

# *Philippians 3:9-11*

*Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 9/2/2007*

## **Marks of a True Believer: A look at Paul's testimony Part 3**

### **Prayer**

Father, what a privilege it is for us to come together as a body to corporately worship You, to praise You, to give You honor and glory which is due Your Name. And, Father, we continue to worship You and we pray as we continue to look into Your Word that You would be opening our hearts and minds to understand it. But, Father, I pray that we would not be like the foolish men and women who listen but do not do what You say. Hearers and not doers, Lord God. I pray that You would convict us and prompt us through Your Spirit to do what You have said so that You will be glorified. Father, thank You for Your Word. We just pray now that You would give us wisdom and insight, and that our response would bring You glory and honor. We pray this in Jesus' name.

### **Sermon**

I want to ask you, "What are your goals in life?" Maybe for some of you, the goals that you have are financial security. Or for some of you, it is the future of your children. Or for some of you, your goals are what career, what work you might be in. Some of your goals, like mine used to be, was centered around how I was going to spend my vacation and time off. That was pretty much the goal of my life, was to get through the job and get to vacation time. Many people have that saying "I work for the weekend," basically. All they think about is their free time, and they plan their lives around their free time. Well, maybe some of your goals have to do with ministry. Maybe some of you believe God is leading you to teach or preach or to serve. Maybe some of you do not have any goals at all. Maybe some of you are just getting by.

While although many of those goals are noble, I believe today we are going to see that all true believers should have one main goal and focus. And it is that main goal and focus; from that all the rest falls into place. Today we are going to continue looking at the marks of a true believer as we look at Paul's testimony.

And if you turn with me in your Bibles to Philippians chapter 3, we are going to start with verse 9. Well, just a little bit concerning the context of the book of Philippians. Again, the book of Philippians; we know from Acts 16 that the apostle Paul was somewhat of a spiritual father to the Philippian church. He had been led by the Spirit of God to share the gospel with Lydia down by the river. She came to faith, and those with her. We have Paul and Silas being put in jail and then sharing their faith with the Philippian jailer after God caused them to be released supernaturally. And the jailer was going to commit suicide, and he said to them, "What must I do to be saved?" And Paul said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." And Scripture says he shared the Word with him, and with his household. And we know the nucleus of the Philippian church came about through the preaching of the gospel by the apostle Paul and Silas. Now, the Philippian church and those in Philippi loved the apostle Paul, and the

# Philippians 3:9-11

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 9/2/2007

apostle Paul loved them. They had sent Epaphroditus to bring some needed finances for Paul and some care for him. And they were very concerned about his condition as Paul was under house arrest in Rome, being in chains 24/7.

And Paul was anxious in a godly fashion, concerned, to relay back to these Philippians that everything was okay, that even though they might be considering his imprisonment as hindering the gospel, actually God was using it for the furtherance of the gospel. And Paul shares his heart in ministry, which was to recognize that in everything that he does he desired to have Christ magnified in that.

And we saw that for Paul, the possibility of dying was something he looked forward to for Christ because it would be gain; he would be with Christ. But if he was to live on, he would continue for the needful service of this Philippian church. And he did not know which way to go. To live is Christ, to die is gain. We saw his circumstances- he was imprisoned. His attitude- to live is Christ, to die is gain.

And then he addressed the Philippian attitudes. They were to be united in spirit, they were to be humble, they were to be like Christ Jesus. They were to have the mindset that was in Christ. This mindset of humility in which Christ (God in human flesh) humbly took on, taking on the form of a bondservant. He became a man, and He became obedient to the point of death, even death on the cross. Ultimately, exhibiting His obedience to God the Father and His ultimate submission of thinking of others as more important than Himself. And we are to have that same attitude, to think of others as more important than our self.

And then we saw that because God is at work in us, we are to work out our salvation with fear and trembling because it is exactly that- God at work in us. And the first real command concerning our behavior, ultimately, after the great example (the fact that Christ was exalted above all, declared as Lord, ultimately, into the position that He was before at the right hand of the Father) we saw that we should do all things without complaining and grumbling. And we recognize that complaining and grumbling illustrates the fact that we do not recognize that the Lord is sovereign over our lives. Maybe we are not even yielding to the Lord.

Now, we know at that point he gave three selfless examples in flesh of humility, of those who considered others as more important than himself. We saw, first of all, his example. Then the example of Timothy. And then the example of Epaphroditus.

And then in chapter 3, Paul says he is going to continue and bring about what remains. And we saw in the beginning of chapter 3 the portion that leads into what we will see today, in which Paul warned the Philippians concerning false teachers. He said to beware, but before he warned them he reminded them of having the right attitude. That they were to rejoice in the Lord. And that his warning them was no trouble for Paul, and it should be a safeguard for them. He says,

**<sup>1</sup>Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things again is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you. (and here is what I wanted to share.) <sup>2</sup>Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision; <sup>3</sup> for we are the**

# Philippians 3:9-11

*Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 9/2/2007*

***true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh, [Philippians 3:1-3]***

Beware of the bad guys, they glory in themselves, they worship in their flesh, they put confidence in themselves. Beware of those guys. "We are the true circumcision," Paul would say. And it is from this point Paul jumps off into his own testimony to give us an example of someone who is truly following Christ in light of those in whom they should beware of.

