

**"Paul's Letter to the Philippians —  
'The Witness of the Apostle Paul — Losing All but Gaining Christ, Part 2'"**

**Review:**

- ***The seven-fold emptying of Christ now leads directly in this letter to the seven-fold offering up by Paul. In each case it is glory that follows.***
- ***Again, the key verse in this entire section (or perhaps even entire letter) is this:***

***Phil. 2:5*** Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus . . .

- ***This is a very great exhortation indeed and immediately leads here in this letter to the Philippians to some very practical applications. But this may seem to be so very far beyond our capabilities that we shy away entirely from these exhortations given by the apostle here. But that would be to ignore the examples here given and the witnesses set before us for our encouragement.***
- ***But the apostle here makes it so clear that to enter into the practical experience that he exhorts we must always remember and be motivated by the seven-fold “emptying” and “glorification” of Christ Himself. This is the constant exhortation of Paul in his letters, that our response to Christ’s great love and its consequence be appropriate to that great sacrifice that was once for all offered on our behalf of us sinners.***
- ***To review then:***

***First, Christ’s Emptying:***

- 1. “But made himself of no reputation”***
- 2. “took the form of a servant”***
- 3. “made in the likeness of men”***
- 4. “and found in fashion as a man”***
- 5. “he humbled himself”***
- 6. “and became obedient unto death”***
- 7. “even the death of the cross”***

***Then, Christ’s Glorification:***

- 1. “The name above every name”***
- 2. “Every knee shall bow”***

3. *“Things in heaven”*
4. *“Things in earth”*
5. *“Things under the earth”*
6. *“Every tongue confess”*
7. *“That Jesus Christ is Lord”*

- *Christ gave what was rightly his; Paul what was not rightly his since he had gained it carnally or through the flesh, as it were.*

*Christ regained what was rightly his; Paul gained what was not rightly his, but by the grace of God it was given freely.*

- *Take note that there are four witnesses as we have seen presented here in this letter. Christ is first and foremost. The apostle Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles is second. The others, Timothy and Epaphroditus follow after Paul and he is their example and should be ours as well.*

*So what had Paul given up for the sake of Christ? What was his witness, his testimony?*

- *Paul’s Witness — Willingly Losing Everything*

- *We have now arrived at the heart of this Pauline letter. Paul’s witness as stated here in detail was this: he had, as his lord also had, willingly left behind everything that was of value to him (in his case, of course, of human value, for that was the issue).*

*That is most important here. The apostle had willingly given up all that was most important to him for the sake of Christ:*

*Phil. 3:4-6*

*4 Though I might also have confidence in the flesh [that is, humanly speaking]. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:*

*5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, [of] the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;*

*6 Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.*

- *Paul’s emptying and his example is now highlighted and it becomes the central focus:*

1. ***“Circumcised the eighth day”***
  2. ***“of the stock of Israel”***
  3. ***“[of] the tribe of Benjamin”***
  4. ***“an Hebrew of the Hebrews”***
  5. ***“as touching the law, a Pharisee”***
  6. ***“concerning zeal, persecuting the church”***
  7. ***“touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless”***
- ***Paul here is dramatically looking back, a dangerous path to travel, as he has stated elsewhere. Any of you that have left much behind for the sake of Christ (and I am not referring here to a way of sinful life but far more) know the kind of thing Paul is mentioning now in these verses. This is his life story before all was gladly given over to the Lord, even his own life.***
  - ***Here he uses the words, “confidence in the flesh”. What is their significance? The apostle’s “exaltation” will be the necessary consequence of his own humbling. But to understand thus we need to know what the apostle gave up? Much detail is given here to help us understand what might seem alien and obscure for us modern Gentiles.***
  - ***So all of these “excellencies” were as offered by the Jewish religious system as Paul knew it. But now he writes that all of that he had given up for the sake of Christ and his glorious work of redemption.***
  - ***But his point is that it is not a matter of what we gave up by faith that leads to salvation. Ours is not a “works” salvation at all, but rather salvation by personal faith in the completed work of our Lord Jesus and through its application to our lives we enjoy the fruit of that salvation.***
  - ***Paul’s Witness — But Nothing May Be Compared to Gaining Christ***

