**I WANT TO KNOW CHRIST**

Philippians 3:1-11

Key Verse 3:10

**“**I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,”

**Introduction**



In today’s passage the Apostle Paul gives the Philippians a strong warning against those who were misleading believers to follow the old law and Jewish traditions in order to gain righteousness. He expresses his firm decision to know Christ, for he considered everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ. He also considered participating in Jesus’ suffering as great gain. Through this, he teaches us what the ultimate goal of our spiritual life is.

1. Read verses 1-3. What did Paul exhort the believers to do? (1a) Why do you think rejoicing in the Lord can be a safeguard for us?(1b) What was Paul’s warning? (2) Who are true believers? (3)

1-1. Read verses 1-3.

Further, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you. 2 Watch out for those dogs, those evildoers, those mutilators of the flesh. 3 For it is we who are the circumcision, we who serve God by his Spirit, who boast in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh

1-2. What did Paul exhort the believers to do? (1a)

***‘Rejoice in the Lord’***

* Paul rejoiced even while he was in the prison. This was not a situation where one would naturally be able to rejoice.
* This is also a fitting theme for Paul’s whole letter. Paul shared with the Philippians the principle of being able to rejoice – not in circumstances, but in the Lord who works all things together for good.
* This joy is fitting for the believer, for it shows that we really do trust in God whom we believe is in control. When we believe this, we are filled with joy.

1-3. Why do you think rejoicing in the Lord can be a safeguard for us?(1b)

***It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you.***

- Rejoicing in the Lord protects us from Satan’s evil works inside of us.

- Rejoicing helps us to keep faith and a thankful heart so that we would be strong and powerful in the Lord.

- The more we rejoice in Christ, the more we will do for Him and suffer for Him. Then we will not drift away.

- The joy in the Lord is our strength.

Nehemiah 8:10 reads,

Nehemiah said, “Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

***‘not trouble for me to write same things to you again’***

* Paul was not troubled at all about repeating these same words because it was so necessary and important for them to rejoice.
* He emphasized his point to make sure that the Philippian believers would practice what he instructed. Through practicing this principle, Paul really wanted them to taste this same joy in the Lord.
* It’s important for us to remember these things as well.

1-4. What was Paul’s warning? (2)

***Watch out for those dogs, those evildoers, those mutilators of the flesh.***

· **‘dogs’** – false teachers who forced believers to practice Judaism - who endeavor to keep up the law of Moses, and mix its observances

· They were like dogs, who were against the gospel of Christ, barking at them and biting them.

People called a person ‘dog’ when they despised him because of his disgusting and evil behavior.

· **‘evildoers’** – those who wanted to be saved through the observation of the law not relying on God’s grace. They boasted of themselves being of the of the circumcision

· **‘mutilators of the flesh’** – they relied on circumcision and the keeping of the law instead of relying on the grace of the Gospel.

· These people sought their righteousness through observing the law, performing rituals, and keeping traditions instead of relying on God’s.

· All those who wants to get righteousness through what they do and have instead of relying on God’s grace are evil doers who are against God.

1-5. Who are true believers? (3)

***‘Those serve God by his Spirit, who boast in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh’***

· He describes true Christians, who are indeed the circumcision, the spiritual circumcision, the peculiar of people of God, who are in covenant with him,

· We are the circumcision, who worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

· The true believers are those who serve God by his Spirit, boast in Christ and put confidence in the Christ. They have circumcision in their mind.

· Serve God by his Spirit : True believers serve God by Spirit, not by flesh. They worship in the spirit, in opposition to the carnal ordinances of the Old-Testament, which consist in meats, and drinks, and washings, etc.

. Christianity takes us away from these things, and teaches us to be inwardly one with God in all the duties of religious worship. We must worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4:24)

· Boast in Christ : True believers boast in Christ because they know righteousness and salvation come only from Jesus. They rejoice in their relation to Christ and interest in him.

