



'Back to Basics for Believers Series'

Sermons in the Epistle to the Philippians

Message 15 – 'That I May Know Him' Philippians 3: 7 - 11

Paul has been explaining to the Philippians the need to focus on Christ in their Christian life, and that the whole focus of their lives should be to know Christ in the deepest way. He explained to the Philippians that to live in this way is costly, but the gain completely outweighs the loss. To gain Christ and all that He is far greater than anything this world can offer, and that is why Paul describes it as refuse. So we can see that Paul desired a experiential, real relationship with Christ in the following ways:

- 1. Paul had a PAST Experience of Christ** - Paul speaks very clearly in v7, as he explains that there was a time when he counted his own righteousness as loss. I think that Paul is referring to his conversion experience here. When Paul had been saved, he had trusted Christ and had become a child of God. It was an instantaneous miracle of the grace of God, the kind that still takes place when the sinner realises their sin, repents and turns to the Saviour by faith. There was a time when he had given up his own self-righteousness and works, and his own attempts to gain acceptance with God. There was a time when he accepted his failing, his sin, and his inability to alter his own standing and position before God. He could not make himself righteous, he could not become perfect.
- 2. Paul had a CONTINUOUS Experience of Christ** - Jim Elliot once said, 'He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose'. These were certainly in line with Paul's sentiments in the following verses. Paul not only counted all things loss, but then he says that he continues to count all things as loss. It is a continuous experience, a continuous action. When God has worked his grace in the life of a believer and they have been converted, it is but the beginning. The desire for the things of God is placed in the heart, and a believer who has been a recipient of grace will be all the more strident in seeking after those things for the glory of God.
- 3. Paul sought a FUTURE Experience of Christ** - Paul wanted to be found in Christ either in his death, or if the Lord returned. When he came face to face with God, he wanted to be found in Christ, for that truly is man's only hope. He wanted to stand before God in the righteousness of Christ, not in his own righteousness. You see, one thing needs to be clear, that is that the righteousness of Christ is the righteousness of God Himself. The righteousness of God does not refer to behaviour or works or deeds – no matter how good they might be. The righteousness of God is Jesus Christ Himself. A person has to trust the righteousness of Christ to cover him if he wishes to become acceptable to God.
- 4. Paul sought a VICTORIOUS Experience with Christ** - Paul also sought a victorious experience with Christ; he wanted to know Christ – to know His glorious power over the world and all that is in the world. His experience with Christ was so tremendous that it completely transformed his life. Paul wanted to know Jesus Christ in the truest, deepest, most biblical sense. He wanted to know Him personally and experientially, and he wanted the evidence of this to be in his every day living. Due to Paul having been saved wholly and solely by Christ, Paul wants to enter into the deepest possible union with his Lord. What a desire? Could that be said of you or me?
- 5. Paul sought an ETERNAL Experience with Christ** - Paul sought an eternal experience with Christ as he sought to be resurrected from the dead. Paul had decided that he would use all means to serve and commit himself totally to this one great purpose, that he might attain to the resurrection of the dead. The words 'if by any means' are not conveying any aspect of doubt or uncertainty. He was not calling into question the resurrection or the resurrection of the dead. Rather he was saying I will give my all as I head for this, it that day I live for!



Penzance Baptist Church

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Pastor Jonathan Stobbs