***Phil. 3:7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.***

- ***But do we really comprehend this comparison? What does it mean in our personal world today? What have you given up for the cause of Christ Jesus? Notice that this is not a matter of ethics or morality. No, it is far different. It is a matter of calling.***

- *So, Christ's example is so great that in comparison with that, our sacrifices are nothing at all — even when from our so limited a perspective, they seem like everything! Paul's example of this "sacrifice" is so relevant and so directly applicable to us today. He sacrificed it all as he says so powerfully in this next section.*
- *And then in most blessed language indeed, he lists his seven-fold gains! This will be our subject today:*
  1. *Excellency of the knowledge of Christ*
  2. *Found in Him not having the righteousness of the Law*
  3. *That I may know Him*
  4. *The Power of His resurrection*
  5. *The fellowship of His sufferings*
  6. *The conformity unto His death*
  7. *The [out] resurrection from among dead ones*
- *Such comparisons as these cause us to reach far beyond our normal abilities to gain, even as he writes, the very "mind of Christ". In reality, all of these examples, each of these witnesses, are provided so that we may by the power of God also share "the mind of Christ".*

#### **Our Scripture:**

***Phil. 3:8-11***

***8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things [but] loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them [but] dung, that I may win Christ,***

***9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:***

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

***11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.***

#### **Our Outline:**

- ***Paul's Witness, The Glory of It All: His Sacrifice was Great Indeed***
- ***Paul's Witness, The Glory of It All: His Strong Desire is Our High Example***
- ***Paul's Witness, The Glory of It All: His Life's Contrasts Are to be Ours Too***
- ***Paul's Witness, The Glory of It All: This Knowledge Comes Only with Great Suffering***
- ***Paul's Witness, The Glory of It All: To 'Win' Christ was Paul's Supreme Hope***

**I. Paul's Witness, The Glory of It All: His Sacrifice Was Great Indeed:**

***[READ ] Phil. 3:8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things [but] loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them [but] dung, that I may win Christ***

- ***Verse 8a - “I count all things but loss ... and do count them [but] dung”: Anything and everything that might stand in the way of Christ’s work in and through me. This sounds so absolute and so idealistic perhaps. But is it really? That is for each of us believers to carefully consider, right?***
- ***“The excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus . . .”: Oh, what it must be like, the apostle writes here, to have this knowledge of Christ. This is very clearly not knowledge of Christ “according to the flesh” [see 2 Cor. 5:16 “Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we [him] no more.” This is rather Christ according to the spirit.]***

**II. Paul's Witness, The Glory of It All: His Strong Desire is Our High Example:**

- ***Verse 8b - “. . . that I may win Christ”: This was Paul’s goal. Is it ours? I would submit to you that very few believers today know anything about this. They are either living under a law, or they have what they wanted through Christ’s salvation and now live in this world having secured that and confident that that is all they can have in this life.***
- ***Is this to be understood as true now or only later, at the Judgment Seat of Christ would be our question?***

***Much of it is clearly here and now. We will need to come here again in our next study, but we will begin that study now by considering what Paul wrote in these verses. Verse 11 will need more serious consideration and we will reserve that until next time.***

**III. Paul's Witness, The Glory of It All: His Life's Contrasts are to be Ours Too:**

**[READ ] Phil. 3:9** And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

- ***“found in him, no righteousness of the law . . .”: “In him”, here meaning as he writes, not based on the works of the law. Paul was as he has written, or so he thought, “blameless” (verse 6 here in this chapter).***

