

The Excellence of the Knowledge of Christ

Philippians 3:7-8

7 But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. 8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ

Paul had given up on all that he had achieved in life. His reward was now he can know Christ Jesus as only God can reveal Him.

Some might say that it was a lousy trade. Many will not give up their situation here in this life so that they might know Christ. Weather it is drugs, money, fame, position or a hundred other things that keep people away from Jesus.

But here is Paul, not sorry at all of what he has done. As a matter of fact he is telling us that it was well worth it. He compares what he has in Christ with the “rubbish” which he had before.

Well of course you say, it makes perfect sense, even a rich man would throw away his gold to save his life. And of course that is true, but Paul here does not seem to have eternal life as the goal.

But if the goal is not eternal life, a place in heaven, a mansion over the hill-top, then what is it that Paul has now that he did not have before?

It is the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. That is what Paul desire more than any thing. You see he used to think that was found in ritual, keeping the law, in his ancestry and race. But now he has come to the realization that none of those things gave him what he was seeking after.

It was only in Jesus Christ that there is light and life. It is only in Jesus that there is peace and consolation. It is only in Jesus that there is truth and reality. It is only in Jesus that there come the knowledge of God. It is only in Jesus that there is fellowship with the Father. It is only in Jesus that the soul can be full, satisfied, and fulfill the words of the Psalmist, “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.”

Everything else in life that Paul had tried had left a bad taste in his mouth and left him still thirsting, even craving for water. It was in Jesus that he found the water that if you drink of it you will never thirst again as Jesus told the woman at the well in John 4. A woman that could not be satisfied by the men in her life. But when the Messiah came by one day, she drank and never came to the well to draw from again.

Every man, woman, boy and girl has a thirst. A thirst that they try to fill in this life. A thirst for fulfilment. A thirst for success, something that gives significance. They go from one thing to another trying to find it, but they are always ultimately disappointed. For there is nothing that can fill that need other than God, through His Son Jesus Christ.

Let us look this morning, if we can even scratch the surface, at the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord.

I. Excellence

A. For the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. Literally, the surpassing superiority of the personal experiential knowledge of Christ, the personal relationship with Him. Excellency is the priceless privilege and the exceeding value of knowing Christ. *KJV Bible Commentary*.

1. 1Pe 2:7 Therefore, to you who believe, **He is precious**; but to those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone,"
2. Col 2:2 that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, **to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.**

B. This is where the glory is:

1. Jer 9:23 ¶ Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches; 24 **But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me**, That I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the LORD.
2. Notice where glory does not come from.
 - a. Worldly wisdom
 - b. Not might or power
 - c. Not in riches
 - d. But it is in understanding and knowing God.
3. Do you understand God?
 - a. You see the world does not and they hate Him.
 - b. They do not like the way He governs the world.
 - c. And they do not like when He does not rush in to save them from their own mistakes.
 - d. To them He is too loving toward those they do not like.
 - e. And His judgment is too strong for those they care about.
 - f. But when you understand God, as best we can, you understand that God is just and righteous in all His ways.

C. Other translations:

1. Phil 3:8 Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the priceless gain of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. NLT
2. Phil 3:8 Yes, furthermore, I count everything as loss compared to the possession of the priceless privilege (the overwhelming preciousness, the surpassing worth, and supreme advantage) of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord and of progressively becoming more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him [of perceiving and recognizing and understanding Him more fully and clearly]. AMP

II. Knowledge

A. This is very much an experimental knowledge.

1. It is not a book knowledge.
 - a. Now you say but that is how we know Him from the Bible.
 - b. The Bible will always confirm what God teaches us and the Holy Spirit will use the Word to teach us but finding out God is more than in the head, it is in the heart.
 - c. That is why there is so much more than study involved.

B. It is a revelation that only come from God and cannot be found out without Him.

1. Mt 11:25 ¶ At that time Jesus answered and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that **You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes.** 26 "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. 27 "All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. **Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.**
2. Mt 16:16 Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." 17 Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, **for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.**
3. 2Co 4:4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, **lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.** 5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. 6 For it is the **God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.**
4. Eph 1:17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, **may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of**

Him, 18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

5. **1Jo 5:20 And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.**

III. I want to list just a few of the excellences of Christ.

A. Of His Love

1. That He loved the world and not just the Jews.
 - a. Eph 3:8 To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles **the unsearchable riches of Christ,** 9 and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ;
 - b. We are not the chosen race.
 - c. We are not descended from Abraham.
 - d. But He loves us.
2. He loved us while we were rebels.
 - a. Romans 5:8 (NKJV) 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
 - b. If His love does not teach you humility then you do not have His love.
3. Eph 3:18 **may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height — 19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.**

B. His grace

1. 2Pe 3:18 but **grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.** To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.
2. Jesus does not wait for us to approach Him with our good works.
3. He extends to us grace, His unmerited favor.
4. He takes our curse and gives us a blessing.
5. Although He owes us nothing, He makes us heir of all things and joint heirs

with Jesus Christ.

C. His Mercy

1. Joh 17:3 **"And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.**
2. Mercy is not something that we deserve, it is only from the one granting it.
3. God could just as well given us justice as mercy.
4. As a matter of fact for many He does give them justice rather than mercy.
5. Ex 33:19 Then He said, "I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. NKJV

D. His Forgiveness

1. Forgiveness is not something that can be purchased with money or favors.
2. But God gives it to His own.
3. Do you know the forgiveness of God, in that you have experienced it.
4. Or is it something that you have read about and are sure wishing that God will be forgiving toward you but you do not know.
5. You can know today.