

# Gain or Loss - Philippians 3 - Sermon 3 of 3

by Roy Hession

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of surrendering all things to gain a deeper relationship with Christ and to receive the gift of righteousness through faith in Him.*

**Duration:** 54:18

**Scripture:** Romans 3:21, Romans 4:4, Philippians 3:7-14

**Topics:** "Counting Loss"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of knowing and experiencing the infinite riches of Christ. He compares it to finding a hidden treasure and giving up everything else to gain Christ. The speaker encourages listeners to count all things as loss in order to know Christ and the power of his resurrection. He also highlights the significance of faith in Christ's righteousness, rather than relying on our own righteousness through the law. Overall, the sermon emphasizes the transformative power of knowing and experiencing Christ in our lives.

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## Transcript

We will read from verse 7, But what things were gained to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I've suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win, revised version, gain, keeping the same word, gain, that I may gain Christ, 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, that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his suffering, being made conformable unto his death, if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead, 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, 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, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. We've omitted the first part of the passage under consideration because we have already looked at that in detail.

As we were singing that very moving hymn that comes to us always so fresh, when I survey the wondrous cross, and when we came to that verse, his dying crimson like a robe, it came to me that that really sums up the whole thing that Paul is saying here as he gives us his testimony. He is telling us of the effect of the cross, or rather the one who went to the cross upon himself. Philippians 3 is simply the effect which

Philippians 2 had on the apostle Paul.

His dying crimson like a robe spread all his body on the tree, then am I dead to all the globe, and all the globe is dead to me. Now that's the simple basic message, I'm sure, of this tremendous passage. When I survey the wondrous cross on which the prince of glory died, there's Philippians 2. It has always this effect upon us.

If we rightly see it, that great stoop, that great thing that Jesus did for worthless sinners, I pour contempt on all my pride. And that is exactly what Paul is speaking to us here about. Well, we've seen him enumerate his one-time assets.

Yesterday we saw him writing the fancied assets off as complete loss for the Lord Jesus Christ. And now, this morning, the part of the subject that I think we need to look at is this last part, what we may call the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. He counted all these things loss because he saw there was an infinitely greater gain in knowing the Lord Jesus Christ.

And that's what we want to think about this morning, the infinitely greater gain of knowing Christ Jesus our Lord, that makes us pour contempt on all our pride and discard those vain things that charmed us most. Here is the phrase in the authorized version, the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. And we saw yesterday it simply means the knowledge of Christ excels everything that I might have in myself.

Every my fancied position, my fancied righteousness, my pet interests, my idols, to lose them and gain Christ, it's cheap at the price. We're infinitely and always the gainers. No Christian, no matter what he surrenders, is ever a martyr.

He's a gainer all the time. Don't you go around saying, oh Lord, I've given up, aren't I a martyr? You're nothing of the sort. You're an infinitely gainer.

You gain the knowledge of Christ Jesus your Lord that infinitely excels that dear thing which perhaps he asked you to yield to him. The New English Bible, or no, rather the Amplified New Testament, translates that, this phrase, the surpassing worth and supreme advantage of knowing Christ. You can't have both.

You can't have the world and this. You can't have your own righteousness and this. You can't have your idol and this.

And what it was that made Paul let go his righteousness and his idol was seeing the surpassing worth and supreme advantage. There was no regret in what he'd let go, in the fact that he'd dropped out of polite society with just a tramp preacher. No regret.

It's just, all that's just so much dung compared with a surpassing worth and supreme advantage of knowing Christ. How strange and foolish we are when we resist this priceless privilege when it is pressed upon us, as if it's the worst thing in the world that could happen. I know I did.

I know how slow I was. And yet, how those of us who've yielded, praise the Lord for this supreme advantage. The New English Bible translates this phrase, he counts all things that last, because all is far outweighed by the gain of knowing Christ.