We saw Paul's mindset before Christ. He shares his mindset in verse 4. " <sup>4</sup>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." [Philippians 3:4] He is saying he had a list of accomplishments that we will see that were so great spiritually and religiously speaking that he had all kinds of reason to put trust in those things. Even so much more than maybe those false brethren that had come around. And he says, " <sup>5</sup>circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; <sup>6</sup>as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless." [Philippians 3:5-6] Paul relied on his heritage before coming to Christ. In his mind, he was born into salvation. That is what he is talking about, the circumcision and the nation of Israel. Paul relied on his own religiousness, he was a Pharisee zealous for God. And Paul relied on the result of his heritage and religiousness which was his own righteousness found in the Law, in which he was found blameless.

And Paul, before Christ, had a lot to brag about. He had a whole list of things on his spiritual ledger sheet of pluses in his own mind, things that he thought were gain. Things that he put confidence in. He was not the dirty wretched sinner in the gutter. He was zealous for God, he was obeying all of His commands. But yet we see that none of these can save anyone. Nothing on his impressive list of things could save. And ultimately, the apostle Paul did not know Christ. Then on the road to Damascus, Jesus Christ appeared before him and Paul did not know who He was. "Who art Thou, Lord?" And He said, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting." And Jesus Christ brought him into a relationship where the apostle Paul believed in the Lord Jesus Christ and then immediately went and preached repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

And then we saw in verse 7 Paul's mindset at conversion, when he got saved. " <sup>7</sup>But whatever things were gain to me, (we saw that is in the past, continually. "I counted all this stuff as gain in the past.") those things I have counted (in the past with result to the present now) as loss (total loss) for the sake of Christ. [Philippians 3:7] Or really because of Christ. Because of his relationship now with the Living Lord of the universe, Jesus Christ, all that stuff was considered as loss. It is rubbish, as we will see. For the sake of Christ, because of Christ.

And then we saw last week the beginning of his current mindset as a believer. His testimony. Where do we go from here as believers? We have come to Christ- what is the next step in our walk? What should we be thinking? What should we have? And we see the apostle Paul giving us that testimony today in

# Philippians 3:9-11

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 9/2/2007

our passage. And first we are going to review verse 8. But we are going to see that Paul counted all as loss in order to gain Christ. Let's go back to verse 7 again and we will roll into verse 8.

**<sup>7</sup> But whatever things were gain to me (that is all of his confidence in religiousness), those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. (Because of Christ) <sup>8</sup> More than that, I count all things (Now present tense. This is his mindset now. The apostle Paul, writing to the Philippians. "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 (Or literally "dung") in order that I may gain Christ, [Philippians 3:7-8]**

Paul made it clear that an intimate, personal relationship with Jesus Christ the Lord of the universe surpasses everything. It surpasses everything. Everything he considered, that he counted on, that he focused on, that he trusted in, was loss. His hopes, his dreams, desires, everything before Christ, everything, as we see, he counted as literally refuse or dung. That was Paul's mindset. It is all worthless, it is all smelly, ugly trash compared in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus. And he actually says he actually lost it. He lost everything. "For whom I have suffered the loss of all things." Paul lost everything relating to his old life when he came to Christ. He lost his position; he was rising religiously as a Pharisee. He lost his status. He most likely, as we saw last week, lost his family. Certainly, those relationships were changed. And Paul went from the persecutor, being fully secure and safe, to the one who was being persecuted, being chased from city to city, being beaten wherever he went.

Paul rightly, after he came to Christ, continued to reckon those things that he trusted in and focused on as loss or dung in light of knowing Christ. And he actually lost it. He was not the said-faith Christian. "I will give everything for Christ" and yet retains everything, retains your own desires, retains your own plans. Retains everything. He gave it up for Christ. We see his testimony here.

And at this point we see the result of truly coming to a saving knowledge with Jesus Christ. And we will see that in the end of 8 and then in verse 9. Verse 8.

**<sup>8</sup> 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 (or trash or dung) in order that I may gain Christ, <sup>9</sup> 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, [Philippians 3:8-9]**

Did you notice in the end of verse 8 there was this phrase "in order that". There is a Greek word *hina* which basically means "A purpose or result is following." And he has counted all his previous accomplishments religiously, everything he trusted in, his life apart from Christ as rubbish in order that (2 times that he uses the term "may" to identify)- "that I may gain Christ, that I may (verse 9) be found

# *Philippians 3:9-11*

*Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 9/2/2007*

in him.” And here the apostle Paul gives us a very concise picture of the results of truly believing the gospel. Two specific results that come from saving knowledge of Christ.

Let’s take a look at the first one, which is gaining Christ. He says, “For whom I have suffered (middle of 8) the loss of all things and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ.” [Philippians 3:8] Paul clearly relates his former righteousness apart from Christ, everything he valued apart from Christ, as dung in order that he might gain Christ.

Now, this is an interesting statement because he says, “I may gain Christ.” It is a subjunctive mood which in Greek is the mood of possibility. Well, what does it mean? Is he saying he may not gain Christ? Is that what he is saying here? Is he saying he has not gained Him and he might gain Him or he might not gain Him? Well, certainly we know that Paul did not believe that he would not gain Christ. Paul believed he would. And he was confident that when God begins the work of salvation, He will finish that work. Is this not what he said back in chapter 1? “He who began a good work in you will complete it.” With confidence Paul said (inspired by the Holy Spirit) that it will happen. So what is he saying here? I believe he is saying that the process is not complete yet. “That I might gain Christ.” He has not gained Him completely. He has not gained Christ completely. He knows Christ now. And he is gaining Him, but as we will see later, he has not completely gained Him yet.

