

Title: Unto You It Is Given

Text: Philippians 1: 29

Date: May 17, 2009

Place: Sovereign Grace Baptist Church, Princeton, New Jersey

INTRODUCTION

A. Look with me at the following descriptions of some amazing miracles and strength in suffering.

Hebrews 11: 35: Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: 36: And others had trial of *cruel* mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: 37: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented.

Acts 7: 51: Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers *did*, so *do* ye. 52: Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: 53: Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept *it*. 54: When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with *their* teeth...58: And cast *him* out of the city, and stoned *him*: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. 59: And they stoned Stephen, calling upon *God*, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit;

Acts 14: 19: And there came thither *certain* Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew *him* out of the city, supposing he had been dead. 20: Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe. 21: And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and *to* Iconium, and Antioch, 22: Confirming the souls of the disciples, *and* exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

B. Now, let's see something just as miraculous and amazing!

Acts 28: 23: And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into *his* lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and *out of* the prophets, from morning till evening. 24: And some believed the things which were spoken,...

John 6: 66: From that *time* many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. 67: Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? 68: Then Simon Peter

answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. 69: And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

C. Now let's see something else just as miraculous and amazing!

Acts 1: 14: These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren; **2: 41:** Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls. **42:** And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Does it strike you with the same amazement when you read "some believed" and "continued" as it does when you read some "received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance"? It should because it is just as much a miracle of God's grace for a man to believe and to continue believing unto the end as it is for him to endure suffering without denying our Savior.

If the end of your life comes by suffering the awful things we just read about can you, or will you do so, without denying Christ? If you believe Christ you are called on to believe him unto the end. Can you? Some have! What made them do it! How did they believe? How did they continue believing? How did they pass through such awful suffering and die in faith? Here is the blessed answer in our text this morning:

Philippians 1: 29: For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;

I. FOR UNTO YOU IT IS GIVEN IN THE BEHALF OF CHRIST

A. The reason that God gives unto any sinner saved by grace is to glorify his anointed Christ, the Lord Jesus his Son.

Matthew 3:17: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

John 12:28 Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, *saying*, I have both glorified *it*, and will glorify *it* again.

Colossians 1: 14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins: **15:** Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: **16:** For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: **17:** And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. **18:** And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence. **19:** For it pleased *the Father* that in him should all fulness dwell;

1 Corinthians 12:4: Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5: And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. 6: And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. 7: But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. [It is given in the behalf of Christ or to glorify Christ. It is profitable in proportion to the glory which it gives to Christ.]

II. IN THE BEHALF OF GLORIFYING CHRIST IT GIVEN UNTO US TO BELIEVE ON HIM

Philippian 1: 29: For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, to believe on him...and not only this...

A. What is given so that a sinner can believe on Christ?

1. Power, Life, New Birth

John 1:12: But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

2. Revelation, Understanding and Willingness to Come to Christ

Matthew 16:17: And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

John 6:44: No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. 45: It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

3. The Gift of Faith and of Repentance From Dead Works

Ephesians 2:8: For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:

Acts 11:18: When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

4. All things.

2 Peter 1: 3: According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: 4: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

James 1:17: Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

These are given unto you in the behalf of Christ Jesus the Lord. **Philippian 1: 29: For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, and not only this...**

III. IN THE BEHALF OF GLORIFYING CHRIST IT IS ALSO GIVEN UNTO YOU TO SUFFER FOR HIS SAKE

A. This means not merely that you are given the privilege of suffering for the sake of Christ, but it means that just as the gift of faith was given so the gift of steadfastness is given unto you to enable you to bear suffering.

2 Corinthians 4: 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 always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

That is, that it might appear through the upholding of such worthless earthen vessels that Jesus, though he died, is risen again from the dead, and lives at the Father's right hand, and ever lives to make intercession for us. In this there is full proof to the believer and to the hater of Christ that inasmuch as we are supported by him under all the trials and sufferings which we are enabled to endure for his sake it is because he lives therefore we live also amidst so many dangers and deaths which attend us.

B. It is given unto Christ's witnesses to suffer so that Christ will be glorified through the preaching of the gospel.

2 Corinthians 4: 12: So then death worketh in us, but life in you. 13: We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; 14: Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. 15: For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. 16: For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. 17: For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; 18: While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Do not think for one second that any praise can be given to the strength of the believer. It is not that the suffering is in any way less painful to our flesh. The outward man is continually dying and continually made unto us a weak and worthless thing, both in our suffering and in

the word of God which we hear preached. But as the outward man perishes the inner man is renewed. How so?

As the suffering increases, God increases our spiritual sight through faith to behold the "far more exceeding eternal weight of glory." It works in us to give weight, substance, through faith that those things promised and the those things which are eternal are real. We behold this "far more exceeding eternal weight of glory" while we look not at the things which are seen--that is it is given unto us to lift our eyes to behold Christ Jesus our Lord.