Now, this is very important when you see it in its context here and in the context of our personal experience. Because we do have our battles, not only since our initial surrender, but there are many other surrenders on the road. And we are asked to count our gains, losses, and there's an awful struggle.

This is very much the case when God has convicted us of something, where something in which we've got to admit ourselves to be sinners, admit ourselves to being the wrong, something sometimes very costly to our reputation, to put right. You say, I can't do it. It's too big a cost to humble myself like that, to be a doormat, to say I'm wrong, and if necessary, let that other person wipe their feet on me.

Because the devil says, always says that if you say you're wrong, the other person says, I said you were. Yes, I'm very glad to hear you say it, and they wipe. Oh, I can't bear it, if that should happen.

It sometimes does. There's no guarantee it won't. They did it to the Lord Jesus, and then it is we're helped.

We see something of a surpassing worth, a supreme advantage of gaining a new knowledge of the Lord Jesus. What does our wretched righteousness matter? What does our reputation matter? What is the good opinion of our fellows? What does that pedestal matter, compared with Him? Gaining in a new way Christ and all the other things we shall see are mentioned here. So I've sometimes, well, often been helped, and I needed all the help that Calvary could give me, by getting a glimpse of all I was going to get.

What does it matter? And yet it does, at times, get away from the cross. It matters, our righteousness, our fact that we are right, matters supreme. Oh, but it doesn't, when you see a little glimpse of the blessed fruitage of this priceless privilege of having Jesus.

And then, of course, its context is not only in the matter of the acknowledgement of wrong and sin and of repentance, but in what I may call surrender, because sometimes it isn't exactly repentance so much as a surrender of a darling something or other, a thing that's captured our heart, that's enchained our interests, that's taken first place. And sometimes the Lord says, that's got to go. Sometimes the thing can't be demoted.

It means so much, but it's got to go entirely. Sometimes things can be rightly and properly demoted and put in their right place. Others, you know instinctively, the whole thing's got to go.

Of course, if it's wrong, morally wrong, there's no question about it, but other things are not always morally wrong. And yet they become such idols that they can't even be demoted. They've got to go, an ambition, a longing.

He's sometimes a person, and we have to give that one up, because it's not according to the will of God. And it just pulls the inside of us out, until the Lord Jesus helps us. He draws back the veil, and we see the surpassing worth, the supreme advantage, that which goes after a thousand times for years to come, for eternity is going to excel, the paltry thing that I am called upon.

So, this morning we want to look at this supreme advantage, these things which excelled, all that Paul gave up. And as I've looked at what he got, what he gained in the Lord Jesus, compared with what he gave up, well, I must say, I feel myself out of my depth this morning. I feel myself out of my depth, intellectually, that I don't understand all that he says here, but even more so experimentally.

I don't know to what extent I've entered in to these games that are there for the man in Christ, for the man who's count, willing to count all else but loss. And I feel one can only say what Paul says, brethren, I count

not myself to have apprehended, but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that, for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. So, I think all one can do is to let the word itself speak, and the Holy Spirit to give it to each one of us, the meaning he wants us to see in it.

Now, I don't think it's terribly important, but it's a matter of interest, perhaps, that there are seven gains which he counted loss for Christ, and there appear to be seven glorious gains which he received again in the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, just look at the seven, shall we? We've seen verse eight, counting all things loss. At the end of verse eight, you have the first glorious inclusive gain, that I may gain Christ.

I count all things but loss, scrap everything, that I may gain the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, that ties up in my mind with that parable in Matthew 13, where the Lord gives us the parable of the treasure hid in the field. And the man happens to be going across a certain field at a certain time, he sees a bit of sacking protruding from the ground.

He says, hello, what's that? He's been past that field many a time before, never saw that. Or if he saw it, it never attracted his attention. But for some reason, it's attracted his attention.

He pulls it, it won't come, so he gets a spade and digs around. It's not his field yet, but just a matter of interest. And he discovers that underneath there, there's a chest full of gold.

