

## Week 7 - PHILIPPIANS 3:1-11

# Counting it All as Loss

“What [Paul] learned to value was Christ Jesus his Lord. Consequently coming to know Christ, entering into a deeper and fuller appreciation of His person and work, was of primary importance to Paul. This knowledge (Gr. *gnosis*) is the kind that one obtains only by personal relationship. It is different from knowledge we gain through objective academic study... To gain this fuller knowledge of Christ, Paul had let everything else in life go.” (Warren Wiersbe, 1981)

### vv 1-3 **Guard Joy from the Dogs who Would Steal**

Jesus and the prophets used the term “dogs” to refer to opponents of God’s truth (Matt. 7:6; Deut. 23:18; 1 Sam 17:43; 24:14; Prov. 26:11; Isa. 56:10-11). The Jews referred to Gentiles contemptuously as dogs (Matt. 15:21-28).

### vv 4-6 **Paul’s Confidence in the Flesh**

For the sake of argument Paul adopts the Judaizers’ attitude of confidence in the flesh. He did this to show that his rejection of Jewish advantages was not because he lacked them.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Circumcision of the flesh was one thing the Judaizers trusted in for acceptance by God.  | kingdoms divided, also formed the core of the restoration community along with Judah, possessed the land of Jerusalem and the temple. |
| 2. Paul was a pure Jew by race and descent.   | 4. Non-Hellenistic Jew  |
| 3. Tribe of Benjamin was filled with warriors (Hos. 5:8; Feast of Purim celebrating Mordecai), was joined only by Judah in loyalty to the House of David when the | 5. Strictly orthodox practice of Mosaic Law   |
|   | 6. Zealot   |
|   | 7. Blameless  |

### vv 7-10 **Paul’s Greater Goal**

1. Be found in Christ
2. Obtaining a righteousness from God *which depends on faith*. “Faith is the very opposite of human works; it is the reception of God’s work by those who acknowledge the futility of their own efforts to attain righteousness.” (Kent, 1978)
3. Share in his sufferings & become like him in his death. “Christian life is cruciform in character; God’s people, even as they live presently through the power made available through Christ’s resurrection, are as their Lord forever marked by the cross.” (Fee, 1995)

(Gr. *tou gnonai*, “to know”) “Suggests for Paul just the coming to know Christ outweighs all other values, that for him the significance of Christ, ‘in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge’ (Col. 2:3), is so vast that even to *begin* to know him is more important than anything else in all the world.” (Hawthorne, 1983)

### vv. 11 **The Natural Product of Knowing Jesus**

Paul verbalizes a yearning to experience resurrection power – a confidence that we will be raised with Christ. This could imply Paul wished to live to experience the Rapture, or even a special resurrection for those who endure extreme suffering and death for their faith, but the most natural reading is that he would be raised where others were not.

**Philippians 3:1-11** English Standard Version (ESV)

*Righteousness Through Faith in Christ*

**3** Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you.

<sup>2</sup> Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh.<sup>3</sup> For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh— <sup>4</sup> though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more:<sup>5</sup> circumcised on the eighth day, of the people 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 righteousness under the law, blameless. <sup>7</sup> But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. <sup>8</sup> Indeed, I count everything

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

