

True Joy - The Wisdom of Philippians
Rejoice in the Lord! - Knowing Christ (Phil 3:7-11)
5-30-10
Scripture Reading - Psalm 139:1-17

Introduction - The best thing about the Good News

What is the Good News?

- Jesus was all about proclaiming the Good News from the beginning of His ministry to the end.
 - o Mark 1:15 (ESV)
¹⁵and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in *the gospel* (euangelion - yoo-ung-ghel'-ee-on - *good news*)
 - o Luke 8:1 (ESV)
¹Soon afterward he went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the *good news* of the kingdom of God.
 - o Mark 16:15 (ESV)
¹⁵And he said to them, "Go into all the world and *proclaim the gospel* to the whole creation.
- Jesus passed the proclamation of the Good News on to His disciples.
 - o Acts 8:25 (ESV) - Peter and John
²⁵....they returned to Jerusalem, *preaching the gospel* to many villages of the Samaritans.
 - o Acts 8:40 (ESV) - Philip
⁴⁰...as he passed through he *preached the gospel* to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.
 - o Acts 14:7 (ESV) - Paul and Barnabas
⁷and there they continued to *preach the gospel*.

- o 1 Corinthians 1:17 (ESV)
¹⁷ For Christ did not send me to baptize but to *preach the gospel*,...
- Paul defines the Good News in 1 Corinthians 15.
 - o 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 (ESV)
¹ Now I would remind you, brothers, of *the gospel* I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, ...³ For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: *that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures*, ⁴ *that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures*,

What makes the Good News of the Gospel so good?

- Lots of things! The Bible promises that if we believe the Gospel...
 - o Our sins will be forgiven.
 - o Christ's righteousness will be credited to our account.
 - o We will be adopted into God's family.
 - o We will be filled with the Holy Spirit.
 - o We will be steadily transformed into the image of Christ.
 - o God will work *all things* for good in our lives.
 - o We will spend eternity in Heaven.
 - o We will avoid eternity in Hell.

But the BY FAR the best thing about the Good News is this...

- *Because of Jesus... we can have a personal relationship with the God of the Universe!!!*
- We can actually get to know on a deep and personal and intimate level, the omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent one and only true God described in Psalm 139!!!
- We can legitimately call *that God* not only our Lord, but our Father, our Brother, and our Friend!!!
- This is one of the biggest things that separates Christianity from all other world religions and true Christianity from false Christianity.

Even a child can understand how HUGE A DEAL this is!

- Story of the little boy in the hospital
 - He knew what everyone either knows already or eventually finds out, that relationships are by far the most valuable thing there is.
- The best thing about the good news is that it allows us to have a personal relationship with God Himself!

No one understood this better than Paul who said...

- Philippians 1:21-23 (ESV)
²¹For to me *to live is Christ, and to die is gain*. ²²If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. ²³I am hard pressed between the two. *My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.*

Body - Thus today's main point and the main point of my favorite passage in the Bible is this: *The BIGGEST REASON we should rejoice in the Lord is because in Him we can KNOW HIM.*

- Philippians 3:7-11 (ESV)
⁷But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss *for the sake of Christ*. ⁸Indeed, 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* ⁹and 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— ¹⁰*that I may know him* and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Note three things about this AWESOME passage...

- 1) For Paul, NOTHING compared to knowing Christ.
 - a. Philippians 3:7-8 (ESV)
⁷But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss *for the sake*

of Christ. ⁸ Indeed, I count *everything as loss* because of the surpassing worth of *knowing Christ Jesus my Lord*.

- b. Paul not only counted his impressive religious record as loss for the sake of Christ (like we talked about last week), he counted *everything* as loss for the sake of Christ.
- c. Why? “because of the *surpassing worth* of knowing Christ Jesus (*his*) Lord.”
 - i. Matthew 13:44-46 (ESV)
⁴⁴ "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. ⁴⁵ "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, ⁴⁶ who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.
 - ii. Jesus was the treasure, Jesus was the pearl, and Paul knew it!!!

