

>>>>>> **Philippians - Lesson 06** <<<<<<<

- 1) Continuing our look at vs 4-7 and then 8-11, Paul is explaining his credentials as they were before meeting Christ and then as they are in Christ and the values of them ...

Philippians 3:4–7 (NASB 2020)

... ⁴ although I myself *could boast as* having confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he is confident in the flesh, I *have more reason*: ⁵ circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless. ⁷ But whatever things were gain to me, these things I have counted as loss because of Christ.

- 2) I want to read this passage in Acts again because this is really a good look at Paul’s attitude toward the church as it was before he met Christ.

Acts 26:9–11 (NASB 2020)

⁹ “So I thought to myself that I had to act in strong opposition to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. ¹⁰ And this is just what I did in Jerusalem; not only did I lock up many of the saints in prisons, after receiving authority from the chief priests, but I also cast my vote against them when they were being put to death. ¹¹ And as I punished them often in all the synagogues, I tried to force them to blaspheme; and since I was **extremely enraged at them**, I kept pursuing them even to foreign cities.

- 3) This is from Paul’s defense before Agrippa ...
- 4) One really important part of this testimony before Agrippa is in the last part of vs 11.
- a) He says, “I was **extremely enraged at them.**”
 - b) I think this is as strong a statement of anger as he could conjure up.
 - c) Basically to quote an expression from a newscaster Howard Beale in the movie Network many years back – “I’m mad as hell and I’m not going to take it anymore.”
 - i) I think the frustration Beale’s character portrayed at the world situation that he was helpless to fix in that scene shows the depth of frustration Paul feels with the threats posed by this “movement”.
- 5) I say all of that to show how different Paul was after meeting and accepting Christ for who He was.
- 6) Let’s set Paul’s anger and persecutions of the church aside for now and look more at what he tells the Philippians about his credentials.
- 7) Paul is saying, if you want to compare anything you might think you have with what it means to be a member of the circumcision, then here’s what you might compare to.
- a) In other words, if you buy into what these Judaizers are selling, this is where you must go.

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- b) Not the persecution part of the zeal but the idea of living under the Law!
- 8) BUT!! He continues – even all that means nothing to me.
 - a) At the time, before Paul met Christ, they were gain.
 - b) After meeting Christ – they are loss because of Him.
 - i) This comment is not made to pass those things off as unimportant to Paul – not just something he shrugged off.
 - ii) On the contrary, it says that they were very important to him and he felt the loss deeply.
 - iii) But it was a necessary loss because Christ was far more valuable.
- 9) As a Hebrew of Hebrews, these all go to make up Paul’s credentials.

If someone were to ask you what credentials you have as a Christian, what would you say to them?

Would your answer have been different say 20, 30, or for some of us even 40 years ago?

- 10) And, continuing on starting in verse 8 Paul talks about perhaps what we might consider his credentials now ...

Philippians 3:8–11 (NASB 2020)

⁸ More than that, I count *all things* to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of *all things*, and count them *mere* rubbish, so that I may gain Christ, ⁹ and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith, ¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; ¹¹ if somehow I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

- 11) Again, Paul is contrasting the loss he suffered and the value of the things lost against value of gaining a relationship with the Son of God.
- 12) Before Paul met Christ on the road to Damascus, all of the knowledge of and keeping of the Law was the most important thing in his life.
- 13) By persecuting the Church, he was protecting that very way of life that was so important to him.
- 14) Yet, now, after meeting Christ, that all changed in a way that is profound – all things become loss.
 - a) Nonetheless – **he still felt that.**
- 15) But he then expands this by saying when he compares these “things lost” to gaining that relationship with Christ, the “things lost” become as rubbish or trash.

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16) I am going to step off into that area of opinion again.

- a) Paul uses the term “all things” twice in verse 8

17) It is possible that the first “all things” may refer to the life he had before.

