

Wanting More

by Jim Cymbala

Jim Cymbala's sermon emphasizes the importance of desiring a deeper relationship with Christ and the pursuit of spiritual growth.

Duration: 17:33

Scripture: Philippians 3:7

Topics: "Hunger"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the important principle found in Philippians chapter 3. The apostle Paul shares his testimony, highlighting his religious accomplishments and zeal for persecuting Christians. However, Paul declares that he now considers all these things as loss for the sake of knowing Christ Jesus. He emphasizes that true righteousness does not come from following the law or earning salvation through good works, but rather through faith in Jesus Christ. The speaker emphasizes the gospel's foundation, which is that believers are accepted by God solely because of their relationship with Jesus, not based on their own efforts or performance.

Transcript

Look at this passage, a very important principle in Philippians chapter three. Paul right now is giving his testimony and remembering all he had just been telling people. Look, if anyone has anything to boast about religiously, it would be me, a real true Israelite of the tribe of Benjamin, according to the law, faultless.

Zeal, I persecuted the Christians. And now he's summed up all of that and he says, but whatever were gains to me, I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things.

I consider them garbage, that's a very, very strong word in the Greek, that I may gain Christ 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. So the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.

So he's saying here, listen, now I understand everything. I used to try to earn salvation, merit salvation, do enough good works so that God would accept me. Now, all that stuff, my pedigree, my almsgiving, all that stuff, my sacrifices and all of that, I count it as dung because now I know Jesus.

Now I know Jesus. And now what I want is that righteousness which has nothing to do with the law, but it's the righteousness that God gives as a gift, a right standing with God that comes through faith in Jesus Christ. Listen, you all gotta remember that and know that.

That is the gospel, important foundation under it. We are accepted by God not because we did 90% good, 10% bad, 82% good, 18% bad. We are perfect in God's sight because we are in Jesus now.

His perfect righteousness, listen, was given to us when we by faith gave him our sins and said, be my savior, I believe you died for me. You gotta understand that. To be accepted by God, no one's gonna go in there saying, did I do good enough? It'll be Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus.

Thank you, Jesus, Jesus, my savior, Jesus, my righteousness, Jesus is everything. So Paul now realizes my track record and my religious background is not worth two cents. But now I'm found in Christ.

Now he goes on, I want to know Christ. Yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death. So now notice verse 10, I wanna know Christ.

Hey, don't you know him? You're writing a good part of the New Testament. You saw him on the road to Damascus. You don't know him yet? No, see, he's saying, no, I wanna know him more.

I know him, notice he's not saying I wanna know Bible verses, I wanna know him. If he's a person, you can get to know him better, amen? Through the word, by the spirit, a lot of other ways, through life, trials, difficulties. He said, here's my quest, I wanna know him and the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, the power of his resurrection now in my life and eventually when I die, if I die before he comes, I wanna know that I will share in that resurrection that he led the way in but I wanna know that power now, that power that's working in me now, the same power that raised Jesus from the dead is living in all of us.

Oh my goodness, just think the potential, the same power that raised Jesus from the dead is inside of the man that you hear talking now. Just think of what God can do through me if I understood that better, trusted him more. I wanna know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death.

In other words, what he's saying there, not that he would die and atone for sins like Christ did, there's only one atonement, one sacrifice for sins, that's Christ but what he's saying is, I wanna be conformed to him with that same surrender to God's will that he exhibited when he went to the cross. I want that same thing. I wanna suffer for him if that's his will.

I wanna have that same brokenness that said, not my will but thine be done. I wanna know the power of his resurrection but I wanna know the fellowship of his sufferings and be made just like he was when he died on the cross and to be found in him, not having that righteousness and so somehow attaining to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I've already obtained all this or have already arrived at my goal but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.

Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it but one thing I do, forgetting what's behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. Go back to verse 12, not that I have already obtained all this or have already arrived at my goal but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. By the way, in that Greek language there, there's a lot of different metaphors that he's using,

athletic contests but it's not so much the chariot race, it's more the running and the picture that he has in the Greek is he's running a race and there's the finish line and you're getting toward the finish line and you ever see the runners in the Olympics or in the track meet, they're always leaning forward because that'll get them there faster, right? They're leaning forward, every muscle, every sinew straining to the most and he says, I'm not looking at who's behind me.