2) Paul GLADLY SUFFERED the loss of all things in order to gain Christ

- a. Philippians 3:8 (ESV)
For his sake I have *suffered the loss* of all things and *count them as rubbish*, in order that I may gain Christ
- b. Notice three things about this sentence...
 - i. In order to gain Christ, Paul had to lose everything.
 - 1. Jesus said this would be the case.
 - a. Luke 9:23-24 (ESV)
²³ And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny

himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. ²⁴ For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.

2. His fellow apostles had done it.

a. Luke 5:10-11 (ESV)

¹⁰ ... And Jesus said to Simon (James and John), "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men." ¹¹ And when they had brought their boats to land, *they left everything* and followed him.

b. Luke 5:27-28 (ESV)

²⁷ After this he went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax booth. And he said to him, "Follow me." ²⁸ And leaving everything, he rose and followed him.

3. Paul did it too.

a. Acts 9:20 (ESV)

²⁰ *And immediately* he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God."

ii. Losing everything wasn't easy.

1. It bring me such comfort to know that Paul "*suffered the loss of all things*"

2. Think about all he lost...

- a. His worldview
- b. His job
- c. His identity, status, and reputation
- d. *His family and friends*
- e. *His safety, his health, and his life*

3. In other words, Paul lost everything!!!

iii. But gaining Christ was worth it.

1. Philippians 3:8 (ESV)

For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and *count them as rubbish*, in order that I may *gain Christ*

2. Rubbish = Street refuse thrown to dogs or dung

3. *Paul counted even the best things in life rubbish compared to Christ.*

a. This is so important for us to remember when Jesus calls us to give something up in order to know Him more.

3) Paul knew that knowing Christ meant participating with Him in His DEATH and RESURRECTION.

a. Philippians 3:10-11 (ESV)

¹⁰, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

b. First note two things about verse 11, “that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.”

i. Paul is not talking about earning his salvation nor about being unsure of it.

1. Philippians 3:9 (ESV)

⁹ 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—

2. Philippians 1:21 (ESV)
²¹For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

3. Philippians 1:6 (ESV)
⁶And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

ii. The reason Paul wanted to attain the resurrection from the dead so badly was because *he wanted to know Christ so badly.*

1. He links the two together in the beginning of verse 10, “that I may *know him* and the power of his resurrection”

2. Paul knew that he couldn’t fully know the power of Christ’s resurrection, and thus fully know Christ in that regard, unless he attained the resurrection of the dead on the last day.

a. **Philippians 3:20-21 (ESV)**
²⁰But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹*who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.*

3. In the same way, Paul knew he couldn’t fully know the fellowship of sharing in Christ’s sufferings, and thus fully know Christ in that regard, unless he became like him in his death.

a. This is doubtless another reason why for Paul, dying was gain.

- c. But fortunately for Paul, he didn't have to wait until the day he died in order to experience the power of Christ's resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings. *He was dying and being raised every day.*
 - i. Paul knew that death and resurrection was the normal *rhythm of the Christian life* that Jesus had set forth.
 - ii. Paul describes this rhythm in the famous Christ Hymn of chapter 2. As you listen to the rhythm of Jesus' life in 2:5-11 notice how it mirrors the rhythm of Paul's life in 3:7-11.
 - 1. Philippians 2:5-11 (ESV)
⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, ⁸ he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
 - iii. Paul knew that unless he was willing die with Christ on a regular basis, he couldn't be raised with Christ on a regular basis.
 - 1. 2 Corinthians 4:7-11, 6:8-10 (ESV)
⁷ But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. ⁸ We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; ⁹ persecuted, but

not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; (We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; ⁹ as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed; ¹⁰ as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything.) ¹⁰ always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. ¹¹ For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

- iv. Like Christ, Paul was constantly dying to self and living for God and others. Unlike Christ, one of his primary reasons for doing so was to know Him more.

Conclusion - Is knowing Christ your HIGHEST PRIORITY?

- Do you count everything as loss compared to the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus your Lord?
- Have you suffered the loss of all things and do you count them as rubbish in order to gain Christ?
- Do you want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings to the degree that you are willing to become like Him in his death on regular, day to day, moment to moment basis?

If what we've talked about today is true, then the answer to all of these questions should be YES!!!

