

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

Paul's Spiritual Accounting Practices Philippians 3:4-11 Part 5

Sin is a cruel master. Those that are held captive by the sin of anger suffer greatly. Those being held captive by the sin of lust suffer greatly. Those being held captive by the sin of jealousy suffer greatly. Those being held captive by the sin of anxiety suffer greatly.

Sin is a cruel master any time it takes control of our lives even if only for a moment. Nothing good comes from it but I have good news for you. If you are a Christian you are far from helpless. Let us turn in our Bibles to Philippians 3.

In **Philippians 3:1-3** we considered Paul's warning concerning the Judaizers. The Judaizers were individuals who were saying that in order for Gentiles to be saved, they, in addition to believing in Jesus, needed to be circumcised and adhere to Jewish law.

In order to focus attention on the danger and futility of that message, Paul compares the Judaizers' willingness to place confidence in circumcision and adherence to the Mosaic Law with his own past personal experience prior to his conversion. This is described for us in **Philippians 3:4-11**.

He begins by speaking of his own so-called spiritual advantages he once valued so highly in **Philippians 3:4-6**. Let me read these verses for you, **“Although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. 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.”**

After listing for us these so-called advantages, he speaks of a very dramatic change in his thinking in **Philippians 3:7-8**. What was this change? Let us read these two verses, **“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 in order that I may gain Christ.”** What was Paul's dramatic change in thinking? Paul came to see that everything that he once considered so valuable needed to be viewed as rubbish. And Christ, who he had at one time thought to be rubbish, needed to be his singular treasure, surpassing everything else in his life in value. This dramatic change in Paul's thinking led to an adjustment in his spiritual ledger that totally turned his life upside down. Hopefully each of us here this weekend has followed in the footsteps of the Apostle Paul.

What are the benefits that come to someone who is willing to make this adjustment to their spiritual ledger? WHAT ARE THE POSITIVE RAMIFICATIONS OF GAINING CHRIST?

The first positive ramification of gaining Christ is knowledge. Paul talked about how he counted all of his so-called spiritual assets as loss **“for the sake of Christ”** in **Philippians 3:8** and then he declares in **Philippians 3:9** that he counts all things as loss **“in view of the surpassing value of knowing of Christ.”**

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What did Paul hope to enjoy by transferring all of his assets, everything that he had ever considered valuable to the loss column in order to gain Christ? KNOWLEDGE! The word for “knowing” (GNOSIS) when it is used with a personal object as it is used here, refers to knowing in terms of a relationship or experience. Paul was willing to move everything that he had once considered important and valuable to the loss column in order to enter into a personal relationship with Christ, the Lord of glory.

Some people do not value relationships but most people do. And most people are willing to give up a whole lot in order to secure, or maintain, or protect a relationship that they feel is important.

What relationship could be more important than a relationship with Christ? There is no relationship that we can experience with any individual that could be more rewarding, more fulfilling, more important than a personal relationship with Jesus, the Lord of glory. No one could possibly love us more or do more for us than Jesus. And no one could be more faithful to care and minister to us in any and every situation of life than Christ.

I know that Lynn (Lynn is my wife) might think I am a pretty good husband but I cannot offer her what Christ offers her. For her sake and for the Lord’s sake she needs to view me as taking a back seat to Christ. In fact she needs to view everything as taking a back seat to Christ. Why was Paul so eager to transfer all his spiritual and earthly assets to the loss column in order to gain Christ? The very first positive ramification of doing this was knowledge, or in other words, a personal relationship with Jesus.

The second positive ramification of gaining Christ is righteousness. Let us read **Philippians 3:9** **“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.”** Why did Paul transfer everything in his life that he ever valued to the loss column so that he might gain Christ? The first thing that he lists is knowledge. But we cannot have a personal knowledge of Christ or in other words a relationship with Christ without simultaneously taking possession of the righteousness which comes from God. Knowing the Lord and possessing the righteousness of God are inseparable.