You know, famous runners have lost races because they stopped and looked around at who was around them and while they were looking around, they slowed down and people passed them. He says, I don't care about who's behind me, around me, I'm just straining toward the goal that Jesus has set before me. Everything, look, just totally focused, just focused, totally focused, I'm running, I'm running, I'm gonna finish that race but here's what I wanna leave you with that we could pray about.

Notice that although he knew Jesus so well, he wanted to know him better. Although the power of God worked in him, he wanted to know more of that power of God. Although he was surrendered in his will to Christ, he wanted a deeper surrender.

The worst thing that can happen in Christian life is when you lose your appetite for more. When you're content with, this is good, Christian, not what I used to be 10 years ago, I'm doing good. Already the cobwebs are gonna start to settle on us.

The way Christianity is, we're always joyful and full of peace and Christ has done it and yet we're straining. Mas y mas, yo quiero mas, I want more, I want more and when a church stops wanting more, just a matter of time, bye. When a Christian or a pastor or a deacon stops wanting more of God, that I might know him.

Well, but you know him, you've been serving God. I know but I wanna know more, there's more to know. There's more power to experience changing me more like Jesus Christ.

I wanna know more of yieldedness. I know I've sung I Surrender All but I wanna sing it with deeper now. I wanna go deeper with him.

I hope that's the way you feel tonight but I wanna charge all of you, you gotta want more. God wants you to be hungering and thirsting after righteousness, after things, never be settling. All the great athletes, all the great keyboard players, all the great musicians, they never say, this is it, I've reached my pinnacle, that's the best I can ever be.

No, they're practicing, let me learn a new thing, a new lick, let me learn a new move, let me learn something, I gotta get better, I want more and that's the way Paul was. He was such a Christian athlete, he didn't wanna stay where he was, he wanted more. But let me close with this thought.

He said, here's one of the things, that's a general thing that all of us should be wanting more of which is I wanna know him better. How many know him and love him right now tonight, just the way it is? But how many know there's so much more to know about Jesus? Could you lift your hand? All right, so every time you open the Bible, every time you get along with God, God, I thank you for what you've done, I wanna know you more, I wanna know you. Did you know just pursuing to know God better solves 90% of Satan's devices against us? It's when we settle and we get complacent and go, hey, I'm doing good, I go to church on Sunday, read the Bible when I can, ooh, that's a bad place, bad place, I wanna know more of his power in my life.

I've seen him do things, Sylvia's seen him do things, but we should be able to pray together, my sister and I, who's like a spiritual daughter to me, I want more, God, I wanna see more of your power in me. I don't wanna settle. That goes for church, that goes for you, that goes for me.

I wanna know more, surrender to his will. Those areas that maybe I keep back from myself a little bit, I wanna stay in my comfort zone, I wanna get more radical, more surrender to him. See, that's general for all of us, but here's what Paul's also saying.

He says, one day, he grasped me, he captured me. On the road to Damascus, he stopped me. I was persecuting Christians, he revealed himself to me, and he captured me for a purpose.

This is individual now. And he said, you know what my great desire is? I wanna capture what he captured me for. In other words, when he got me, he had a plan, he had a purpose.

I see it sometimes, his unveiling, but I don't totally see everything, but I wanna get everything he got me for. I wanna apprehend, listen, everything he apprehended me for. And that's what I want tonight.

And I wanna pray maybe with some people who you're not satisfied with where you're at. You know he's captured you, but you know I'm not where I need to be. By the way, you just see a minister settle for what he has from God, and it'll begin to deteriorate.

The way it works spiritually is you either move ahead or you fall back. There's no holding still. No, it's impossible.

No, I'm just gonna tread water. I don't wanna go deeper, I'm not sure what's out there, but I don't wanna go back to the shore because that's what God saved me from. So I'm just gonna stay where I'm at.

No, you won't, you'll automatically start going back. You don't have to wanna backslide. We all backslide, right? So you have to be always moving forward.