And folks, “gaining Christ”, this terminology, “loss and gain, loss and gain”- gaining Christ is the core of salvation. Because salvation is about knowing the living God, it is not about a ticket out of hell. Certainly there is punishment for sin, yes, but salvation is about knowing the living God. John 17. “And this is eternal life, (He says) that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.” [John 17:3] Isaiah makes it clear that sin has caused a separation between us and God. Isaiah 59. Paul shared with the Romans that the wages of sin is death. The paycheck you receive for your sin is death. Death in relationship to God. When God told Adam and Eve that the day they disobeyed His Word and ate, ultimately, they would surely die. They did not fall over and die at that moment but they died spiritually. They died, they were separated from God. And the wages of sin is death. Paul shares with the Ephesians, in Ephesians chapter 2, that these Gentile Ephesians before Christ were without God in the world. They were without God. And when you are in your sin you are without God but when trust in Jesus Christ and believe in Him, you gain Christ.

Going from being without God to gaining Christ. Now, our gaining Christ begins, as we will see, with gaining His righteousness first. That is called “justification,” where we are given the very righteousness of Christ. And we will see that in a minute. And the gaining goes on in a practical, on-going sense as we are being conformed to the image of Christ. As we practically live out the life of Christ that is called “sanctification”, being set apart from sin unto God.

And then, ultimately, we know from Scripture that when we see Him we will be made like Him. That is “glorification”. And at this point, we gain Christ completely. I think that is what Paul was talking about- “to live is Christ, to die is gain.” Much, much better to be with Christ personally. So he is gaining Christ right now. And he considers everything as rubbish “in order that I might gain Christ.” This process has

# Philippians 3:9-11

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 9/2/2007

started, and we will see he presses forward towards that goal. And I need to warn you that this phrase “in order that” in the end of 8 implies quite clearly that if we do not see our old life, all we trusted in, in its true light, its worthless trash and dung, we do not gain Christ. If I do not see my religious activity before Christ as worthless, I cannot gain Christ. Paul saw it as worthless in order that he might gain Christ. Currently, there are many people who think they are Christians but they are not because they are not, as Jesus said, and as we saw last week, willing to give up their lives. They love their own lives. They have not changed at all. They have not been delivered from darkness into the kingdom of His beloved Son.

And folks, salvation is about the person of Jesus Christ. And we have seen the last few weeks, it is about knowing Him, an intimate, personal relationship with the living God. And I want to ask you, have you gained Christ? Are you gaining Christ? You cannot be saved unless you recognize everything you trusted in before Christ is worthless. If you want to save your life, you will lose it. I remind you of what Jesus said in Luke 9, verse 23.

***<sup>23</sup> And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. <sup>24</sup> "For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, (if you want to save your own life and your own desires, you want to be the Lord of your life, you want to save that, you are going to love it) but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. <sup>25</sup> "For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself? (let's say you continue in your own desires and you actually succeed, and you gain everything, but what have you profited if you lose your own soul? And he says,) <sup>26</sup> "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. [Luke 9:23-26]***

Oh brothers and sisters, salvation is not about being a Christian. It is about truly knowing Christ, and thus gaining Him.

So then, in light of the surpassing value of knowing Christ, Paul counted everything as rubbish or dung, in order that he might gain Christ. Well, what does this gaining look like? We see in the passage he speaks about, ultimately we gain His righteousness. End of 8, “In order that I may gain Christ.” Verse 9, “and may be found in Him.” Or “discovered to be in Christ.” When you look at Paul, or Saul, before Christ, he was found in Judaism. That is what his life consisted of. When you looked at Saul, you saw the trappings of the world. Everything he thought he needed, he was adequate within himself. He was confident. He was self-religious and righteous. But after coming to Christ, or after Christ came to him, he realized it was all loss, it was all dung. And as a result, now he would gain Christ and be found in Him alone.

It is not Christ plus. It is Christ alone.

So Paul now expands on what it means to be found in Him. Again, verse 9. Actually, let's go back to the middle of verse 8. “...in order that I may gain Christ, and may be found..” The “In order” applies in the

# Philippians 3:9-11

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 9/2/2007

sentences to the “may be found in Him”. He is going to explain it here. “... **not having a righteousness of my own derived from Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith,**” [Philippians 3:9]

Paul before Christ believed, as many people believe, that they can attain righteousness through what they did. Paul specifically thought he was righteous because he kept the Law. Remember what he said back in verse 6. “As to righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.” He covered everything, he did it all. If you looked at Saul of Tarsus, you saw a man who kept the Law perfectly. As to righteousness, at least externally, he was found blameless. He sincerely and zealously believed that through the works of the Law, he could be righteous. And some of you may sincerely and zealously believe it is what you do that makes you right before God. It is coming to church that makes you right before God, or it is an event in your life that makes you right before God. Maybe it is baptism or whatever you might say, you think it is something that you do. But Paul says, “**and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but** (in contrast) **that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith,**” [Philippians 3:9]

Folks, God demands righteousness. He is righteous, He is holy. He demands righteousness. And we have a life and death contrast here. A contrast between man’s righteousness which cannot save and brings death with the righteousness that comes from God through faith in Jesus Christ. Which alone can bring salvation. And thus, we have a summary of the process of justification. The word “justification” just simply means to be declared righteous. Righteous is the noun. Justification or justified is the verb. It is the same word. God demands righteousness and He makes it clear in His Word that there are none righteous, not even one. Romans chapter 3.

