

Introduction...

Phil 3:8 Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ ⁹and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— ¹⁰that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Can we say along with the apostle Paul that of all the things that this world values, nothing matters so long as we have Christ? That is what Paul is saying in these verses. The things that our world considers to be of value are like nothing compared to knowing Jesus Christ as Lord. Paul's religious heritage, his ethnic identity, his nationality, his tribal identity, his global identity, his education, his moral accomplishments, and all of his religious zeal are as nothing compared to knowing Christ Jesus as Lord.

For all of His life, Paul has placed his confidence in these things. He had placed his confidence in his flesh (v. 4) and what he meant by that was that his identity and worth was wrapped up in his own religious heritage and personal accomplishments. The core of his life, the dynamic that fueled his life, was the do-it-yourself, moral improvement of Pharisaism. The fuel of his life was the belief that he could earn God's love through self-effort and moral behavior.

He was better at it than everyone of his age but he came to see all of his accomplishments, all of his self-made religion as worthless; and He came to view Christ as the most valuable thing in the universe. He walked away from everything he once held dear and he was left with nothing but Jesus, and he found Jesus to be more than enough.

What happened? What changed him? The dynamic force of Paul's life shifted from self to Christ, from religion to the gospel. When Paul came to God he brought his religion, his moral resume, his list of good works. But when God came to Paul he brought the resurrection of Jesus and this changed everything.

Everything changed for Paul when he saw Jesus for himself. **He saw the risen, resurrected Jesus with his own eyes and on that day the earth-altering dynamic of the resurrection changed Paul's life.** The gospel and the resurrection of Jesus wrecked Paul's normal, moral and religious life. Maybe you can identify with that. Maybe you need to identify with that. Maybe you need to have your life wrecked, turned upside-down by the power of God. I know I do.

Transition...

What difference does the resurrection make for our lives today? Sure, we have some idea of what it will mean for us in the life to come, but how does it affect our life today? How does the resurrection of Jesus affect our heart, our life, our relationship with God, and our thoughts about death? Here in **Philippians 3**, God is going to help us answer these questions

Sermon Focus...**I. The Resurrection of Christ affects our hearts (V. 8)**

The word resurrection is not a common term in the OT, in fact, it's not a very common term in the NT. When ancient religious people thought about life after death they didn't think in terms of

resurrection. Pagans believed in a *spiritual existence* after death but not a *bodily resurrection*. Many of the Jews, the Sadducees in particular, rejected the resurrection because they claimed Moses hadn't said anything about a bodily existence after death. They were wrong, of course, and Jesus pointed that out to them in **Mark 12:26-27**.

Resurrection refers to something that happens to the body. Most religions identify that the soul will live on after death, but Christianity teaches that our bodies will be raised from the grave. The followers of Jesus might have lived long and happy lives if they had simply stated that Jesus lived on in the spirit after his crucifixion, but they didn't. **They taught that Jesus' body was raised and brought back to life by the power of God.**

They taught this because they saw it with their own eyes. They walked in the empty tomb just three days after they saw Christ die on the cross. They saw Jesus in the upper room, saw the scars in his hands and on His side. They touched those scars. They saw Jesus again on the shore in Galilee and they ate breakfast with him. They watched outside of Jerusalem as His body was taken up into Heaven right before their eyes.

When Jesus' disciples preached the resurrection, they weren't referring to Jesus' soul being raised, or his spirit living on; they were claiming that His dead body had been raised to life. To the Romans this was nonsense and to the Jews this was a scandal, **but the resurrection is at the heart of the gospel. Our salvation depends on the reality that Jesus not only died on the cross for our sins but also that He was raised from the dead three days later.**

Paul had believed all of his life that in order for him to be loved by God all he needed to do was to try his best and have a good moral resume to show for it. **Which is not all that different from what most of us believed. We have this innate sense that if we want God to love and accept us, then we are going to have to earn it.** It's in our heart. We naturally assume a debtor's ethic and that is why legalism comes so easy to us.

But legalism is theologically ignorant because it assumes that the way to solve your problem is to have more of your problem. Legalism claims that we have a weakness in our flesh and it tries to remedy that by relying on that same weak flesh to do enough good works to make us acceptable. But the gospel comes and tells us that our problem is not just a weakness of the flesh, but a deadness in our soul.

