, what I really, really want. So, tell me what you want, what you really, really want. I tell you what I want, what I really, really want.

[4 : 27] So, tell me what you want, what you really, really want. And it doesn't get much better than that, I'm sorry to say. That's as good as it gets, really. You're left wondering, what on the earth do you guys want?

Really, that's what we're looking at this evening. A bit more clued up than the Spice Girls. What do we want? Is there anything else that you want as a Christian, in the Christian life?

I'm not talking about possessions. I'm talking about spiritual things, spirituality. Spirituality. That is what we're looking at this evening in the passage before us. Our goals, our desires as Christians. So, I've called this sermon, What Do You Really Want? I could have put a few reallys in there, but what do you really want? It's worth stopping, isn't it, to think, what do we really want?

We are continuing a series of studies in the book of Philippians about shining and about being the people that God wants us to be. We remind ourselves we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works that He has prepared beforehand.

[5 : 33] Last week, we looked at something very important, didn't we? How are we made right before God? Philippians 3, 1-9. Paul was basically a very religious man, a devout Jew, zealous Jew.

And we looked at how is somebody made right before God? Paul says, it's not in the flesh. There's nothing we can do to make us right before God.

Every other religion, apart from Christianity, is based on works. This is based on what Christ has done. And we cling to Him. And so, it's not based on what Paul says, if anybody had reason to boast, he had more.

He was one of the most religious guys you'll ever meet, devout Jewish believer. But it begins, you remember, by knowing Christ. He says here, that I might know Christ.

And we, this comes through the gospel, knowing who He is, why He came, what He achieved. We won't go back over that, but that is the gospel. To understand how we can be right before God, we need to know Jesus.

[6 : 39] And then he says, that I might gain Him as well. He wanted to gain Christ. He considers everything that he could achieve that were once in the gains column, he's moved to the losses.

But he wants something else in the gain column. What is that? It is nothing less than Jesus. That's the only name you need to write in your gain. Not, I did Jesus, and Jesus is there, and all these good things.

All our good deeds are basically losses. We only depend on Jesus. And that's it, gaining Jesus. He tells us that massive truth here. That I might be found in Him, verse 9, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ.

The righteousness that comes through God, from God, on the basis of faith. That passage last week is massive. It's a massive passage.

It's something that everybody on the planet needs to know, how we are made right before God, because everybody's trying to achieve a righteousness of their own. And it's filthy rags in the Lord's sight.

[7 : 48] So, we are reminded of this, that I might gain Christ, not having a righteousness of my own through the law, but through faith. So, perhaps as a Christian, you're here this evening, and you think, well, John, I did that.

I agree with you 100%. I am trusting only in the death of Jesus Christ. I've done it. I've arrived. And that is it. When really, that is only the beginning of the Christian life.

And dare I say, the Christian experience, that there is more to experience of the Lord. You have not arrived. And perhaps you think, well, yeah, I'll work now.

I've got the main thing. I'm right before God. If I die tomorrow, I'm swell with my soul. That's the most important thing. If you've got members of your family, my two daughters were saved when they were about 15.

They're walking on with the Lord. And I think, that's great. I'm made up myself. I think, that's great. My daughters are fine. But maybe you're here yourself, and you think, well, I've been justified by

faith.

[8 : 48] I hear what Paul says. I don't have a righteousness of mine. My righteousness is Jesus, and that is enough. But Paul is basically saying justification, or being made righteous, is not the end.

It's not enough for any Christian. We should want something more. Paul wasn't content with this. So in verse 10, I want to know. There's something else that Paul wants.

We would finish it, verse 9, and say, that's all you need. And that is all you need for salvation. But should we be content with this? What is Paul's real desire? So let's look at this this evening.

Just two main points. We have a couple of subdivisions. But what are the two things that Paul basically wants here? First of all, he wants to be like Jesus, or like Christ.

And here he's talking about sanctification, that process whereby he's made holy. It's not enough. God doesn't just want us to be pronounced righteous. He wants us to become morally righteous.

[9 : 51] We'll never be morally perfect between now and the grave. But it's a new desire that we have to please him. We want to please him. We don't just say, I'm saved, and sin doesn't matter.

Sin matters for us. And we want to please God. We want to live a life worthy of the Lord. So justification and righteousness is not the end. Sanctification is something that we should desire.

And Paul says, we want to be like Christ. Now, he mentions two things under this heading of basically dealing with our sanctification. First of all, he wants to live like Jesus.

And here he talks about holiness. He wants to be holy. And that is a strange thing. He says here, I want to know Christ, yes, to know the power of his resurrection.

That's what he says. I'm justified by faith. I'm made righteous. But now I want to know the power of his resurrection. Now, it's a strange thing to desire.

[10 : 54] If you're a Christian here this evening, you already know the power of his resurrection. The same power that raised Jesus back to life has raised you back to life.

And you have been made alive. You were dead in trespasses and sins. The power of God has come upon you, and you are now given spiritual life. And Paul already knew this.

He was confident in this. You were dead, Colossians 2, in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh. God made you alive.

Dead, alive. That is, we've already experienced the resurrection. We've already been raised. Colossians 3, since then you have been raised with Christ.