And Romans chapter 3, verse 20. “... **because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight...**” [Romans 3:20a] No flesh will be determined to be righteous through the works of the Law. Why? Because through the Law comes the knowledge of sin. The Law should have told Paul that he is a sinner, that he does not meet its demands. But in his human pride, he felt like he could keep it all. And as to the Law, he was found blameless but that righteousness brings about death. Isaiah makes it clear that all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment or menstrual rag. It is an ugly picture of what we think is good and righteous. And folks, it is only when we encounter the Son of God through the Word of God that we recognize the filth of our self-righteousness and our self-determination and our self-focus.

And when we cry out to God to save us from our sin, when we place our faith in Jesus Christ (as we will see here), we receive the righteousness of Christ as a gift. 2 Corinthians 5:21. “<sup>21</sup>**He made Him who knew no sin** (that is Jesus) **to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**” [2 Corinthians 5:21]

You see, when Jesus Christ paid the penalty for our sins, when He redeemed us we were justified through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. What does that mean? That Jesus paid the price that we could not pay, and when we believe in Christ that price is paid for and therefore God can look at us because of Christ and say, “Righteous,” declaring us righteous, even though we know we mess up. Even

# *Philippians 3:9-11*

*Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 9/2/2007*

though we know we sin. We are given and found in Him, not having a righteousness of our own but a righteousness that is from Christ through faith in Him. That is the mindset of someone who is saved. It is his testimony. He is saying, "That I might gain Christ, that I may be found in Him not having a worldly, man-centered righteousness but a righteousness that comes from faith in Christ alone." That is the mindset of a true believer that has been justified because of the blood of Jesus Christ.

Paul realized the only way he wanted to be found was in Christ, with the righteousness gained through faith. Now some of you recognize you are not righteous because the Bible says there are none righteous, not even one. That the wages of sin is death. That none of your deeds add up, that you are unrighteous. But God is a gracious God and He poured out all the sin on Christ. Christ bore our sins in His body on the cross, paid the penalty for it, and the Father is satisfied with His sacrifice. And when we place our faith in Christ, it is credited to our account, the righteousness of Christ. Nothing we do except "believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." And that implies that we are truly turning to God from our sin. We do not want to live that way anymore. We are turning from our own lordship to the Lord. And just crying out to Him to save us from our sins.

God gives His very righteousness, what He requires is through faith in Jesus Christ alone. How is it that you believe you are righteous? Is it through something you have done? If it is, it is like filthy rags in God's sight. Even things that He commands in other areas. The Law that Paul was found righteous in was God's Law. But it was given to show him his sin, not to make him righteous. Paul desired to be found in Him not having a righteousness of his own, derived from the Law but that which is through faith in Jesus Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith. And you have a concise explanation in that verse of one element of salvation, justification. Justification by faith, being declared by God that you are righteous in His sight, therefore opening the door for relationship with the righteous God. Not because of anything we do but because we simply believe in Jesus Christ.

Paul had a lot to brag about before Christ. But in light of that, it was all dung. It was waste. It was worthless. And thus he gained Christ, and thus being found in Him with His righteousness. And that was his continual desire. And folks, there are some of you today who see your own works or your own deeds as why you are righteous before God. And that is filthy. And most of the time, it is religious stuff. It is sacraments or baptism, whatever it is, you see those things as what makes you right before God. And nothing makes you right before God except the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and faith in Him. "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." When judgment comes, when you stand before the living God, will you be found in Christ with His righteousness by faith? Or will you be found in something else? Nothing else than the righteousness of Christ will deliver you from judgment. And it is free. It is a free gift. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

So then, Paul counted all as loss in order to gain Christ. That is the mindset of someone who is truly saved. It all before this is loss, it is worthless, it does not count in light of Christ. Secondly, we are going to see Paul had a deep desire, his testimony. Now, it did not stop there. He did not gain Christ and then

# Philippians 3:9-11

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 9/2/2007

just cruise on his own way in his own Christian paradigm. We see Paul had a deep desire to know Christ. Let's go back to 8 again.

***<sup>8</sup>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, (we just saw that) <sup>9</sup>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, <sup>10</sup> that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; <sup>11</sup> in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.[Philippians 3:8-11]***

Paul gained Christ and His righteousness. That was the beginning of salvation. But what direction does the heart and mind of a true believer go as opposed to a false one? Remember, he is giving his testimony in light of the people around him to beware of. What is the focus of a true believer versus the bad guys to watch out for?

First of all, we see again it is all about knowing Christ. Verse 10. "That I may know Him." Justification or being given the righteousness of Christ is just the beginning of salvation. Paul was gaining Christ, and gained His righteous and now his focus was on knowing Christ. "That I may know Him."