Paul in the past thought that he had a righteousness of his own derived from the law but he realized that this so-called righteousness had gotten him nowhere. He realized that in spite of all of his efforts he was a sinner and had fallen short of the glory of God and was under the condemnation of God. He came to realize that he needed a righteousness which was not his own; a righteousness which could only come from God. But how could this be done? How could he take possession of God’s righteousness?

Paul took possession of God’s righteousness and came to know Him by exercising faith in Christ. **Philippians 3:9** says. **“And may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through What? “faith” in whom “Christ.”**

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Paul exercised faith in the work of Christ when he transferred all of his spiritual assets to the loss column. Paul exercised faith in the person of Christ when he transferred all of his earthly assets, everything that he had ever considered valuable in his life to the loss column. In other words, Paul exercised faith in Christ when he embraced him as his Lord and savior. And it was at that point in time that Paul was joined to Christ by the baptizing work of the Spirit and, having been joined to Christ by the baptizing work of the Spirit, Paul entered into a personal relationship with Christ and took possession of the righteousness that comes from God because Christ is in fact God. This baptizing work of the Spirit who joins us to Christ when we exercise faith and allows us to receive the righteousness of God is highlighted for us in Paul's introductory phrase in **Philippians 3:9** when he says, **“And may be found in Him.....”** followed by **“not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ.”**

WHAT ARE THE POSITIVE RAMIFICATIONS OF GAINING CHRIST? In other words, why in the world should everything that is presently important in our lives be counted as less than worthless in order to gain Christ? The first positive ramification of gaining Christ is knowledge, or in other words a personal relationship with Christ. The second positive ramification that Paul gives to us in this passage of gaining Christ is righteousness, the very righteousness of God..... We are not yet finished.

The third positive ramification of gaining Christ is power. Let us again read **Philippians 3:7-9** but this time let us continue on to the first part of **verse 10**. **“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 in order 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**”

Notice how the verse begins, **“that I may know Him**” Does this sound familiar? Paul had already referred to the surpassing value of knowing Christ in **Philippians 3:8**. In fact, we have already stated that this was the first positive ramification of gaining Christ. But here he is again emphasizing his desire to know Christ, or in other words to have a relationship with Christ. This repetition is emphasizing the importance that Paul assigns to this relationship.

And what specifically does Paul have in mind when he speaks of knowing Christ in **Philippians 3:9**? We do not have to guess. Paul tells us. And what does he say, **“that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.”** Paul mentions three specific things that he wants to experience personally so that he might be able to know Christ fully. This weekend we will only consider the first of the three.

The first thing that Paul wants to experience personally so that he might be able to know Christ fully is the power of His resurrection. What does he say? **“that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection.”**

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The power of Christ's resurrection is the present standard of divine power. The Bible discloses a standard of divine power for the past, present, and future. When in the past God sought to impress His people concerning His power, He reminded them of their deliverance from Egypt (Exodus 20:2). Over and over again we hear the statement, **"I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt."** In the coming age the standard of divine power will be the regathering of Israel to the promised land in the time of the Millennial Kingdom (Jeremiah 23:7,8; Matthew 24:29-31). Let me read for you **Jeremiah 23:7-8** **"Therefore behold, the days are coming," declares the Lord, when they will no longer say, 'As the Lord lives, who brought up the sons of Israel from the land of Egypt,' (8) but 'As the Lord lives, who brought up and led back the descendants of the household of Israel from the north land and from all the countries where I had driven them.' Then they will live on their own soil."** Someone might ask, when will this occur? This will not take place until the church has been raptured and God turns His attention once again to the Jews and the complete fulfillment of the Jewish covenants. In order to accomplish this, the world will enter into a seven year period of tribulation which will prepare the Jewish people for the return of Christ and the establishment of his earthly kingdom. This is described for us in **Matthew 24:29-31**, **"But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the power of the heavens will be shaken, (30) and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. (31) And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other."** However, in the present age the standard of divine power is Christ's resurrection (Ephesians 1:19-21). We see this emphasis in the verse we are now looking at, **Philippians 3:10**.