Set your heart on things above. Ephesians 2, but because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ. God raised us up with Christ.

[11 : 50] Well done, Paul. Thank you. Here's a rescue for you. Here we go. Lovely. I felt guilty when I've got a glass of water here as well.

Thank you, Paul. We already, if you're a Christian, you know something already of the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. You already know this. Ephesians 1, I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, and that you may know the hope to which he has called you.

And, that you may know his incomparably great power for us who believe. So, there's a power there. What is it? That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead.

So, Paul says there is another power that's still the same power of the resurrection, not to give you new life, but basically to cause you to live a godly life, to live in holiness.

One of the commentators says that what Paul is saying here, he's not saying, I want to know him and the power of his resurrection. He's saying, I want to know Jesus in the power of his resurrection, the power that Jesus has.

[13 : 07] He wants this to be made real. Let me quote you from one of the commentaries. He says this, He wishes to know Jesus as alive. He's wanting an alive Jesus.

How do we get this? I get too excited there, guys. I think we're nearly there. Hold on, the mic is gone. It's gone. Got it, got it.

You got it? Yeah. Never get animated in the pulpit. You better just do what John Knox does. He just leans across in points. You don't want to kind of start waving your arms, right?

I think we're back on course again. He says this, I want to know Jesus as alive. We sometimes concentrate a lot on his death, and we know that he's alive, and we know that all power and all authority has been given to him, but we should want that power to be made manifest in our life.

That power that raised him back to life is available to us. He wishes to know Jesus as alive and creatively at work to save him from himself, to transform him from bad to good, to propel him forward towards a life of service to others, to inaugurate newness of life, life in the Spirit, in a word to resurrect him from death and sin to life in God, to quicken and stimulate his whole moral and spiritual being.

[14 : 38] If you're a Christian here this evening, I'm sure that is your desire, not just to be saved, but to be a godly man or woman, to know the power of Jesus in your life as you live out your Christian life.

It's a supernatural power. It's a power that God works within us, that transforms us and changes us, not just our position before him, but for who he is.

It's resurrection power. It's an alive Jesus within us, that power that raised him back. And I wonder, is that your desire, to be sanctified, to be holy?

It was Paul's desire, not just to be justified, but to be sanctified and to know the power that raised Jesus to life, creating new life within him.

So that's the first thing. To be like Christ, sanctification, and under that area of sanctification is holiness. The other area is to live like Jesus in terms of suffering, in terms of his suffering.

[15 : 40] He says, I want to know Christ, yes, to know the power of his resurrection and his life, living a godly life, and participation in his sufferings.

Or if you're using another version, I might talk about the fellowship of his sufferings. They mean the same, to share in his sufferings, participate in them, to fellowship with them.

And if the first one is an experiential power that comes from the Lord, not just to speak in tongues or whatever, but to be a godly person, this too is experiential as well.

Something that we experience that causes us to participate in his sufferings. The simple truth is this. You cannot live the Christian life and know Jesus and live in holiness without suffering.

It will surely come as night follows day. If we seek to live a godly life, we too will be persecuted. We are light, living in a dark world. We don't have to go out and seek it.

[16 : 42] It will come our way. Folk already think we're weird for what we believe and wasting our time and so forth. And we have no option, in many ways, but to share in this.

And Paul has already talked about the verse that motivates this whole series about shining like stars. Remember, in a crooked and perverse generation.

That is how we are to shine in a world that has rejected us. And as a Christian, I remember as a young Christian, discovering the wee verse, we wrestle not against flesh and blood.

We wrestle against the world, the flesh, and the devil. That came as a revelation to me. I just thought, I'm saved. You just go through. Life is just going to be the same. Suddenly, you have three enemies.

You have the world that is a pressure from outside. Formally, it can be through legislation and stuff. As Christians, we, to put pressure on us to live differently. It may just be a personal level.

[17 : 40] People giving you grief because of what you believe and they think you're weird and so forth. But there's a pressure that comes from the flesh. Your own difficulties that cause you to, and you struggle with that.

That's a form of suffering as well where you, the old nature is very much still there. And then you have these supernatural battles from the wicked one himself who will seek to cut across us and to discourage us.

And, and because we love him and because we have this resurrection power to live a holy life, that causes us to keep pressing on. It's interesting that the pattern for us is different.

Jesus suffered and died and rose again. For us, we are, we are given new life and then we have to die. Life becomes more and more difficult.

Jesus is raised to glory, seated all power and all authority. Ours is the opposite. We are raised and then we suffer. Then we live as a Christian and we try to be holy through the power of the Lord and we suffer.

[18 : 49] But one good thing about suffering and it's a sign that you're really saved. John, John 15, Jesus said this, Remember the words I spoke to you.

No servant is greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obey my teaching, they will obey yours. Paul writing to Timothy, 2 Timothy 3, 12.

In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. It is being granted to you on behalf of Christ.

I don't know how many times as a young Christian I read this verse and read it and read it because I used to witness to everybody and the more I witnessed, especially in the workplace, especially to family, you're driving me nutty.