· Put confidence in Christ : True believers put their confidence in Christ, not in themselves or any other things. They have no confidence in the flesh, in those carnal ordinances and outward performances. We must repent of trusting in our own merits, that we may build only on Jesus Christ, the everlasting foundation.

2. Read verses 4-9. What reasons did Paul have to put confidence in the flesh more than anyone else? (4-6) Why did Paul consider everything as a loss and even as garbage? (7-8) Where does our righteousness come from? (9)

2-1.Read verses 4-9.

Though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; 6 as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless. 7 But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. 8 What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.

2-2. What reasons did Paul have to put confidence in the flesh more than anyone else? (4-6)

***Though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; 6 as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.***

· Paul shows what he had to boast of as a Jew and a Pharisee.

· If he would have trusted in the flesh, he had as much cause to do so as any man, even more.

· His birthright - He was a native Israelite: of the stock of Israel. And he was of the tribe of Benjamin, in which tribe the temple stood, and which adhered to Judah when all the other tribes revolted. Benjamin was the father's darling, and this was a favourite tribe.

· A Hebrew of the Hebrews, an Israelite on both sides, by father and mother, and from one generation to another.

· He could boast of his relations to the church and the covenant, for he was circumcised on the eighth day; he had the token of God's covenant in his flesh, and was circumcised the very day which God had appointed.

· For learning, he was a Pharisee, brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, an eminent doctor of the law: and was a scholar learned in all the learning of the Jews, taught according to the perfect manner of the laws of the fathers. (Acts 22:3) He was a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee (Acts 23:6), and after the most strict sect of his religion lived as a Pharisee. (Acts 26:5)

· He had a blameless conversation: Touching the righteousness which is of the law, blameless: as far as the Pharisees' exposition of the law went, and as to the mere letter of the law and outward observance of it, he could acquit himself from the breach of it and could not be accused by any.

· He had been an active man for his religion. As he made a strict profession of it, under the title and character of a Pharisee, so he persecuted those whom he looked upon as enemies to it. Concerning zeal, he persecuted the church.

· He showed that he was in good earnest, though he had a zeal without knowledge to direct and govern the exercise of it

· All this was enough to have made a proud Jew confident, and was stock sufficient to set up with for his justification.

. This shows that Paul achieved the standard of righteousness which was accepted among the men of his day – though this standard fell short of God’s holy standard. Because of how the law was interpreted and taught, there were those of that day who were deceived into thinking that they really were blameless.

· Paul put his confidence in his flesh, in what he did and had. But he didn’t put his confidence in those things anymore.

· He stopped putting his confidence in himself realizing that true confidence and righteousness comes only through Jesus’ death and resurrection.

2-3. Why did Paul consider everything as a loss and even as garbage? (7-8)

***‘ whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ’***

· The things which he had counted gain while he was a Pharisee, but now he counted them as a loss for Christ. He counted them loss; not only insufficient to enrich him, but what would certainly impoverish and ruin him, if he trusted them, in opposition to Christ.

· The things that he valued were considered as a loss because they hindered him in knowing Jesus.

· He counted all things as a loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord,

· It was the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord, a believing experimental acquaintance with Christ as Lord; not a merely notional and speculative, but a practical and efficacious knowledge of him.

· To gain Jesus he lost everything. After meeting Jesus he considered everything that he valued as nothing. It even became garbage.

. Here Paul put a personal relationship with Jesus Christ at the very center of the Christian’s life. He joyfully accepted the loss of all other things for the greatness of this personal relationship with Christ.

. Paul said that he counted; in this verse he said I also count. This first counting was at his conversion; the second – some 30 years later – was in his Roman prison. After all he had experienced, he still counted it worthy to give everything up for the sake of knowing Jesus.

2-4. Where does our righteousness come from? (9)

***through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.***

· Only true righteousness comes from God through our faith not any other things.

· There is a righteousness provided for us in Jesus Christ, and it is a complete and perfect righteousness.

· The righteousness which we depend upon is that which is through faith in Christ, not a legal, but evangelical righteousness: The righteousness which is of God by faith, ordained and appointed of God." The Lord Jesus Christ is the Lord our righteousness.

· Jesus’ sufferings were sufficient to satisfy God’s justice for the sins of the world, and to bring in a righteousness which will be effectual to all that believe. Faith is the ordained means of actual interest and saving benefit in all the purchase of his blood. It is by faith in his blood.

· The righteousness cannot be obtained through effort or observing the law. Only by faith in Jesus who redeemed us on the cross we can get it. By faith we accept Jesus’ righteousness.

3. Read verses 10-11. What did Paul want to know? (10) What did he want to attain? (11) What can we learn from his goal in Jesus Christ?

3-1. Read verses 10-11.

I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

3-2. What did Paul want to know? (10)

***I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection***

· Knowing him here is believing in him: it is an experimental(experiential) knowledge of the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, or feeling the transforming efficacy and virtue of them.

· Knowing the power of resurrection is not experiencing resurrection with new body after our physical death. It means to experience the power of Jesus Christ who is working in ambelievers’ life. This power of resurrection let believers live new life.

· Paul didn’t want to know the resurrection of Jesus Christ just as a historical fact. Rather he wanted to experience Jesus who resurrected and is working in believers’ life practically and personally.

· He was eager to know the power of Christ's death and resurrection, and he received the benefit of Christ's death and resurrection in his justification.

· We are made conformable to His death when we die to our sins, as Christ died for sin. When we are crucified with Christ, the world is crucified to us, and we to the world, by virtue of the cross of Christ. This is our conformity to his death.

· He wanted to participate in Jesus’ suffering not just to participate in his suffering for salvation but to kill his old self daily to live with the power of resurrection

***and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death***

. And the fellowship of His sufferings. Knowing Jesus also means knowing this fellowship of His sufferings. It is all part of following Jesus and being in Christ.

. We can say that suffering is part of our heritage as the children of God; we get to be part of the family of suffering: If children, then heirs – heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together ([Romans 8:17](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Rom%208.17)).

3-3. What did he want to attain? (11)

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

· To the saints it will be indeed a resurrection, a return to bliss, and life, and glory; while the resurrection of the wicked is a rising from the grave, but a return to a second death.

. This joyful resurrection was what Paul pressed towards. He was willing to do anything, or even suffer anything, that he might attain that glorious resurrection.

· The hope of resurrection carried him with so much courage and constancy through all the difficulties he met within his work.

· Paul himself did not hope to attain it through his own merit and righteousness, but through the merit and righteousness of Jesus Christ.

. Paul wanted to know in an experiential way the power of Christ’s resurrection. That is, he wants to experience the same power that raised Christ from the dead.

. The power of His resurrection is a manifesting power. The power of His resurrection is a justifying power. It is the receipt and proof that the sacrifice of the cross was accepted as payment in full.

. The power of His resurrection is a life-giving power. It means that those who are connected with Jesus Christ receive the same resurrection life.

. The power of His resurrection is a consoling and comforting power. It promises that those who are dead in Christ live with Him.

3-4. What can we learn from his goal in Jesus Christ?

* The ultimate goal of our spiritual life should be to know Jesus and the power of his resurrection.
* It is because only by faith in him and by participating in his power of resurrection we can get true righteousness and live a new life with the power of resurrection.

**Conclusion**

Knowing Christ is more than just having assurance of going to heaven when we die. When we really know Christ we find him to be the most precious treasure. Jesus is everything to us. He is worthy of the investment of our time and energy and all we have. These days, an easy-going, pleasure-seeking, suffering-free life style is the goal of many people. "Suffering" is not a good word. But people suffer for their sins anyway. How much better it is to suffer for Jesus and for others than to suffer because of our sins. May God help us to follow the apostle Paul who eagerly desired to know Jesus’ suffering and his resurrection power practically every day! He did this by participating in Jesus’ command to feed His sheep. When we do this, we also would experience a powerful life, with the power of Jesus resurrection working in and through us.

**One word: I want to know Christ—yes!**