Why did he save you? And that's what I wanna ask you. Why did he save you? He didn't save you to come to this church. You say, no, he saved me so I can go to heaven.

I got that. We're all gonna go to heaven. What did he save you to do? Why did he apprehend you to live on this earth in New York City or wherever you're at? Why did he save you? What's the purpose? Who were you supposed to touch? What prayers were you supposed to pray? What faith were you supposed to have? What miracles were you supposed to believe God for? What part were you supposed to play in world missions spreading the gospel? In other words, why did he apprehend you? Paul says, listen, he didn't just save me to hang out until he comes again.

He saved me for a reason. Now, I wanna get that reason. I want every ounce of why he saved me.

I want every facet of why he laid his hand on me. Just a personal note, I've been praying that lately. I was praying it this morning.

God, I wanna be everything you want me to be. Notice what Paul says. Now, I haven't got all that yet.

Look how humble he is. He said, not that I've gotten everything yet, but one thing I do, I forget what's behind. And I'm going after that, baby.

I'm going after everything God has for me. I want everything. Come on, how many are with me? I want everything, everything, everything, everything, everything.

Some of you know a little bit about my life, but I'm an unlikely person to be up here. My older brother, better Christian growing up, much brighter, much more talented, and God didn't call him in the ministry. He really serves the Lord.

He's a great brother, great Christian. My sister, my father spoiled her, but let's not go there. I gotta get over that stuff.

But she was a nicer person than me, and I was a renegade, and I wasn't behaving, and I cut school, and I got all kinds of that. Basketball and sports saved me from worse trouble, but the last person in the world that ever would be a pastor would be me. But God doesn't go by the way other people see things.

Yes. See, the gifts and callings of God are without repentance. You can't figure it out, and you're here today, and I'm here, now why did he pick me? What did he want me to do? He put me in the ministry.

What, just to hang around? Or is there some deeper plan, deeper gifting, deeper blessing I can be? I want it, but you gotta forget the things that are behind. You gotta forget your own failures. You gotta forget where you messed up.

Forget that. You gotta forget what people say. You gotta forget what happened in another church.

You gotta forget who's talking about you. You gotta forget, forget, forget, forget. Forgetting those things that are behind, because if you don't forget them, you won't be that runner.

You'll be like, why'd she say that back then? How you gonna run like that? You gotta run like this, right? Forgetting those things that are behind. I press on, stretching out. How many want to capture everything God captured you for, everything? And that goes for lay people.

I'm not talking the pastors and the deacons here. I'm talking about all of you. There is no division in the body of Christ in the New Testament where ministers do the work and the members just sit there.

That's been the rune of a lot of American Christianity. We all have a part to play. Let's close our eyes.

Anybody here want to join me as I do this and call you forward? Anyone want to come forward? Others might have to leave. They can leave, pick up their children, do whatever, but I'm not going anywhere. I want to apprehend why he apprehended me.

I haven't gotten it all yet. I have news for you. Brad Trask hasn't gotten it all yet.

Pastor Petrie hasn't gotten it all yet. Pastor Park has not apprehended everything. But if you're here today and you're hungry, I, pastor, I want to pray and call on God and wait on God so he can show me more of his plan for my life.

But I want to get further, deeper, more, not content with what I am today. I thank him that I'm not what I used to be, but I'm not what I want to be. I want to be more like him.

Just come and stand here. Yo quiero mas, senior. We want more, Lord, more Jesus.

Knowing you more, knowing you better, more of your power in our lives, more of a surrendered will, more openness to suffering and rejection for your namesake. We want to apprehend why you apprehended us. We want to take a hold why you took a hold of us.

Lord, we not only pray that you will get us home safely and those who need individual prayer, we're gonna pray, but God, this week, make us vessels of honor for you. Day by day, hour by hour, let us honor you, your name. Tell people about your name.

Tell them about your power. Tell them about your love, about your grace. Tell them about what you've done in our lives.

Make us vessels of honor. Vessels of honor, sanctified, holy, separate. Just separated for you, belonging just to you.

Not the world, the flesh, the devil, but for you, Jesus.

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