Eph 2:1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ²in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

Our problem is not that we are weak, it's that we are dead. Let me illustrate it this way, we don't naturally seek God, we naturally believe that a little sin will be fun. **We naturally think that a little sin will spice up our weekend. We don't naturally think that a little righteousness will be fun.** Our hearts are captive to sin in this way, but our hearts aren't captive to God in this way.

What does this mean, it means we don't just have a little problem with sin it means we are dead in our trespasses and sins. We don't just need to straighten up a little bit, we need God to resurrect our hearts from the dead

Our hope lies outside of ourselves. Jesus didn't come to show us a new way to God, He came to be the way to God. He died in our place to free us from our spiritual deadness. He lived the righteous

life that we could never live. He died the death that we deserved and His resurrection from the dead is proof that God accepted His sacrifice on our behalf.

Here's what that means for our hearts today. It means that we can and should say along with Paul,

⁷ Whatever gain I had, I count it as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.

The resurrection of Christ shows our hearts that we can abandon our self-salvation mission and put all of our hope in the one who lived, died and rose from the dead to save us from our sin.

But the resurrection of Christ does more than affect our hearts it also affects our lives.

II. The Resurrection of Christ affects our lives (V. 8, 10)

V. 8 For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ

In verse 8, we read that Paul not only ***counted all things as loss***, but he also ***suffered the loss of all things***. The flesh that he once put all of his hope in, was now something that would endure persecution. Paul suffered for his faith in Christ and part of that was his choice. Not that he was longing to get beat up everywhere he went, but he believed it was worth it.

As a servant of Christ, he suffered imprisonment, countless beatings and was often near death. Here is an account of Paul's suffering in **2 Corinthians 11**.

²⁴ Five times I received ***at the hands of the Jews*** the forty lashes less one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; ²⁶ on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; ²⁷ in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. ²⁸ And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches.

Now why did Paul endure all of this suffering? ***V. 8 – For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ.*** This verse is one of the most shocking verses that Paul ever wrote. Paul's suffering was for the sake of Christ and much of it was at the hands of the Jews. They persecuted Paul because he came to see his old way of life, his old way of life as rubbish or quite literally ***dung***.

All his life, Paul had viewed his Pharisaism, his legalism, as something valuable to God. But now that he had come to know Christ he looked on his old religion as disgusting. It was less than worthless and who wants to carry around a handful of dung, much less to hold it up to God and say, "This is why you should love and accept me." Paul came to see that compared to the gospel, his religion was wretched. So, he tossed it aside and began to serve Christ. This brought persecution.

But the gospel didn't leave him empty handed. He tossed away his man-centered religion and in its place, he gained everything. The gospel doesn't call us to renounce everything and become empty, boring, dull people. The gospel says let go of what will rob you of greater joy, lasting joy and embrace the Truth that will set you free to truly live.

The resurrection made Paul see that he could give his life away and he wouldn't lose a thing. He lived with unstoppable faith and fearless hope. His faith in Christ caused him to sacrifice everything on the altar of the gospel, and in the end, he got God.

Dear Christian, don't live a timid, fearful life. God has not given us a spirit of fear but of power and love and fearless faith. Let's be willing to suffer the loss of all things for the sake of Him. Let's be willing to give our lives away for His sake.

The Resurrection affects our heart, our life and our relationship with God.

III. The Resurrection of Christ affects our Relationship with God (V. 9)

At the end of **verse 8** Paul writes, "*...in order that I may **gain Christ**.*" Now what does that mean? the answer comes in **verse 9**. Gaining Christ means...

V. 9 *being found in him, not* having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but **that which comes through faith** in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—

Gaining Christ means that I have obtained, through faith, the righteousness from God. Or you could say it this way, it means to have the righteousness of Christ credited/imputed to your account. Now why is this better than obtaining righteousness on my own?

This verse compares two types of righteousness. The righteousness of my own that comes through my obedience to the law or the righteousness from God that comes through faith in Christ. Paul looks at both of these and says, "I'm walking to the gates of Heaven with the righteousness from God." **This is the confidence that the gospel gives us.**

Let's do a thought experiment and imagine that you do 1 act of pure righteousness everyday of your life. 1 act per day done in obedience to the law of God that is not fueled by some selfish motive, or sinful ambition. 1 per day and I believe that is being crazy generous. I remember a stretch of years between high school and college that wouldn't have produced anything to my credit. But let's be generous and give ourselves credit for 1 good deed each day of our lives.

If we live to 80, that is just over 29,000 good deeds in a lifetime. But the math really doesn't matter all that much, because for each good deed there is a counteractive bad deed.