Example: Stephen...the more the suffering increased the more his vision of Christ increased. He saw Christ just as we see Christ through faith and just as our sight of Christ is ever increasing until the day when we see him face to face. Go back to chapter one of 2 Corinthians in verse 5: **For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ...7: And our hope of you is stedfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation.**

This is one more proof that just as the flesh truly *profits* nothing--nor can the flesh *hinder* anything in keeping us from Christ. Christ has overcome and therefore he sees to it that we overcome because he is in us and constantly reminds us that we are in him.

C. Through giving us faith and the gift of steadfastness to experience suffering for Christ's sake, Christ is glorified as he gives the believer a sincere desire to cast aside all else that we might know our Lord Jesus more and more.

Philippians 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, 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;

1. Righteousness spoken of here is through the fidelity of Christ; the righteousness which is of God which comes to the believer by or through faith--

This righteousness is of God's purpose, of God's power, of God's accomplishment at Calvary, and it is imputed to the believer through faith in Christ. This righteousness in Christ Jesus caused Paul to count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord. But that knowledge consists of more than a mere doctrine. The excellency of the knowledge is the sinners only through the vital union with Christ Jesus our Lord. This union causes a believer to desire to know more of Christ.

Verse 10: That I may know him--Paul knew him but Paul desired to know more of Christ and he tells us exactly how.

Verse 10: And the power of his resurrection. The power of Christ's resurrection accomplished the justification of all those he represented. His resurrection freed us from condemnation. It declares God is satisfied, that victory over death has been won. All who are given faith in Christ are robed in the garments of righteousness and assured of the hope of a blessed immortality by the power of his resurrection. But Paul wants more than a doctrine. He desires to know by experience the power and efficacy of Christ's resurrection working in him.

Illustration: We should not put any confidence in an experience which we created by something we did. But when the believer is born of God so that he is turned from dead works to believe on Christ Jesus, he experiences something of the power of Christ's resurrection. Paul learned it when he was planted face down in the dust on the Damascus road. But the more Paul learned of the absolute utter nothingness of his flesh the more he wanted to know the power of Christ's resurrection.

Verse 10: And the fellowship of his sufferings. It does mean that Paul was willing to suffer for Christ. But it is more than that. Paul desired to know that he was in Christ when Christ suffered the ignominious death at Calvary. One way a believer is given a token of salvation in Christ is by the power of Christ working in us whereby Christ enables the believer to bear suffering for the honor of Christ. That is exactly what Paul said in **Philippians 1:28: And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God;** That is what Peter said in **1 Peter 4:14: If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.** It is what gave Paul the earnest expectation and hope to say in Philippians 1: 19: **For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, 20: According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. 21: For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.** Knowing more of Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, works in the sinner toward this end purpose...

Verse 10: Being made conformable to his death. What is it to be conformed to Christ's death? What did Christ do when he died? **Hebrews 5: 8: Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; 9: And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.** Though Jesus were the very Son of God, he obeyed God by trusting the Father and thus he experienced the faithfulness of God the Father toward those who endure suffering trusting God alone. Christ did so in absolute perfection and is the Author of eternal salvation. Paul says I want to be taught by Christ the Lord to trust the Author of salvation in a manner like he trusted the Father. **Heb 12: 2: Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.**

D. By the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his suffering the Author and Finisher of faith strengthens the believer to lay aside the weight that so easily besets us and makes us to run the race set before us with patience looking to Christ the Author and Finisher of faith. That is exactly how Paul describes it here:

Philippian 3: 11: If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. 12: Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. 13: Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this* one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14: I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Just as it is given to believe and to suffer, so you are filled with the fruits of righteousness by Jesus Christ. The evidence that you are following after Christ your Holiness is that you have no desire to speak of any holiness in you or obtained by something you have done but only of Christ. When Christ has truly been made Sanctification unto us our desire is to know more of HIM, to rejoice in him always, and more and more we learn to cast all our care on him. The weight that besets us is laid aside not merely by stopping this sinful act or that sinful act but it is laid aside by looking only to Christ Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith.

It is given to you to believe. It is given to you to continue. It shall be given to you so that you are able and shall suffer, even unto death (if it pleases God) all for one reason that all the glory may be to Christ Jesus the Son of God unto the praise and glory of God.

Application:

Philippians 3: 15: Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. 16: Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing...20: For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: 21: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

Do you believe God? Do you believe that women really did receive their children from the dead? Do you believe that an ax head really did swim? Do you believe that three fellows were thrown into furnace heated seven times and not even a hair was curled? If you believe God it is only by the same power which made those things to happen: **according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.**

Philippians 4: 1: Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, *my* dearly beloved.

But what should I actually do in standing fast, in pressing toward the mark? **Philippians 4: 4: Rejoice in the Lord alway: *and* again I say, Rejoice. 5: Let your moderation be known**

unto all men. The Lord is at hand. [Don't be overly anxious about troubles. Remember Pauls' Words: Philippians 1: 6: Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ.] **6: Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 7: And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. 8: Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things.** [What are these things? Those things are the doctrine of Christ--these things we have seen which are freely given unto you so that Christ and not you shall receive all the glory in your salvation. They are...] **9: Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.**