**IV. Paul’s Witness, The Glory of It All: This Knowledge Comes Only with Great Suffering:**

**[READ ] 3:10** *That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death*

**Phil. 3:10a** That I may know him . . . ***Meaning in this now “new” way, not according to the flesh but according to the spirit.***

**Phil. 3:10b** . . .and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death

- ***“The power of His resurrection”: Don’t take this apart from the following: This is regarding the resurrection power found in Christ. But it is not to be taken alone as these next words of the apostle indicate. This is not the resurrection itself but rather the “power” of his resurrection. This is the life of the spirit of Jesus Christ he has written about in chapter one. This is the knowledge he writes of here. The indwelling Christ suffered and died for each of us — but now we are to willingly enter into these various dimensions of this life and by his resurrection power we are to “enjoy” this life as further described here:***
- ***“The fellowship of His suffering”: Surely this is in this life and not in the next and there is no question about that. This is optional for the believer as we shall see as we proceed.***
- ***“Conformity to His death”: Of course, in this life. This is part of the detailed teaching that we need to get further into in our next study. For now though, lets look very quickly at one chapter in 2 Corinthians [and this theme is found in other places in that letter and others as well]:***
- ***So our conclusion based upon Paul’s example here is simply this:***

- ***No matter what the circumstance of life, we are empowered to live above those circumstances. It is the glory of our Lord Jesus that is at stake here.***
- ***Paul's example, he writes, ensures us that this path of living above it all is open and available and freely given as part of God's great gift to us through our Lord Jesus Christ. Newness of life is therefore the most natural of responses for us believers. THIS IS NOT A MATTER OF LAW KEEPING BUT LAW TRANSCENDING, for law and grace do not mix as Romans 11 makes so clear.***

**V. Paul's Witness, The Glory of It All: To 'Win' Christ was Paul's Supreme Hope:**

**[READ ] Phil. 3:11** If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

- ***Is it clear to you how great the blessing described by these words would be? Paul sought it with all of his heart.***
- ***"The [out] resurrection from the dead"***
  - ***This cannot be the rapture or resurrection that will occur at that time. That is guaranteed for all believers, of course. But this resurrection is optional. It is reserved only for those that meet the requirement mentioned here. Paul was not even sure himself if he would "gain" this resurrection or "win" Christ as he writes of this here.***
  - ***The apostle writes about this in many places in his letters — it is a major theme. One of the most powerful is in 2 Corinthians 4:***

**[READ ] 2 Cor. 4:6-11**

6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to [give] the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

8 [We are] troubled on every side, yet not distressed; [we are] perplexed, but not in despair;

**9 Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;  
10 Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord  
Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in  
our body.**

**11 For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus'  
sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our  
mortal flesh.**

- ***We will plan to start here in our next study in order to understand the letter to the Philippians better, comparing scripture with scripture.***

***So let's conclude today with Steve Green's "Refiner's Fire" which is right on point in this regard.***

***"There burns a fire with sacred heat  
White hot with holy flame  
And all who dare pass through its blaze  
Will not emerge the same  
Some as bronze, and some as silver  
Some as gold, then with great skill  
All are hammered by their sufferings  
On the anvil of His will***

***Chorus:  
The Refiner's fire  
Has now become my souls desire  
Purged and cleansed and purified  
That the Lord be glorified  
He is consuming my soul  
Refining me, making me whole  
No matter what I may lose  
I choose the Refiner's fire***

***I'm learning now to trust His touch  
To crave the fire's embrace  
For though my past with sin was etched  
His mercies did erase  
Each time His purging cleanses deeper  
I'm not sure that I'll survive  
Yet the strength in growing weaker  
Keeps my hungry soul alive"***



**Conclusions and Application:**

- ***Are we being drawn by the power of these words (and by these witnesses as set before us here) to follow their example?***
- ***Is the love of Christ enough? For the apostle Paul it was enough. He cast off every human accomplishment for the sake of Christ and because of his great love. For that poor man “Cripple Tom” it was enough. Do you know his story?***

***Amen!***