Jay Vernon McGee writes,

*Some people get the impression that being saved by faith means there is no motivation for conduct and works. They think that if a person is saved by grace it must mean he just sits around and twiddles his thumbs. Nothing could be further from the truth. Saving faith is a faith that moves you....If you have been saved by faith you have a new motivation, a new life purpose, a new life-style. If your faith in Christ hasn't changed you, you haven't been saved. You are still the same old man producing the same old life. Paul dissipates any notion that being saved by faith means you can sit in a rocking chair and rock yourself all the way to heaven.*

Paul's life was changed. And the grammar in this passage implies that the righteousness by faith, saving faith, brings about a true desire to know Christ. "That I may know Him." I have shared this before: eternal life is about knowing the living God. Those who were without God came to faith and trusted in Him, they were separated by sins and Christ paid the penalty. They believed in that sacrifice. And they were united with Christ. What did Paul say earlier? He counted all things as "loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord." Our justification, being declared righteous, allows us to relate and know a holy God. We are no longer seen in our sins. We can boldly come before His throne because we have the righteousness of Christ. But as we are sanctified, set apart, our intimate relational knowledge of Christ begins to increase. This may lead some of you to ask the question, "How is it that we know Christ better?" How is it that we grow? He says, "That I may know Him." Well I ask you, how

# Philippians 3:9-11

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 9/2/2007

did you come to know Christ in the first place? It was through hearing the Word and thus believing. Ephesians 1:13. Paul reminds the Ephesians.

**<sup>13</sup> In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation-- having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise," [Ephesians 1:13]**

He did not say, "You did this, this and this on your own." He said, "You listened, you heard, you believed and you were sealed with the Spirit." Romans 10:17

**<sup>17</sup>So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. [Romans 10:17]**

1 Peter 1:23

**<sup>23</sup> for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding word of God. <sup>24</sup> For, "All flesh is like grass, And all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, And the flower falls off, <sup>25</sup> But the word of the Lord abides forever." And this is the word which was preached to you. [1 Peter 1:23-15]**

Faith comes from hearing, and hearing from the Word of God. And folks, Paul (the same writer of this book) would tell the Colossians, "As you therefore have received Christ, (It is through faith, it is hearing the gospel, hearing the Word,) so walk in Him." Christ Jesus, the Lord, so walk in Him. Our walk is through the impartation of the Word of God by the Spirit of God that changes our lives and makes us more like Christ. Folks, we receive Christ through faith, hearing and believing the Word. And folks, the same is how we grow in our relationship with God. Jesus was praying to the Father and He said, "**<sup>17</sup> Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth.**" [John 17:17] Not "sanctify them in truth in general" but "Sanctify them in Thy Word, Thy Word is truth." And folks, I marvel at the number of contemporary songs that Christians sing about knowing Christ that have nothing to do with the means of knowing Christ. A true conversion to Christ should lead to a desire to know Him. If you have truly been saved, you should want to know your Savior. Peter says, just after he shares about salvation which I just read- 1 Peter 2:2. "**<sup>2</sup>like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, <sup>3</sup> if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.**" [1 Peter 2:2-3]

Like a baby, like an infant who by nature cries for food you should be longing for the pure milk of the Word so that you may grow in respect to salvation. What is salvation? Is it the Christian thing? No, it is a relationship with Jesus Christ. We grow through the Word by the Spirit of God illuminating it in our hearts. Do we not see this in 2 Peter, chapter 1?

**<sup>2</sup> Grace and peace be multiplied to you (in what?) in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; (it is about knowing Christ) <sup>3</sup> seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, (there are no excuses- God has given us**

# Philippians 3:9-11

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 9/2/2007

everything we need. We should just trust Him.) **through the true knowledge of Him** (it is not separated from knowing Christ) **who called us by His own glory and excellence.** <sup>4</sup> **For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. [2 Peter 1:2-4]**

You see, we know Christ better through the Word of God. And that is why He commands His people to be the “blessed man” that we see in Psalm 1, to be in the Word of God day and night. For pastors to preach the Word in season, out of season, to reprove, rebuke, to exhort with great patience and instruction. If you have been truly saved, you will have a desire to truly know Christ.

Now, I am not saying we are perfect. We do get saved and we do have that desire and then our desires are hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. Things crouch around us, we become conformed to this world and not transformed by the renewing of our minds. Folks, if that is the case, if you know you are truly saved, your conscience and the Word of God align with one another concerning salvation in Christ, maybe you have been hardened by sin. If you do not have a desire to know Christ first of all, I would examine yourself to see if you are in the faith. If you could care less about the Word of God on a day to day basis, I would say most likely you are not saved. If you could care less about it. That means you care less about Christ. Now I do not know your heart, but God knows your heart, and the first thing I would do is examine yourself to see if you are in the faith. See if what God says about you aligns with what you believe.

Secondly, you may be a believer and you have been hardened by the deceitfulness of sin; you have lost your first love. The cares of the world, things that encroach on your relationship with Christ. Just repent. God is a gracious God, a forgiving God. Tell Him you are sorry, you have just let your life encroach and you are sorry. And you have not been about knowing Christ and you are sorry. God forgives you, He is a gracious, loving, wonderful God.