You're going to shut up. You need to be saved and this is the way, as clumsy as hobnail boots really. I look back in those days and surprised I never got slapped. But zealous for God and getting grief because of it.

[19 : 46] So verse 29 of Philippians 1, it's being granted to you not only to believe, but also to suffer for him. And 1 Peter says this, don't be surprised at the painful trial you're suffering as though something strange were happening to you, but rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ.

The same word that Paul uses here, Peter and Paul, both of them saying, rejoice that you participate in the sufferings. It's a sign that you're saved.

And it really is something that you, you remember the disciples in Acts 5, when they were arrested, they left the Sanhedrin rejoicing because they'd been counted worthy to suffer disgrace for the name, capital N.

2 Thessalonians 1, and all this is evidence that God's judgment is right. And as a result, you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God for which you are suffering. The Bible goes out of its way.

If we live a holy life, and which we should want that after justification, to live a life that pleases God, this will involve suffering. Paul embraced this. He didn't reject it.

[20 : 57] He says, I want to participate. I wonder if that's what you really, really want. Holiness, and you're not ashamed to suffer for the Lord.

Secondly, the second thing, main thing, is not just sanctification. Paul wants to be like him, like Christ in sanctification, but also in glorification. He wants to know something about Jesus and his death, not just his life.

So he says in verse 10, I want to be like him in his death, not just participating in his sufferings, but like him in his death. We notice it's a strange statement once again, that Paul says here, that somehow to attain the resurrection of the dead, that is he really going to be raised back to life?

He's going to live a life worthy of the Lord. Paul was confident of the resurrection. He was confident of his own resurrection. Being confident, Philippians 1, 6, we read this very early on in our studies, being confident of this, that you began a good work in you, will bring it to completion, that God will raise you back to life.

It's more that he's being humble here. Somehow he presses on to obtain this resurrection. So what does he want here? He wants to die like Jesus. If the other ones were to live like him in holiness and suffering, he chooses to die like him, becoming like him in his death.

[22 : 24] Jesus, what does this mean? It means that in his death, to bring glory to the Lord. We read this in John 17, I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.

That is how Jesus died. He died a glorious death. As it relates to the Father, I have brought glory to you. And he would bring further glory to the Father as he dies.

That is why when he died, he says, it is finished. And this, a couple of weeks ago in Philippians 2, we read what even death on a cross meant. Therefore God exalted him to the highest place, gave him the name which is above every name, and confessed that Jesus is Lord.

Paul wants that. He wants to live as Jesus lived and associate with him and his suffering. But he also wants to die as he died. He wants to die a glorious life, bringing glory to the Father.

He mentions this in 2 Timothy 4. We read 2 Timothy, an overview of this a few weeks ago. Paul's last letter that he ever wrote. He says, I am already being poured out, 2 Timothy 4, 6, being poured out like a drink offering, and the time of my departure is near.

[23 : 44] I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award me on that day, not only to me, but to all who have longed for his appearing.

He wants to hear from Jesus those words, well done, you good and faithful servant. Jesus would have heard those words. He is the Son of God. He lived a life glorifying God.

Come share in your Master's happiness. Is that your desire? To live like Jesus and to die like Jesus as he died. But he doesn't just want to die like Jesus, he wants to be raised like Jesus.

And this is the last point. I want to, somehow attaining to the resurrection from the dead, Jesus, it was said of him, he is not here, he is risen.

He is risen just as he said. Paul wants to be raised in the same way, raised to glory, raised, not to the same extent, seated at the Father's right hand, unlike the disciples.

[24 : 53] May we sit at your right hand and your left hand. May we sit in this position. The Lord decides how we sit in the extent of our glory. But Paul wants to not only die like him, living a life that glorified the Father, he wants to glorify the Son.

He wants to be raised like him, raised to glory, to receive that crown. I wonder if that's what we want. What do you want this evening? What do you really, really want?

Do you want to be like Christ? Is justification, you know it's not enough. It's not enough just to receive forgiveness. You want to live like Jesus in holiness and to live like him in his suffering, not being ashamed of him.

You want to be sanctified. But you also look forward to that day when you will be glorified, when you will die like him, looking back and saying, you have lived a good life, a life that brings glory to the Lord, and you want to be raised back, raised to glorification.

Does that make sense? Let me read to you those verses that we consider together. I want to know Christ. Yes, he says. Yes, I've mentioned that in the early verses. I want to know Christ.

[26 : 08] Definitely. Know his righteousness. But I also want to know the power of his resurrection. Sanctification, basically. Participating in his sufferings.

I want to become like him in his death, bringing glory to the Father, and attaining to the resurrection from the dead, our future glorification. That should be the desire.

These are very simple verses, but they are better felt than tell. So you've heard that expression, haven't you? They are such easy things just to say, yeah, I understand.

Your points were clear, Pastor. But let the spice go. Do we want it? Do we really, really want it? Do we want to feel these things? Do we want to experience them, to be real in their life?

Or are we content just to be justified rather than sanctified? One day we will be glorified. But let us walk humbly with our God. And that Paul's desires would be ours as well.

[27 : 08] Let's stand and we'll sing together. All I once held.