You know what he does? He covers it up, even with a bit of sacking, no one's to know. He goes along to the estate agent, he says, is that field in the market? Well, I'm not going to tell you. He asks what the price is.

Well, it isn't all that a big price compared with what he knows is there, but it's more than he's got in cash. And he goes home, he tells the wife, he says, we're going to sell everything. What did she say? Sell everything, everything.

Furniture, home, everything. It's the most horrific, stupendous surrender. That wife can't understand, she thinks he's mad.

And Tilly lets her into the secret. And then she goes to him with terrific enthusiasm. They get a sort of cart and they pile everything on top, all the furniture, and with a great hallelujah, they go down the street.

So the whole lot. And they raise the down payment, raise the sum necessary. And everybody thinks they must be in terrible financial difficulties.

This is the last ditch. They're in terrible debt. Nothing of the sort.

Look at their faces. And then they buy the field and they start digging up the treasure. And they've found a fortune for a paltry nothing.

And so it is with the Lord Jesus Christ. We pass him by, we see for years, no beauty in him that we should desire him. No point in being a Christian.

Or if you're a Christian, no point in going further. Don't let the Lord challenge you. What's the point? And there's no beauty in him.

Until one day we get a little glimpse, perhaps with somebody else's testimony, through fellowship with others, or in some more direct way, of the infinite supreme advantage of knowing Christ. And we collect all

we've got. And we scrap the whole lot that we might gain Christ.

People think we're doing the maddest thing in the world to give up position. It might be to give up this, to give up that, come down off our pedestal. But we know what we're doing.

We're doing it with a song. For we've seen this infinite riches in him. Now that is, I think, the meaning of that parable.

Though it can be switched the other way around. But that raises a difficulty in our minds. I thought the Lord Jesus Christ was God's gift to poor sinners.

All hail the gift of Christ my Lord, my strength and righteousness. Yes he is a sheer gift, received only by faith without words. But so often before our empty hands, our hands are empty enough to receive it, they've got to be empty.

You see, he that loveth his life shall lose it. And a man says, but if I receive this gift, what's going to happen to me, my reputation? Or if I go further with the Lord, what's going to happen to me? What's going to happen to me, in my position as a Christian leader, if I start coming off my pedestal? Yes, there's the gift all right. But the gift has a challenge about it.

And so the Lord went on to say, he that loveth his life and isn't willing for what might be involved in receiving that gift, shall be ultimately the loser. But he that prepared to lose his life, to receive this peerless gift, shall be a thousand times the gainer. And that passage is so often put in juxtaposition about, whoso confesseth me before men.

Because sometimes to confess the one that you've received before men, before that group with which you move, and to come out without compromise, well, it's to lose your life, it would seem, to lose much. And people sometimes aren't willing, all right, then they don't get the gift. And the thing they thought was so wonderful proves to be no, no satisfaction at all in the end.

And they live poor, shriveled, self-centered lives, no good for God or man. And so, whereas he is God's gift to men, because he is what he is, and the world is what they are, and you can't serve God and man, and God and the world, and it means there's going to be a great cleavage, there is a sense in which to receive Christ, I've got to count everything that would militate against my coming to him and acknowledging him as loss and doubt. But friend, it's cheap at the price.

The other day, yesterday we were playing hockey, I was not very vigorous, though I'm feeling the effect of my mild exercise already today, and I was sort of back-come goalkeeper, but the goalkeeper was not allowed to kick as normally in our rules, but there were occasions when there was a certain goal, and I just put my foot in the way, and we had a penalty against us. And people said, well that's a bad show, not at all cheap at the price. What was a short corner compared with a goal? And all these things, these baubles that have to be counted last, cheap at the price, in view of gaining Christ himself.

But then the apostle goes on to tell us what's in him for us. The second is to be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. He says, I'm going to find myself in Christ.