Now here Paul continues, and I believe he manifests and shows us two areas in which Paul desired to know Christ. First of all we see he desired to know His resurrection power. Verse 10. **“<sup>10</sup>that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection” [Philippians 3:10a]** Paul desired to know the same power that raised Christ from the dead. Now is this a selfish desire on Paul’s part to get power? Folks, knowing the power of the resurrection cannot be separated from the One who is resurrected, who is Christ. A few things about resurrection here to speak of first of all. The resurrection of Jesus proves that He was who He said He was. You see, He humbled Himself and came in the form of a man. When you saw Christ in the incarnation, all you saw was a man. You did not see His glory. But the resurrection proves that He truly was who He said He was. “Before Abraham was, I AM.” And it says in Romans 1 that He was declared the Son of God by power through the resurrection from the dead. Also, the resurrection best illustrates the surpassing greatness of His power. Jesus said in John 2:19, “Destroy this temple and I will raise it in three days”, speaking of His body.

# Philippians 3:9-11

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 9/2/2007

The resurrection proves that Jesus has power over death, sin and Satan and his cohorts, and all the physical and spiritual world. Paul desired to know His resurrection power, the power that brought victory over death, sin, the world and Satan. And that ought to be our desire. Is this type of knowledge out of reach for us? No. Paul prayed for the Ephesian believers. Turn with me, just back a little bit, to Ephesians chapter 1. We are going to look at verse 15. And notice as we read this how knowing this power is intricately connected to knowing Christ. You cannot separate the two. It is not “give me power” type deal. It is knowing Christ and His resurrection power. Ephesians chapter 1, verse 15.

**<sup>15</sup> For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you, and your love for all the saints,** (That is the evidence of true faith.) **<sup>16</sup> do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers;** (And here is his prayer) **<sup>17</sup> that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.** (That you would know Christ better, right?) **<sup>18</sup> I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened,** (How so?) **so that** (Or literally, “having had the eyes of your heart enlightened.” So that, three things.) **you may know what is the hope of His calling,** (This upward call in Christ Jesus.) **what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,** (How valuable you are as His inheritance because of Him. And the third thing.) **<sup>19</sup> and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.** (As you know Christ and grow in the knowledge of Christ, this should be coming forth. You should know more, and he says, “This power towards those who believe.”) **These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might <sup>20</sup> which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, <sup>21</sup> far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come. [Ephesians 1:15-21]**

Paul wanted them to know the surpassing greatness of His resurrection power towards those who believe. Paul says, “That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection.” It was not a selfish desire on the part of the apostle Paul to know God’s power. The same power that raised Christ from the dead enables us to have victory over sin, the self and the world. It is intricately connected to Christ.

Now, some people want to know the power of His resurrection, not realizing that the power of His resurrection cannot be fully known apart from the fellowship of His sufferings. Verse 10. **“<sup>10</sup>that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings...” [Philippians 3:10a]**

Paul clearly says he wants to know intimately the fellowship of His sufferings. I have never heard of any Christian yet that says they want to know this. Seriously. And I wish I had. I wish we would have this mindset like Paul. Let’s look at this. “And the fellowship of His sufferings.” What does he mean by this? The word “fellowship”, koinonia- we have heard that word means “joint participation or sharing”. Now, it is clear Paul is not speaking of sharing in the substitutionary suffering of Christ because Christ said, “It is finished.” He is not talking about sharing in His death to sin on the cross because it is finished. Well,

# Philippians 3:9-11

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 9/2/2007

what is he talking about? I believe he is talking about the suffering for Christ, ultimately, the suffering that Christ suffered for righteousness' sake while on the earth, the suffering that resulted from doing the will of the Father not His own which ultimately led to His death. "Behold, I come to do Thy will," He said. It is the suffering we encounter on earth that is meant for Christ, when we do His will and not our own. Paul speaks of this suffering for righteousness in 1 Peter, chapter 2 verse 21.

***<sup>21</sup> For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, <sup>22</sup> WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH; <sup>23</sup> and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; [1 Peter 2:21-23]***

Later on 1 Peter chapter 4,

***<sup>12</sup> Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; <sup>13</sup> but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing; so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation. <sup>14</sup> If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. [1 Peter 4:12-14]***

He is not talking about the "martyr-complex" suffering. Doing foolish things for Christ that cause suffering. He is talking about being obedient to the will of God, and suffering for it. There is a special blessing when we share the sufferings of our Savior. Suffering is a confirmation of our union with Christ and there is great reward awaiting. Matthew 5:10, the Sermon on the Mount.

***<sup>10</sup> "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of (Being an ornery Christian or a self-righteous Christian? No! For the sake of...) righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. <sup>11</sup> "Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, (Why? Because you are an arrogant Christian who is always sharing when no one wants to hear? No.) on account of Me. <sup>12</sup> "Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. [Matthew 5:10]***

There is a special closeness that happens when two people suffer the same thing. We know that in the world, right? It happens in marriages, when you suffer in situations with someone else, that there is a closeness, there is a bond in that. It happens in war. It happens with our walk with Christ. Paul wants to share intimate communion with Christ, that intimate communion that one shares while suffering with Him and for Him.

There is a tremendous blessing for those who suffer when God ordains it. Not through, as I have shared, our own martyr-complex or our own wisdom or our own sin, but when we just trust Jesus and do what is right and we suffer for it. It may be in your marriage, you do what is right as you lead your wife. Or as a

## Philippians 3:9-11

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 9/2/2007

wife, you do what is right as you love your husband and submit to him. Whatever it is, if you suffer for doing what is right there is a fellowship with the Living God that Paul says he wants to know the fellowship of His sufferings. When you are truly suffering for Christ, there is an intimacy in the midst of that suffering that is unexplainable. And Paul wants to experience and grow in it.

