

The Priceless Privilege of Knowing Christ

Philippians 3:4b-11

All Stand and Read Scripture

Philippians 3:4b-11 (NASB)

If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more:
⁵ circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.

⁷ But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, ⁹ and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith, ¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; ¹¹ in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Prayer

INTRODUCTION:

We all, no doubt, remember MasterCard's "[Priceless](#)" campaign. It lasted for nine years and featured approximately 160 different commercials.

ILLUSTRATION:

One commercial shows an owner brushing down his pet elephant. The owner had a severe cold. After the brushing, the elephant picks up a MasterCard and goes to the pharmacy. The ad describes the items that are purchased...

- Hot Soup \$4
- Cold Medicine \$11
- Tissues \$1
- Blanket \$24

The elephant then pays with his MasterCard credit card and returns to his owner who is now in a recliner with a scarf around his neck. The elephant serves him the soup, gives him the cold medicine, offers him a tissue, and covers him with the blanket. The ad continues...

- Making it all better...PRICELESS!

Paul exhorts us to surrender ourselves completely to Christ and practice the things that he taught us and did as an example for us. When we become a "new creature" in Christ and serve the Lord, we will have the "Peace of God"

within us. This is the **sense of well-being** that I have been talking about. He then tells us what that peace does to us.

BODY:

I. Count Personal Gains as Loss

Philippians 3:7 (NASB)

⁷ But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ,

Paul was living an obedient Jewish life.

- He was circumcised on the eighth day, which was the exclusive privilege of one of pure blood.
- Saul of Tarsus was proud of his tribal genealogy. He was of the tribe of Benjamin.
- He came from pure Hebrew ancestors on both sides.
- He was of the strictest sect, a Pharisee, the champions and representatives of the law.
- He was persecuting the Church thinking that it was blaspheming God.

So we get a living picture of Paul and of his confidence before he was a Christian. He thought that he was serving God. This “confidence in the flesh” were grounds for pride and self-satisfaction in the heart of the young Pharisee, who rode out of Jerusalem on the road to Damascus.

But, ever since Paul’s conversion of the Damascus road, Paul’s belief that he was serving God was turned upside down. He was reevaluating his life. He says these advantages, these things that were given to him in birth, were not bad in themselves. But when considering these things as earning salvation, they were not only of no value, but of a negative value. Saul did not just accept the things that God had given him, but he had used them as assets. He was using them as a deposit in his checking account for God. After making all of these deposits to the bank, he goes to the bank and realizes that they have all been withdrawn. He thinks he has a lot of money in the bank and he goes to the bank and finds out he owes. He thought he was accruing favor with God when in fact he was doing exactly the opposite.

Here in verse 7 he says whatever things **were gain** to me, those things I have **counted** as loss for Christ. Note that he is talking in the past tense. He counted them as loss a long time ago.

Now in verse 8 he continues to say that he counts all things to be loss. Now he is speaking in the present tense. Not only was he counting his previous achievements and privileges that he had as loss, but any thing that gets in the way of fully accepting Christ and His righteousness.

In **Acts 27**, Paul was trying to get to Italy to appeal to Caesar. He was on a ship and experienced some bad weather. There were 270 people on the ship and a lot of cargo. It was **gain for the owners** of the ship. It was also **gain for the merchants** who were going to purchase the cargo. It was **gain for the people** who would purchase it for their use. But that which was gain for them all of a sudden was not a good thing because the weight of the cargo in the ship was nearly causing the ship to sink due to a violent storm. So they took all of the precious cargo in the ship and threw it overboard and they counted it but loss in order to save their own lives.

This is a wonderful picture of what we do when we come to Christ. Everything that we have ever trusted in, we throw it overboard, because we realize that it has no eternal value.

II. Experience Righteousness by Being in Christ.

Philippians 3:9 (NASB)

⁹ and may **be found in Him**, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the Law*, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes from God on the basis of faith*,

Paul was willing to give up everything in his life that did not have eternal value, because he wanted to be like Christ. Paul wanted God to see that he is IN Christ. This is because Christ is righteous. We have no righteousness of our own. We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Because of that sin, we cannot have righteousness with God.

We can never get righteousness with God, unless we know where it is at. It is found in Christ Jesus. We obtain righteousness when we are in union with Christ and that changes everything.

When we live through **faith** in Christ, we **know** Christ, and we are **in** Christ and God always accepts His Son. That means that when looks at us, He does not see me and He does not see you, He sees Christ who is **in** us and God always accepts His Son. We are completely accepted by God.

Jehovah God accepts me **100%**! Isn't that beautiful? It is because He always accepts His Son. When He accepts the Son, he accepts all that is within the Son. That is every one of us who are **in** Christ.

Now do you understand why Paul counted this as such a valuable thing? There is nothing that you can do to find favor with God. There is nothing you can do to become righteous. Everything that you trust in apart from Christ is rubbish.