I'm going to be regarded by high heaven, and I can regard myself no longer as in Adam, sharing all that my fallen forefather has transmitted to me of guilt and condemnations. I can get to be regarded as joined

to Christ, as a part of him, as incorporated into him, and all that's his is mine. Sound thou ever with me, and all that I have is thine.

And the thing that Paul is especially occupied in this passage is this question of righteousness. Because as we saw, your righteousness is deep down your most precious possession. Your righteousness, your desire to be right, is more precious than that one you've fallen in love with.

It's easier to give her or him up than be broken and admit yourself in deep particulars that he may be wrestling with you about to be the sinner, the failure you really are, and be willing to give that sort of testimony. Well, Paul was brought to that place, and he gave up his own righteousness with God, and in Christ he found another righteousness altogether. Now this question of righteousness is a very basic thing in the gospel.

I'm not at all impressed with the feeling that we must only use words which the common man knows. My wife has become rather occupied with gardening, much to my approval, and she tells me, you've got to know a bit of Latin to understand gardening books, for all the names of the flowers are in Latin. They don't, they don't, they don't give it to you in ordinary language, you can find out what it means.

And so it is, every subject has its language, and if you want to know the subject, you've got to understand the language. It's right that we who preach shouldn't use the language without explaining it, but we never fail to use the language which is the only language that rightly expresses what God is saying, and we've got to understand what the language means, and explain the language as we go along, because these are words which the Holy Ghost teaches. Now, one of the great words of the gospel is righteousness, and the basic provision of the gospel of our Lord Jesus is righteousness.

In Romans 1, Paul says, I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, it is the power of God, the salvation to everyone that believes, for therein is a righteousness of God revealed. Whatever you make of it, get it clear, that is the basic thing that the gospel offers to simple men, a righteousness of God. Well, now, what does it mean? Because the New English Bible translators, they've been quite defeated.

There's some wonderful bits in that New Testament, we're very grateful to it, but there's obviously certain things that scholastically doubt this, but they've betrayed the fact they didn't quite understand, especially on this thing, what Paul meant. Years ago, Guy King was writing the Scripture Union notes on Romans, and I found those notes very helpful, and this is what I've culled from him, and it's helped me very much, that for righteousness, you can read rightness with God. That's what it is.

What's provided for the sinner who confesses himself to sinner, to be a sinner, is a perfect rightness with God. And I think that is the sense in which this word righteousness is used. We talk about the imputed righteousness of God to the sinner.

While I'm still a sinner, only on the condition of acknowledgement of my sin, God is pleased to count me, for Christ's sake, perfectly right with himself. And I say again, while I'm still a sinner, that is what God has provided, a perfect rightness with himself, for the most hopeless failure in the world, on the one condition that he would acknowledge, that's his true condition, and put his faith in the blood and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, with this word righteousness in Paul, you invariably have a righteousness of God.

Now, that also is a little misleading, unless one looks into it a bit more closely, because it would seem to be it's God's personal righteousness which is counted to it, which isn't the case at all. Just look at two

scriptures there, along this line. Romans 1, to begin with.

This verse, which I've already quoted, it reads in our authorized version, for therein is the righteousness of God revealed. Well, as I said the other day, if you want accuracy, you can't do better than the revised. And the revised does not take undue liberties with unauthorized, so you're still on familiar ground.

But there it makes one alteration, therein is not the a righteousness of God revealed. And also, the word of God is not the genitive. I'm very bit rusty on my grammar, and I can only assure you that I have no first-hand knowledge of Greek.

All mine's obtained second-hand like any of you can obtain it, and lots of help. For therein is a righteousness not belonging to God, but from God, as opposed to a righteousness from myself. That's always the meaning of that word of God.

We talk about being born of God, and quickened of God, and taught of God. Here we have a righteousness of God in that sense. In other words, it's a divine righteousness, something that God does.

He delights to declare the penitent sinner utterly right with himself, even though he's got nothing to commend himself. He's turning over a new leaf, has been utterly ineffective, but he's confessed the whole truth as he knows it about himself. And God, for Christ's sake, has counted him right.

This is the divine. Look again at Romans 3. This is a passage which the translators didn't really know quite what to make of. Romans 3, 21.

But now, once again, a righteousness of God, apart from the Lord, is manifested. Nonetheless, being witnessed by the Lord and the prophets, it hasn't taken us all by surprise. It was all there prophesied.

Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all, them that believe, for there is no difference. There it is. And this is what Paul found.

And this is that for which he counted all else but loss. Look at Romans 4. I don't know, this verse has meant a lot to me in past days. Verse 4, to him that worketh is the reward, not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

In other words, the man who's trying to do this and do the other to get right with God, that's what it means, to do this and do the other to get right with God, or to get blessing, or to get revival even, is trying to put God on his debt and has forsaken the ground of grace. The reward for that man is apparently no longer a matter of grace, receiving it as a beggar, but a matter of debt. He's trying to put God on his debt, which is impossible.

But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. His faith is counted for a righteousness which he doesn't otherwise possess. While he's still a sinner, if he's only got that repentance and faith in the God who's declared his willingness to declare right those who admit they're wrong, then that simple faith is counted for a rightness with God that he doesn't otherwise possess.

I tell you it takes some believing when you feel bad about yourself, when you feel yourself such a failure. To come quickly into joy and peace and praise again, that really is victory, because your conscience tells you what you are, the fact that you're a Christian and yet a fallen, you feel so bad about it. And Paul,

anticipating it would be such a difficulty for us to believe that, gives us in that very chapter the illustration of the difficulty that Abraham had to believe that he would have a child when he and Sarah were past age.

It's sometimes as difficult to believe on him that justifies the ungodly as it was for Abraham to believe that he'd have a child when he was past age. It takes believing. It's so good, it's too good to be true.

Surely God's going to stand me in a corner for a week, isn't he? Here's the word. For any dear self-condemned one amongst us that to him that work is not apart from your good or your bad. Your good please turn the cassette over now, do not fast wind it in either direction.

For any dear self-condemned one amongst us that to him that work is not apart from your good or your bad. Your good isn't going to help you here, your bad isn't going to hinder you. Apart from that question altogether, God's delighted to count that simple repentance and faith as yours for a righteousness, a rightness within self that you don't otherwise possess.

And you've got to believe it. Otherwise you'll never have peace with God. We only have peace with God when we know that we stand in an unassailable rightness before God.

Turning over to the end of chapter four, you have the same thing. Talking about Abraham verse 23, now it was not written for his sake alone that it was reckoned or counted to him, but for us also to whom it shall be imputed or counted if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offences but was raised for our justification. Paul says, I want that.

And if there's anything stopping me getting into that place, I'm prepared to count it lost. And as I said, it isn't just a doctrine. It's a tingling contemporary experience to know this truth in me now, although I'm a sinner.

If I don't repent of what's gone wrong, I'm not saying I'm in and out of justification, but I don't get the bliss of it and the peace of it. But when I take a sinner's place again and break to admit myself wrong, I'm in the enjoyment of a sinner's righteousness again and a sinner's peace with God and the freedom of it, the access of it. All heaven, all God is open to me.

So Paul says, I'm going to count all things but lost. Give up that paltry striving of mine to stand in this righteousness. And you see, when you're battling, when you're going to bow your head at the cross over something, friend, all you're doing is to exchange the very uncertain ground of your own innocence and your own righteousness for the precious, sure ground of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

God has got nothing for us on the ground of our innocence. I didn't do it. I don't have those sort of sins.

You get nothing from God at all. Heaven hasn't got anything for a man like that. But for a man as I had these things, this is characteristic of me, that I take my place where the work is being finished on the cross.

Then God delights to count this perfect rightness to us. What it comes down to is this. God delights to declare those to be right, who admit they're wrong.