So then, Paul counted all as loss in order to gain Christ. Paul had a deep desire to know Christ and lastly, we will see, Paul had a deep desire to be like Christ. This is his testimony. He is standing up, sharing his testimony before the church on his salvation. Verse 8 again.

***<sup>9</sup>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 <sup>9</sup>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, <sup>10</sup>that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, (And here we go.) being conformed to His death <sup>11</sup>in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. [Philippians 3:8-11]***

It is all connected. Paul connects the knowledge of Christ, His power, His sufferings with His conforming purposes. It is His power combined with His refining purposes of suffering that draws us closer to Him and brings us more into the image of Christ. Paul desired to be conformed here to His death. But what does that mean? Did Paul say, "Hey, I just want to die now"? What does he mean by that? Being conformed, *summorphizo*- we saw the same word back earlier, *morphe*, that Christ while being in the very form of God, *morphe* of God (He was God and He showed it), He came in the form of a bondservant. He was a servant but then He showed it. He manifested that by taking on human flesh.

So what does he mean by "being conformed"? Well, we know that Jesus Christ physically died to redeem sinners. But also, in His incarnation, Jesus was obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. He died to His own will, entrusting Himself to the Father. So as to bring about His physical death, to redeem sinners, right?

So I believe here Paul had the inner desire to be manifest in his outward behavior such that the death to his own desires in life would manifest the very real presence of Christ, as we will see. Is this not what we saw in 2 Corinthians 4 that Dennis read? Paul said in 2 Corinthians 1 that they were brought almost to the point of death that they would not trust in themselves but the God that raises the dead. And in 2 Corinthians 4, it talks about his persecution and he says, verse 10, "<sup>10</sup> always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus." [2 Corinthians 4:10]

Being conformed to His death. What does he mean by that? Kenneth Wuest writes that,

*Paul's desire was that he might so come to know his Lord, the power of His resurrection operative in his life, and a joint-participation in His sufferings, that he would be brought*

# Philippians 3:9-11

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 9/2/2007

*to the place where he would become, both as to his inner heart life and also as to the outward expression of the same, like his Lord with respect to His death, not merely His physical death which was for others, but His death to self, as illustrated so vividly to the Philippians in the self emptying of the Lord Jesus, a self-emptying that was true of our Lord not only in His act of becoming incarnate and of stooping to the death of the Cross, but also one that conditioned His entire earthly life and made it the beautiful life it was, a death to self, a denying of self for the blessing of others. This was what Paul was striving for.*

That is what the Christian life is about. I come to Christ and I need to die; I need to decrease and Christ needs to increase. My desires, my wills, that is the fight we have every single day. Paul desired to be conformed to His death.

But it does not stop just here. The results of this conformity ultimately manifest themselves in His resurrection life, and we will see that.

***<sup>10</sup>that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; (And this will help us understand it, verse 11)  
<sup>11</sup>in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.” [Philippians 3:11]***

We are almost done with this passage, but here is a very difficult portion to interpret. Some interpreters have claimed that this portion of verse 11 is the most difficult verse in the entire Bible to interpret. And you say, “Why is that? It seems pretty simple to me!” “That I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.” Well, before we just look at it at face value, there are a few things that I need to share with you. First of all, he says, “In order that I may attain.” “If perhaps.” Was Paul not assured of his resurrection? Did Paul think he might not make it? That cannot be the case because in 2 Corinthians 5, he says if we are absent from this tent we will have a tent made from God. It is assured. 1 Corinthians 15. Paul is assured of resurrection. So what does he mean? Some say he is just being humble. “I may make it to heaven, I may be resurrected.” Is that what Paul is saying? I do not think so.

Well, there is a second problem in the text here but I think it helps answer the first problem. The word he uses for resurrection is only used once here in Scripture, and it is the common word for resurrection, *anastasis*, with a preposition added to it, *ex*. *Ex* means “out from”. So he literally says, “If perhaps I might arrive at the out-resurrection from the dead.” Now you know why people will say it is the hardest verse in the Bible to interpret. You go, “What is he talking about here?” Well, I think context will help us, I believe, get close to what Paul inspired by the Holy Spirit intended to say. This leads us to three possible interpretations. I will go through them quickly.

First, some say he is speaking of a bodily resurrection, that is what we first said. But I do not believe that because Paul would not be in doubt of that, right? “If perhaps.”

Second possibility, that Paul desired to be alive when the church was raptured. That is possible, right? “That I might be there when it happens. That I might attain the out-resurrection.” That is possible.

# Philippians 3:9-11

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 9/2/2007

And the third possibility that Paul is speaking of, spiritual resurrection, out of the dead. What do I mean? The very idea conveyed by Paul in Romans 6, based on being united with Christ. I am going to read that for you in Romans 6 for a moment. Romans 6:4.

***<sup>4</sup>Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, (We have been united to His 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. <sup>5</sup> For if we have become united with Him... [Romans 6:4-5a]***

That is what happens when you believe in Christ, you are placed into a relationship with Christ, all the benefits of His death, burial and resurrection apply to you. If that has happened, if we have been united in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection. And he talked about walking in newness of life.