Some of you might be saying, "I sure wished that I had some of that power." You do have! In fact you do not possess some of it you possess all of it, if you are in fact a Christian. In Christ all the power that was manifested in His resurrection is available to us as we seek to live a holy life (Romans 6:1-4). Listen to **Romans 6:1-4** **"What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase? (2) May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? (3) Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? (4) Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life."** This is what Paul is talking about in **Philippians 3:10** when he says, **"That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection."**

All of us here this weekend are continually being tempted by the world, the flesh, and the devil to sin. The battle is on. And this battle needs to be fought. But though the battle against sin is raging, it will not be won through the exercising of our strength. Hopefully we have come appreciate Christ's statement in **John 15** that without Him we can do nothing. But even though we can do nothing apart from Him; in Him our power is not true.

Is Christ alive or dead? Christ is alive. And He, the resurrected Lord, wants to supply the power to win the battles that we face with sin.

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We are not to battle sin in our strength but in the strength of the living resurrected Christ.

Let me ask you a question, “Can alcohol abuse resist the power of the living resurrected Christ working in and through us? No! Can drug abuse resist the power of the living resurrected Christ working in and through us? No! Can any of our fleshly appetites resist the power of the living resurrected Christ working in and through us? No! Can covetous, envious, self seeking attitudes resist the power of the living resurrected Lord working in and through our lives? No! Nothing and no one can resist the the King of Kings and the Lord of lords who is now alive and who desires to supply us with power, even the type of power that was unleashed at His resurrection..... Satan wants us to believe that we are weak, which we in fact are, but he also wants us to believe that we are weak in Christ and this is a lie. Because we have taken possession of the righteousness of God through faith and enjoy a personal and intimate relationship with the living Lord, we have an infinite supply of power. In fact we have the kind of power that raised Christ from the dead.

Is this something that you can get excited about? I hope that the answer would be yes. Not only because it will provide for us spiritual victories but even more importantly living our lives in the power of the living resurrected Christ will help us to know Him more fully. Tapping into the power of Jesus is pretty intimate. I would like to think that enjoying Christ on that level would be more satisfying to you than any sinful choice that we might be confronted with.

Perhaps you are here this weekend and know that things are not right between you and your husband or your wife. Perhaps you believe you have been mistreated in some way and rather than lashing out at them you are simply keeping them at arm’s length and have purposed not to show them any warmth or affection. Is this behavior sinful? And the answer would be yes. What does the Scripture teach us? **Ephesians 4:31-32** says, **“Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. (32) And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.”**

You now have a choice. You are not helpless. If you are a Christian you have been joined to Christ and His power, the power that was able to raise Him from the dead, is available to you. So you have a choice. You can continue to keep your relationship with your spouse in the deep freeze and extract whatever pleasure you can from such a destructive action or you can once again choose to transfer everything that makes up your life to the loss column, including the grudge which you might be harboring against your spouse, which has given you some kind of perverted pleasure, and personally experience the very power of the risen Christ working in and through you.

But experiencing the power of Christ’s resurrection does not just happen. To live in the power of Christ’s resurrection requires that we continue to count all things as loss (Philippians 3:7-10). We need to continue to deny ourselves. We need to continue to die to ourselves. We need to continue to present our bodies as a living sacrifice.

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CONCLUSION

For us to deny ourselves, for us to die to ourselves, for us to present our bodies as a living and holy sacrifice, for us to count all things as loss in order to gain Christ, there needs to be some positive benefits and there are.

When we exercise faith and make this adjustment to our spiritual ledger, we not only enter into a personal relationship with Christ and take possession of the very righteousness of God, but beyond these things as we continue to count all things as loss, we are able to tap into the power of Christ to live a holy life. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead.

What area of sin are you presently battling? This is a wonderful opportunity for you not only to enjoy victory but to know Christ more fully, to know the power of Christ. BUT THERE IS A QUESTION THAT YOU MUST ASK YOURSELF. WHAT DO YOU WANT MORE? TO KNOW SIN OR TO KNOW CHRIST AND THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION?