**I WANT TO KNOW CHRIST**

Philippians 3:7-14

Key Verse 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**



 Happy new year! Today’s passage reveals Paul’s personal testimony. He wants to know Jesus Christ, in particular His suffering and resurrection. Jesus was his role model to imitate in his spiritual marathon race. We need a right attitude to press on toward the goal. Let’s set the right goal at this upcoming new year and make a well tune with what God wants to win prize, the crown of life at the end of our life journey. May the Lord help us to imitate apostle Paul’s single hearted desire to know Jesus Christ and live a life of ultimate victory. Amen.

1. Read verses 7-9. How had Paul’s value system changed? (7-8) Why was knowing Christ such a worthy endeavor? Why did he consider everything garbage compared to knowing Christ? (8b-9) What kind of righteousness can we have in Christ?

1-1, Read verses 7-9.

 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[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+3&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29431a)] Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.

1-2, How had Paul’s value system changed? (7-8)

 ***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***

* In the past he boasted about something else in verses 4-6. (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.)
* He put his effort greatly to earn even more, thinking that those things were the evidence of salvation.
* But regardless of possessing all these things, his soul cried out, “What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death?” (Ro 7:24).
* In his deep despair, he was met by Christ who forgave him and rescued him from the body that is subject to death.
* After meeting Christ, Paul’s spiritual eyes were widely opened. He could see himself holding and bragging what was worthless.
* He then gladly let go of all those assets and gave his heart to gain Christ. In this way his value system was changed completely. Praise Jesus!

1-3, Why was knowing Christ such a worthy endeavor?

 ***because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things.***

* Paul pointed out that knowing Christ has surpassing worth. According to such a value system, he made a conscious effort to know Christ.
* Paul had indeed suffered the loss of ALL things that he might gain Christ. He was in a Roman prison. He was cut out to say that he had lost all things for Christ.
* It reminds us of Matthew 13:44-46 about the parables of the hidden Treasure and the pearl.

“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls.When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.”

* In the past, Paul sought to please God in the realms of the flesh. Before Paul became a Christian, he thought all these things made him a success in the human effort to please God by works.
* But he found the greatest value in Christ, that is to know Him truly! John 17:3 says, Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

1-4, Why did he consider everything garbage compared to knowing Christ? (8b-9)

***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.***

* He personally knew that Christ is heavenly treasure. He knew that Christ is everything to everyone.
* Christ is God who incarnated. Christ is the promised Messiah who gives us forgiveness of sins and eternal life.
* Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. So in Christ, we don’t wander but come to God and his glorious kingdom.
* Christ is the resurrection. So in him we overcome death and live a victorious life. Christ is the good shepherd who guides us into all truth and to his kingdom.
* So Paul wanted to know this heavenly treasure Christ Jesus. He realized that if he held on to his past assets, he could not know and gain Christ.
* To know and to gain Christ, he had to let go of these things. Many people tightly hold on to earthly treasures and assets like a young rich ruler in the Bible.
* We cannot serve two masters. We cannot lay hold of the riches of God, Jesus Christ as long as we hold on to the earthly gains.
* That is why Paul considered the earthly gains garbage and was willing to let go of them.
* I know a missionary who was a promising young man and his desire was to get a good job after finishing his school study, marry a wife and having cute kids.
* But this man was met by Christ. Then he realized that his past sweet dream was very earthly and mundane and Jesus is the priceless treasure from heaven.
* He then began to put a value on knowing and gaining Christ, letting go of trivial concerns of life.
* He received God’s call to be a missionary and accepted it willing and eagerly. During his missionary life, he began to see more and more the surpassing worth of knowing Christ.
* So he studied the words of God diligently and shared the gospel faithfully in season and out of season.

1-5, What kind of righteousness can we have in Christ?

 ***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.***

* The foundation for his spiritual life was in what Jesus had done for him and not in what he had done, was doing, or would do for Jesus in the future.
* The righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith - Paul here exposed the great difference between living and trusting in your own righteousness and living and trusting in God’s righteousness given through faith in Christ.
* He renounces his own righteousness that he had through law-keeping, and he turns to Christ as his greatest Treasure.
* And in this turning to Christ and turning away from all reliance on his righteous deeds, he experiences union with Christ. He is “found in him.” Found in him!
* In other words, my righteousness before God is no longer my own law-keeping, it is “from God.” Now it is through faith in Christ. It is through complete union with Christ, meaning “I am given this righteousness from God in union with Christ.”
* What Paul is saying is that the record of his own behavior is now worthless. He needs the righteousness of someone else.
* “Being found in him” with this new righteousness is based on new union with Christ and the way he found himself in Christ.
* Christ has made Paul his own in such a way that he is now “found in Christ” and, as such, already has a perfect righteousness that is not his own.
* So he presses on to become perfect because in Christ he is perfect. Philippians 2:8 reads, “And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”
* This is what Paul means to imitate Jesus, that I may be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law [my old law-keeping obedience], but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith [the perfect obedience that God counts as mine in union with Christ.]

2. Read verses 10-11. What was Paul’s clear desire? (10a) What led him to participate in Jesus’ sufferings? (10b-11)?

2-1, 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.

2-2, What was Paul’s clear desire? (10a)

***10 I want to know Christ—yes,***

* It does not mean to know about Jesus intellectually, but know him personally. To know Christ personally, we must spend time in reading His words and following his footsteps daily.
* Paul had struggled hard to know Jesus personally. His letters show the evidence of it. For example he learned and knew Christ’s faith by practically living by faith in Jesus and experiencing the power of faith.

2-3, What led him to participate in Jesus’ sufferings? (10b-11)?

***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.***

* Paul is now old and in prison. But he still wants to know Christ who rose from the dead after much suffering and death.
* Paul wanted to know Jesus’ resurrection. To know his resurrection, he should first suffer and die like Jesus.
* Paul related his sufferings in prison to Christ’s sufferings. Further he was willing to die like Jesus to know Jesus’ death and experience his resurrection after that.
* Paul did not ask to have freedom from his imprisonment or to establish numerous churches around the world, but to know Christ very personally and practically.
* When he knew Jesus deeper and deeper, his heart must have been filled with joy, strength, peace, hope and love.
* Living in this busy world, we can lose focus of knowing Christ and live just like godless people. But we Christians are people of knowing Jesus continually.
* Paul said in Colossians 2:3, “…in whom (Christ) are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”
* To know Christ personally, let us focus on Bible study and prayer and follow Jesus’ footsteps by applying his teachings on a daily basis.

 3. Read verses 12-14. How did Paul pursue his life goal? (12) For what had Christ Jesus taking hold of Paul? What did Paul run toward in Christ Jesus? (13-14)

 3-1, Read verses 12-14.

 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. 13 Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

3-2, How did Paul pursue his life goal? (12)

***12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.***

* In verses 12-14, we can find sporting terms such as “arrived at my goal” “press on” “straining toward what is ahead” and “win the prize.” These words fit for marathoners who press on toward the goal the finish line to win the gold medal.
* Human life is often compared to marathon race. Sadly though, many people are just running without knowing what their goal is.
* But Paul had a clear goal to win the prize that God prepared in heaven. We Christians are in the race of faith, and our goal is to become like Christ and so win the heavenly prize eternal life.

3-3, For what had Christ Jesus taking hold of Paul?

***I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me***

* Paul pressed on for what Jesus wanted. His effort was put forth to do God’s will, not his own.
* When Paul said, “That I may lay hold,” he used strong language. “The word ‘apprehend’ is from the same Greek word translated ‘attained,’ but with a preposition pre fixed which means in its local force ‘down.’
* He wants to catch hold of it and pull it down, like a football player. Paul began this verse with the idea that Jesus Christ had laid hold of him.
* What was Jesus taking hold of him? Jesus laid hold of Paul to make him a new man. Jesus laid hold of Paul to conform him into the image of Jesus Christ.
* Jesus laid hold of Paul to make him a witness. Jesus laid hold of Paul to make him an instrument in the conversion of others. ([Acts 9:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/acts/9/15/s_1027015))
* Jesus laid hold of Paul to bring him into suffering. ([Acts 9:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/acts/9/16/s_1027016)) So Paul want to know Jesus in the fellowship of His sufferings.
* Jesus laid hold of Paul that so that the Apostle might attain to the resurrection from the dead. (Philippians 3:11)

3-4, What did Paul run toward in Christ Jesus? (13-14)

***13 Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.***

* Once we have a clear goal to win the heavenly prize, then we need to have a right attitude to pursue it.
* Paul ran his life of faith wholeheartedly and now he was locked in prison. So he could have said, “I’m done. It’s time to retire before death.”
* Rather he said, “Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize…”
* First of all, he forgets what is behind and strains toward what is ahead. He didn’t cling to his past great many successes and brag about them.
* He didn’t cling to his past failures either and became very fatalistic and miserable. He forgot what was behind and pressed forward without looking back.
* This reminds us of Jesus’ words in Luke 9:62, “No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.”
* We should never allow what is behind hold us back. We must run the race continually until we cross the finish line.
* As long as we have breath, as long as our heart beats, we are to strain toward what is ahead and run.
* There is no retirement for Christians. We are forgiven sinners. Jesus’ cross takes away our sins and heals our wounds.
* With the cross of Jesus, we forget any sentimental attachments to past failures and sins, and press on continually and newly.
* We know that our loving Lord Jesus is with us, helps us in our race, and pulls us to reach the finish line our goal.

**Conclusion**

 Proverbs 15:24 says, “The path of life leads upward for the prudent to keep them from going down to the realm of the dead.” We are very thankful to examine our lives if we are heading upward or downward through apostle Paul’s example. Often times we are driven by what we want constantly. But we don’t want to focus on perishing paraphernalias. The prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus is obvious like apostle Paul. He focused on one thing to know Jesus deeper, and would not let it loose from his eyesight. He grasped its value and grabbed it in his both hands and pressed on for the prize as a football player ran with a ball. May the Lord help us to overcome all distractions in our daily lives and keep on pursuing what God has taken hold of each of us.

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