I think that the third interpretation is the most viable because later on in the passage he says, “not that I have obtained it yet, but I press forward to the goal.” What is the goal? The goal is Christ’s likeness. He clearly sees that in that context in the next few verses. So, ok, what is he talking about? I believe he is talking about the fact that every believer, when we come to Christ, ultimately is faced with the choice now to follow self or to follow Christ. To yield ourselves to self or to yield ourself to Christ. And when we die to self, being conformed to His death, His life is manifested in us. And that is what I believe he is talking about, being conformed to the image of His death and His resurrection life.

Ok, so what am I saying? Paul simply desired to be conformed to the death of Christ so that he would live the resurrection life. That Christ would live through him. It is sanctification. And this is the process where we are being made like Christ. Again, the passage Dennis read. Now that we hear this it should make sense to us. 2 Corinthians 4:7.

***<sup>7</sup> But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, (That’s Christ.) that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves; (We have this treasure, Christ in us, in these basically clay pots so that you would recognize the power is from God and not from us. And then he says here,) <sup>8</sup> we are afflicted in every way, (This is the suffering, this is the dying for Jesus.) but not crushed; perplexed, (He did not know what was going to happen exactly.) but not despairing; <sup>9</sup> persecuted, but not forsaken; (Jesus never left him nor forsook him.) struck down, but not destroyed; <sup>10</sup> always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. (That is what he is talking about in this passage. As we die to self and our own desires, and God uses persecution and sufferings and trials to bring that about, the life of Christ is manifest in us and we are made more like Christ. We see here, and he says, that the life of Christ may be manifested in our body,) <sup>11</sup> For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. <sup>12</sup> So (He says to the Corinthians,) death works in us, but life in you. [2 Corinthians 4:7-12]***

# *Philippians 3:9-11*

*Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 9/2/2007*

God brings about this death to ourselves, this threat of death where we trust Christ, the God who raises the dead. And then from that, the life of Christ is manifest and it works in you. And I believe that is what he is saying. Paul had a desire to be like Christ. Understanding that being conformed to His death to sin brings about His resurrection life. As we die to self, as we say no to self by the power of the Holy Spirit, as we trust in Christ, the life of Christ is manifest in us. And Paul presses forward towards that goal. And that is the testimony of a true believer. Paul counted all as loss in order to gain Christ. He desired to know Him and he had a deep desire to be like Him, to have His life manifest. I want to ask you, "Do you see the sufferings of Christ that He allows in your life as a means to bring you to say no to yourself? To die to self? So that Christ can live through you?" The process of sanctification, as His Word becomes living and active in your heart in those sufferings and we become obedient to it. What are you passionate about, what are your goals? If someone was to ask you, "What are your goals?" Do you have goals? Paul's goal is clear in contrast to the false guys. His goals are clear. It is all about Christ, knowing Him and being like Him. Sharing in His suffering, experiencing His resurrection power.

Oh brothers and sisters, if this was only our all-consuming passion and desire! What a different life we would lead. This is what God is doing in our lives. This is His plan for the life of a true believer. And it is a glorious plan. But there are the sufferings for the glories to follow. I want to ask you, "What is your testimony?" If someone was to ask you about your testimony, would it line up with what Paul says?

Some of you do not feel this way because you do not know Christ. Because you tried to attain a righteousness on your own or you do not care about righteousness. "It is appointed man to die once, and then the judgment." And there is nothing that you can stand in or be found in apart from Jesus Christ that will spare you from that judgment. And I beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. "He who knew no sin became sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

And folks, are you a believer? You battle with the same thing. We battle with all the time. The world is conforming us by default to think the way we used to think. And when we think the way we used to think, we do not think like this. And folks, we need to be renewed through the Word, transformed. And I want to ask you, "Is your desire to know Christ, being transformed by His Word?" If it is not, something is in the way. And it is sin. I do not know what it is, but something is in the way. Just confess it to God, tell Him you are sorry, you are sorry. "Lord, I have allowed life to get in the way. I am sorry." God is a gracious God and a good God, and He will forgive you. And He will manifest through the death to self the life of Christ.

## **Prayer**

Father, thank You for Your Word. Thank You for the example of Your servant Paul who was like us, a human being. And he says later on in the same letter, "Imitate me." We are to imitate Paul as he follows you. Father, I pray for anyone here who is trusting in their own righteousness, that they would come before You and recognize their absolute and utter need for Your righteousness. And they would believe in Jesus Christ, calling to Him so as to be saved. Father, for those of us who are believers, we confess that we so often become unfocused or we focus on the wrong things. You have told us in Your Word to

# *Philippians 3:9-11*

*Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 9/2/2007*

lay aside every encumbrance and the sin that so easily entangles us, that unbelief. To fix our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of faith. May we do that. May we through the death to self and our lives through suffering manifest His life in us, that we may accomplish the purposes You have ordained for us in that, through Christ. Father, I just pray we would be Your channels to do Your will. That we would trust in You and obey You now. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Available online at: <http://www.vancouverbible.org>

COPYRIGHT (C) 2013 Vancouver Bible Fellowship

You may reproduce this sermon transcript in its entirety for  
non-commercial purposes in accordance with

Vancouver Bible Fellowship's Copyright Policy (<http://www.vancouverbible.org/copyright.pdf>).