- a) The prestige, the acceptance by all his fellow Pharisees and other Jewish leadership.
- b) As part of this, there was the friendship and relationship component that was undoubtedly lost.
- c) Likely his family no longer accepted him as he was before (if at all).
 - i) We know about his sister and nephew who helped him at one point in the book of Acts verse 23:16-22 but beyond that we do not really have any good data on his family.
- d) He was a man who was not accepted by those he once held in high esteem.
- e) Nor was he accepted by those whom he was previously persecuting.
 - i) He was a man without a fellowship base so to speak.
 - ii) When he attempted to share the gospel, if folks recognized him he was looked at with suspicion and fear.

18) On the other hand, It is possible that the second “all things” were the things he described as his credentials in the last set of verses.

- a) A couple of scholars take this even a step further and say that in the second statement he makes here he is actually talking about raising the bar.
- b) In other words, he would give up anything else that might be appropriate for him to give up.
- c) Things mean nothing to him in comparison to what he does have.
- d) What he has is Christ – and he obviously understood how important that was and how the pieces fit together now.
 - i) Verses 8 and 9 clearly states that. “... so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him”
- e) Before Christ, the righteousness he thought he had came from what he did – keeping the Law, persecuting the Church, being a Pharisee, and on and on with those qualifications.
 - i) Now, he was righteous because of faith in Christ.

Again from vs. 9

“... not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith”

- ii) And that faith in Christ was counted by God as righteousness.
- iii) It was not earned it was provided by God.

19) When we look at what Paul has told us in all this it begs one of those questions to ponder.

What did we have to give up to be where we are?

If we were in a similar circumstance (minus the road to Damascus experience) would we have given it up?

20) All of this sacrifice and loss leads to three vital changes in Paul’s life, all at the very core of his thinking.

- a) That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection
- b) That I may know the fellowship of His sufferings
- c) That I may be conformed to His death

21) Let’s see if we can get on the same page as Paul here.

What do each of these statements mean?

Knowing the power of His resurrection?

22) The power of the Holy Spirit which raised Christ.

- a) This power raises us from a spiritual death now.
- b) It also raises us to an eternal life with Christ when our life here is done.
 - i) This was an integral part of Christ’s high priestly prayer in John 17.

John 17:24 (NASB 2020)

²⁴ Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

- ii) This refers to everyone who God has called to Christ – from the disciples to everyone setting in this room today who are part of His salvation.
- c) There is a fact in all this that we can’t (IMHO) over state – ***our eternal life begins when we become a Christian.***
 - i) We only change states at some point on down the road.

How about the next statement – knowing the fellowship of His sufferings?

23) As Paul suffers (even now in prison) he feels that closeness to Christ.

- a) As and when we suffer because of our faith we also should feel that closeness.
- b) In all likelihood, we will never suffer as much as Paul and in the ways which he did.
 - i) We simply are not in a position where Paul’s kind of suffering is required of us.

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- ii) However, we should be aware of instances where we do suffer in any manner because of our faith and have the proper attitude about that suffering.
- iii) The degree of suffering should not change the attitude we have about it!
- iv) ROB PLUMMER story...

And finally – Conformed to His Death?

24) One commentator I think really hit this one on the head.

We cannot know the victory of the resurrection without personally applying the crucifixion. We must die to ourselves before we can truly know either the power of His resurrection or the fellowship of His sufferings.

25) Paul states this in a slightly different way but with the same meaning in ...

Colossians 2:12 (NASB 2020)

12 having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

26) Our baptism is also a burial where we died to our old self and are buried with (or as) Christ was buried.

27) We are then raised with Him as we come up from the burial of baptism and, as Paul says in a different place to “walk in newness of life.”

- a) I think sometimes we really do not emphasize that death and burial part of baptism as much as we should.
- b) It is a serious and challenging part of becoming a Christian – to die to self and be born a new creature in Christ.
- c) Truth is, we all have to struggle to die to self because SELF wants to stay alive and give in to the temptations we face.

28) And all of that is possible because of faith in the working of God.