

PAUL'S PASSION, POSITION, AND PRESSING PHILIPPIANS 3:10-14

Text:

Introduction:

Paul reckoned that to know the Lord was such an excellent thing that it was well worth while losing everything else to gain this knowledge.

Philippians 3:7-8

⁷ But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. ⁸ Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of 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,

What did Paul lose in order that he might gain this excellent knowledge? What did he count as refuse? When Paul became a Christian he lost his former friends, social prestige, worldly advancement financial gain and, of course, he lost physical comfort. But he lost very much more. Study verses 5 and 6, and notice the seven things which Paul counted of great value until he became a Christian, but which he counted as loss, verse 7, and refuse, verse 8, after his conversion.

Philippians 3:5-6

⁵ Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

- * Circumcised the eighth day – Shows us he was a true Jew.
- * Of the stock of Israel – Was a descendent of Jacob.
- * The tribe of Benjamin – Benjamin and Judah were two very privileged tribes.
- * Hebrews of the Hebrews - He enjoyed every advantage that could possibly be derived from the fact that he was a Jew.
- * Touching the law, a Pharisee – No other Pharisee could accuse him of religious laxity.

These had seemed great gains to the apostle up until the time of his conversion, but after he met the risen Lord on the Damascus Road, Acts 9:3-6, he viewed them all as worthless and accounted them as refuse in order that he might gain the excellent knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord.

Note:

1. PAUL'S PASSION (VS. 10)

Philippians 3:10

¹⁰ That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

This knowledge is four-fold

A. Knowing His Person

All vital Christian experience begins when we come to know not only about the Lord, but when we come to know Him personally.

Paul first came to know Him on the Damascus Road, Acts 9:3-6.

Thirty years later he said, Phil. 3:10.

Philip first came to know the Lord at the commencement of His public ministry

See what He said to Philip over two years later, John 14:9

John 14:9

⁹ Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?

Do you know Him? How much do you know Him?

B. Knowing His Power

“The power of His resurrection”

He exercised power over death and the grave.

C. Knowing His Passion

“The fellowship of His suffering”

This means to share the reproach, and the scorn, in short, the sufferings which He endured on our behalf when He was arrested, falsely accused and crucified.

1 Peter 4:13

¹³ But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

Do we rejoice at the privilege of sharing His sufferings?

If we are determined to be faithful to Him we must in some measure enter into "the fellowship of His sufferings".

D. Knowing His Purpose

“Being made conformable unto His death”

God's purpose for every believer is given to us in Romans 8:28-29.

Romans 8:28-29

²⁸ And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

God's intention is to make us like the Lord Jesus, and in order that this purpose may be accomplished, all that there is about us which is unlike Him must "die".

2. PAUL'S POSITION (VS. 12-13)

Philippians 3:12-13

¹² Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. ¹³ Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

The life and ministry of the apostle Paul was dominated by one supreme objective, and it is to this that he refers in Phil. 3:13-14, "this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the

mark.”

Paul is employing an illustration from the realm of athletics.

As he runs along the prescribed course he banishes all thoughts of past failures, and he strains every nerve in an effort of tremendous concentration on reaching his goal; his one and only concern is to win the race. Likewise, if we are to succeed in the race of life we must very deliberately "forget"; and very deliberately "press on".

A. Things which are behind which should be forgotten.

Strangely enough, a good memory is not always a great asset! It is not the things we forget which we should have remembered which cause the most trouble; it is the things we remember which we should have forgotten.

1. We must forget our past sins.
2. We must forget our past failures.

B. Things that are before that we must strive to obtain.

1. Strive for maturity – (perfect)

2. Strive to apprehend the purpose for which God has apprehended us.

God's general purpose for us is indicated in Rom. 8:28-30, but He has a particular purpose for every one of us, a life plan. Have you discovered God's plan for your life?

C. Why are we to do this one thing?

1. Because we're citizens of Heaven.
2. Because the Lord is coming to take us Home.
3. Because there is a prize to be won.

3. PAUL'S PRESSING (VS. 14)

Philippians 3:14

¹⁴ I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

He pressed towards the mark. As he who runs a race never takes up short of the end, but is still making forwards as fast as he can, so those who have heaven in their eye must still be pressing forward to it in holy desires and hopes, and constant endeavours and preparations. The fitter we grow for heaven the faster we must press towards it. Heaven is called here the

mark, because it is that which every good Christian has in his eye; as the archer has his eye fixed upon the mark he designs to hit. *For the prize of the high calling.*

Observe a Christian's calling is a high calling: it is from heaven, as its original; and it is to heaven in its tendency. Heaven is the *prize of the high calling; the prize* we fight for, and run for, and wrestle for, what we aim at in all we do, and what will reward all our pains. It is of great use in the Christian course to keep our eye upon Heaven.