2 Corinthians 5:17-21 (NASB)

¹⁷ Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. ¹⁸ Now all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹ namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹ He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

God took all of my sin and imputed it (counted it) to Christ and God took the righteousness of Christ and imputed it to my account. That is what we call **justification by faith**. Because of that I stand accepted in the sight of God as if I am righteous. I didn't deserve to be righteous, but because of Christ, I have been declared righteous.

Many people do not understand. How many times have you been at a funeral and someone would say, "I am sure he will go to heaven, he was a good man and did many good things." This is denying **justification by faith**.

There is nothing that we can do to justify ourselves to God outside of Christ. No one can "earn" their way to heaven.

III. Seek True Gain from an Intimate Knowledge of Christ.

Philippians 3:10-11 (NASB)

¹⁰ that I may **know Him** and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; ¹¹ in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Here is a reference to the knowledge of Christ. This is not a word that refers to "intellectual" knowledge. It is not a "book knowledge" of Christ.

When Paul talks about the "**surpassing knowledge of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord**" in verse 8 and says "**that I may know Him**" in this verse, he is talking about a knowledge that is based upon a personal relationship with Christ. This is intimate knowledge. It is the same word that talks about a man and a woman knowing each other in a very intimate, physical way.

We are not talking about knowing **about** Christ. It is about **knowing** Christ.

John 10:14 (NASB)

¹⁴ I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me,

John 17:3 (NASB)

³This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

Eternal life comes through knowing Jesus Christ in a personal way.

- Do you have an intimate relationship with Christ?
- Do you spend time with Christ in prayer and studying God's Word?
- Do you consider living for Christ a valuable thing?
- Do you listen to and obey the Holy Spirit within you when he convicts you to do God's will?

A misconception of many professing Christians today believe that salvation means that, sometime in the past, I said a prayer, I raised a hand, I walked down the aisle, and I did the right thing, so I must be a Christian.

But, this is not what the Bible teaches. The Bible teaches that salvation is a **personal relationship** with Jesus Christ.

So how can we know that we are saved?

We must do the will God.

Jesus explained it very well in

Matthew 7:17-27 (NASB)

¹⁷ So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ So then, you will know them by their fruits.

²¹ "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, **but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter.** ²² Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' ²³ And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'

²⁴ "Therefore **everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them**, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and *yet* it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. ²⁶ **Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them**, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. ²⁷ The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall."

The more we know Christ, the more we should desire to know Christ. As we mature in Christ and learn more about Him, we begin to realize how wonderful He is. We will start to appreciate what He did and still does for us each day.

Paul said to know Christ was more valuable than anything else that he could think of because of the wonderful things that we experience.

First, by knowing Christ, we will become benefactors in “**the power of His resurrection**” which gives us forgiveness of our sins and justifies us to God when we live a new life in Christ.

Secondly, by knowing Christ, we “**will suffer**” with Christ. It makes us partners in Christ through suffering. It is a test of our faith. We are to follow the example of Christ and have a good attitude.

Third, by knowing Christ, we are to be “**conformed to His death**”. We are made conformable to his death when we die to sin.

Fourth, by knowing Christ, we will strive to “**attain to the resurrection from the dead**”. Since everyone will be resurrected from the dead, both good and evil, at the second coming, this is, no doubt, referring to our new life in Christ. Our goal should be to live a new life in Christ with Christ as our example.

Romans 6:4-7 (NASB)

⁴ Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵ For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, ⁶ knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; ⁷ for he who has died is freed from sin.

CONCLUSION:

To Count Personal Gains as Loss...Difficult.

To Experience Righteousness by Being in Christ...Commitment.

To Seek True Gain from an Intimate Knowledge of Christ...Perseverance.

To have God say “Well done my good and faithful servant”...PRICELESS!

People mocked Christ because He would not come down from the cross. Today we worship Him because He stayed up there.

If you have never turned your life over to Christ, today could be your day of salvation. Whether you only have one sin in your life or millions of sins, it

doesn't matter. Christ died for all of your sins. Sin separates us from a perfect and Holy God.

- If you have never proclaimed Christ as God's Son;
- If have never repented of your sins;
- If you are willing to do as He commands and be immersed in baptism.
- If you have never made these decisions, and you feel the Holy Spirit convicting your heart,

I want to give you that opportunity this morning.

There are believers here this morning that have been coming for some time.

- Maybe you are ready to **become a part** of this church family
- and would like to **use your influence** in the church
- and **become identified** with this body of believers.

Or maybe you are just in need of **prayer**.

We would ask you to come forward and let us know how we can help you.

The Family of God

I'm so glad I'm a part of the family of God.
I've been washed in the fountain, cleansed by His blood!
Joint heirs with Jesus as we travel this sod,
For I'm part of the family, the family of God.