

Good News Church GA
Midweek Connect
3-10-26

Sermon Series:
“Joy in the Journey”
Paul’s letter to the Philippians

SCRIPTURE TEXT: Philippians 3:7-11 The Fellowship of Joy (Knowing Christ)

7 But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. 8 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 (rubbish, dung, waste thrown to dogs), that I may gain (win) Christ 9 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. 10 I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

Sermon & Book Notes

Sermon (Warner) – *“The Fellowship of Joy (Knowing Christ)”*
“Be Joyful” (Wiersbe) Ch. 8 – *“Learning How to Count”*

7 But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.

- **ASSETS to DEFICIT** - Not only did Paul consider those things which once were thought of as assets as being completely neutralized, he now saw them as deficit (negative balance), such that they were taking away (negatively, adversely affecting his life).
 - **Life Preserver (inflated) > Life Preserver (deflated) > Anvil!!!**
 - It was as if Paul was saying, *“My self-righteousness boasting kept me from experiencing the glory and beauty of Jesus Christ.”*
- **A WORD FROM WIERSBE** - *“Like most religious people today, Paul had enough morality to keep him out of trouble, but not enough righteousness to get him into heaven. It was not bad things that kept Paul away from Jesus—it was good things. He had to lose his religion to find salvation.”* - Warren Wiersbe (“Be Joyful,” Ch. 8)

8 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.

- Example: Knowing your spouse in a marriage on Day 1 is different than knowing your spouse on Day 18,250 (50 years).
- **Knowing about Christ is not the same as knowing Christ.**
 - Knowing About - history, doctrine, theology, example, teachings, etc.
 - Knowing – heart, voice, presence, thoughts, hurts, wounds, joys
- **How do we know Christ better? How do we know anyone better?**
 - Spend time. Have conversation. Ask questions. Listen. Experience life with. Have fun with. Laugh with. Cry with. Invite Him into your home. Go to his. Spend time with His family. Make knowing Christ a priority in your life.

I consider them garbage (rubbish, dung, waste thrown to dogs), that I may gain (win) Christ 9a and be found in him,

- Now that Paul has lost all things, he can compare those things to that of knowing Christ. His conclusion is that they are σκύβαλον (skubalon)... DUNG!!!
- Scott Hamilton shared that, after coming to faith in Christ, and experiencing the difference that Jesus Christ made in his life, **his gold medals became an offense to him.** He kept them in the bottom of his underwear drawer and eventually gave them away for a Hall of Fame display.
- **What do you gain if you “win” Christ?** Life, light, love, meaning, purpose, rest, contentment, provision, gratitude, joy, eternity.
- **What if you don’t “win” Christ? What is life like without Christ?** No Father, no Provider. No meaning. No purpose. No freedom from fear, anxiety, and the uncertainties of life. Everything depends on YOU. No net! No Rescue! No help.

9b 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.

- This is the Good News root which bears the fruit of everything Paul is saying here.

10 I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,

1. What is the resurrection power that Paul is writing about?

It is the power of the Holy Spirit that changes everything in a Believer’s life. It enables Believers to:

- gain victory over enslavement to sin
- endure suffering (with purpose and joy) – martyrs throughout history
- stand firm with courage under trial

- perceive and respond to circumstances with wisdom (i.e., having the mind of Christ. – 1 Cor. 2:16, Phil. 2:5)

2. What does it mean to share in the sufferings of Christ?

It signifies being "*conformed to His death*," prioritizing spiritual growth over earthly comfort, and finding deeper intimacy with Christ through shared pain.

"Suffering is not a matter of what God is doing and why. I think the whole purpose of it is to press us up against the Lord Jesus, to hear His heartbeat, and to identify with Him in His sufferings. It's not about what suffering does for me. It's about knowing Jesus better. God bless the pain. What a harsh but sweet mercy, because it has helped me just... love Him." - Joni Eareckson Tada (from "Songs of Suffering")

3. What does it mean to "become like him in his death?"

It means to live life the way that Jesus did – humbling yourself, serving others, prioritizing others, putting yourself last, taking up your cross, and following Him, even unto death. *NOTE: We can't do this in our own strength. We don't even want to do it!*

▪ What difference does it make to know that you are known by God?

- *You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. – Psalm 139:1-3*

▪ What difference does knowing Christ make?

- affections and motives radically changed and softened
- love, joy, peace, satisfaction, and purpose in life
- relationships made richer, deeper, stronger, better
- heart tenderized, emotions reconnected, beauty enjoyed

11 and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

In conclusion, Paul is simply saying that "life is hard!" We live in a world that deceives us into thinking it has everything we need for ultimate satisfaction and joy, but ultimately those things disappoint and even enslave. But... Jesus is different!

When you come to know Jesus and everything that He's about and everything He is, everything else in comparison is like dung. In fact, when we come to know Jesus, all of our other worldly possessions and accomplishments become offensive to us (because they were counterfeits standing in the way to true joy). And so, we begin walking a different path - a path that requires we carry a cross of self-sacrifice, service, and suffering. And because that's where Jesus is, even there we find joy! But wait there's more!!!

The path of the cross that leads to death is also the path that leads to glory. When we “die to self” and “live unto Christ,” the dead end of death is actually the door that leads to “the resurrection from the dead” and eternal life.

Paul is shocked that “resurrection from the dead” is even remotely possible, because he knows that there is nothing in him that could possibly make that happen. But what he does know is that resurrection is possible, not because of his own righteousness (he has none), *“but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.”*

Discussion Questions

1. What jumps out at you from the scripture text, book reading, or sermon notes?
2. What practical difference does it make in your life knowing that your righteousness is a gift from God, by faith, and not something that can be earned by obeying the law?
3. How have you experienced life being different after vs. before “winning / knowing Christ?”
4. On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate yourself as relates to “*knowing Christ*?” *NOTE: If it makes you feel any better, Drue said he feels like he’d rate himself at about a 2 or a 3.* 😊
5. What would you say are the key ingredients to “*knowing Christ*” better? What challenges / obstacles might be holding you back?
6. What are some of the things (like Scott Hamilton’s gold medals) that have lost their luster in your life or if you’re honest, have too much luster in your life?
7. How would you explain Paul’s statement that he wants “to know Christ in the fellowship of his sufferings?” Can you relate?
8. What’s your primary take away from this discussion?