We have to consider the other side of the scale. Can we assume 1 act of unrighteousness everyday of your life? Can we assume 1 lie, or 1 act of deception, or 1 angry thought, or 1 lustful thought, or 1 hateful thought, or 1 act of greed, or 1 act of pride, or 1 act of impatience, or 1 act of gossip, or 1 thought of vanity. 1 unrighteous act per day, which again is being generous. If it's 1:1 then it is a wash and we have nothing to show for the entirety of our life.

But this is just a thought experiment. The reality is that the numbers aren't even close to being in our favor.

Gal 3:10 For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide **by all things written in the Book of the Law** and do them."

Rom 3:20 For by the works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight

The law cannot save us. Our imagined righteousness will never make us right with God. Imagine standing before God and having tallied up the balance of our good deeds and our sin, and then

presenting that to Him as justification for why He should accept us. We have no chance of pleasing God in this way.

But now, I want you to imagine the righteousness of Jesus. I want you to imagine all of the righteous deeds that Jesus ever did on any given day. There is no need to subtract the unrighteous deeds of Jesus because there are none. He was tempted in every way as we are, but He was without sin (**Heb 4:15**). Now, which righteousness would you put your hope in?

Whose obedience are you trusting in? The resurrection of Jesus is evidence that when Jesus came before the Father, His obedience and His sacrifice was fully accepted. God raised Him from the dead because nothing remained. His righteousness paid the bill for all the sins of all who would believe. Our relationship to God rests not on our righteousness but on His.

IV. The Resurrection of Christ affects our Eternity (V. 11)

10 that I may know him and the power of his *resurrection*, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, **11** that by any means possible I may attain the *resurrection from the dead*.

When the resurrection takes hold of our hearts and our lives and our relationship to God; then death just doesn't seem so bad anymore. I think that is what Paul is getting at in these verses. He is so overwhelmed by the security that the gospel brings that he doesn't really care about anything but Jesus. He says, "I just want to know him and the power of his resurrection. I'm willing to share his sufferings and die a death like His. I don't really care what happens to me in this life...I know that I will experience the resurrection from the dead, like Him. So, whatever comes, to live is Christ and to die is *gain*."

I think that is the spirit of what Paul is saying in this chapter. To be a Christian is to be made like Christ and to be made like Christ is to experience in some measure what He experienced. If we desire to live like Jesus we can expect the trials that He faced. The persecution that He faced.

1 Pet 4:12 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. **13** But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.

Do you want to be made like Christ? Do you want to follow Him in this life? His road is the Calvary road, His path is narrow and difficult, but it leads to life. What Paul wants us to understand is that no matter what the road ahead entails, the end result is that we will be there to share His glory. Death will not be the final page in our story. We will rise with Him and live with Him forever.

Conclusion...

There has been no more important event in human history than the resurrection of Jesus. Easter is not about the celebration of Jesus living on in the teaching of His followers; Easter is about the celebration of Jesus being raised from death to life.

One day everything was normal. The world was filled with pain, sorrow, hopelessness, and doubt. One day everything was just as it had been for thousands of years and the expectation was that it would always be that way. But the next day came and everything changed.

Jesus came and turned the world upside down. He made the world look different, sound different, feel different. He spoke of a Kingdom that was already here and yet still coming into the world. He spoke about spiritual re-birth like it was some supernatural change that took place inside of us. He told stories about the heart of God that no one had ever heard. He changed all of Judea in 3 years and His followers had hopes that He was going to change the world...but His enemies nailed Him to a cross.

He came to His own and His own people did not receive Him. He came as the light of the world shining into the darkness, but the world preferred the darkness over His light. He was put to death, crucified on a Friday, and all of the hope that came with him was taken away. The disciples joy had been torn away from their hearts leaving them empty, shocked, and fearful. Everything went back to normal.

But on Sunday, the power of God was unleashed. The tomb was empty. Jesus was alive. All that He had ever said was true, truer than anything ever spoken. The world has truly been turned upside-down and you can get in on this today.

This is your moment to turn from your sin, to turn from yourself to God. Turn from your sin, turn from hoping in yourself, turn from this world and receive God's gift of forgiveness. He will not leave you empty handed but will fill you with His grace, His mercy, His love and Himself. He will make you more alive than you have ever been and in Jesus you will never die.

He will raise you up, He will raise us all and seat us with Him in Heaven. And in the ages to come He will unfold for us the immeasurable riches of His kindness to us. That is God's promise to us, to you, if you will receive Christ.