That's the reason why some folk can't understand why some Christians repent. They say it's such a miserable business to repent, but they don't look very miserable. They coin themselves by the most awful names in the world and yet they're so free and happy.

You hear their freedom and their testimony. And they say, well, if I said half that about myself, I'd be down in the dumps. They aren't seeing what we're seeing.

They're not seeing the blood. They're not seeing this new righteousness into which I step every time I take a sinner's place and the new freedom and liberty which is mine. Well, what a thing.

This is the great thing. Paul can't speak of anything else. He's always coming in.

And it's important that we should understand, but more than that, enjoy it. Right, that's the second game. Whether we should get through all seven this morning, I don't know.

Now the third. I'm in Romans. Let's turn back to Philippians.

The third, he counts all things but lost that he may gain Christ. All things but lost will be found in him having this righteousness. All things but lost that he may know him.

Knowing the Lord Jesus. You see, he's not really only concerned with the gift of righteousness. It's the person that's captured his heart.

It's that person. Oh, and all, everything that's standing in the way, lost, that I may know in increasing intimacy, this person. Well, now I can only pass on what's come to me.

What does it mean to know the Lord Jesus increasingly? Does it mean that I have an ever longer quiet time? That my quiet times get longer and longer because I'm knowing him more and more. Well, they don't always get longer. Sometimes even the demands of the day don't permit always such a long quiet time as you would have liked.

If you make everything depend on your quiet times, and there's such a tendency for us to do that, there are very occasion, many occasions where you're in complete despair. Because you either you can't have the quiet time, or that you didn't get up in time. And it's possible to make a quiet time before breakfast worth four times a quiet time later on in the day.

Who says that, please? What happens to a mother when the children are always awake before she is? And if you say that, you just put her into bondage. And there's many a mother who has been put into bondage. No, no, knowing Christ.

Well, there's one verse that I think gives us something of a definition. The first epistle of Peter, chapter 3, verse 18. I'm sorry, the second epistle of Peter.

Second epistle of Peter, chapter 3, verse 18. But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We're to grow in two things, in grace and in knowing Christ.

And they're linked. Notice what it says, you're to grow in grace. Not necessarily to grow in goodness.

To grow in goodness could make you a Pharisee. And maybe the goodness you're getting proud of isn't any goodness at all. It's growing in grace.

And grace is God's gift to the guilty who admit their guilt. Therefore, I'm to grow in grace, seeing more deeply the extent of my sinfulness and abounding grace in Jesus to meet it. And Jesus is full of grace and truth.

And I got to know him increasingly as that. And I know him experimentally as I bring to him that which needs grace. I bring to him my emptiness, my helplessness.

I tell him of the futility of my struggles. And I find that every need is anticipated. He's anticipated every need.

None of it's taken him by surprise. My weakness is no hindrance to him. Not even my sin, if I admit it.

My good is no help. It's all grace. And knowing him increasingly as knowing him as the God of all grace.

You see, we do get the idea that we begin with grace, and then we're saved by his grace, and now we've got to go on doing our best. But it isn't that way. We begin with grace, and we go on with grace.

As we were singing that hymn this morning about Jesus, Tender Shepherd, I thought of a verse in Revelation 7. Would you like to turn to it? Revelation 7. For the lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them. And once again, my two-version Bible, which gives me the revised and the martian tells me, the revised says, the lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall be their shepherd. Jesus, Jesus, Tender Shepherd.

The lamb at whose feet I first saw the light is going to be my shepherd for every step of the way. And the lamb speaks of calvary. The lamb speaks of grace for poor people who admit they're poor, for sinners who admit they're sinners.

And I'm not left after having tasted grace to struggle on under law, and by striving and by my own strength which never is sufficient. I find this Jesus is my lamb all the way along. The worst about me is anticipated in him and settled, even before it comes to birth in my own heart.

Hasn't taken it by surprise when he acknowledges and has grace for a man like me, and that is for every other conceivable need. This knowing Christ increasingly. Oh, everything lost and I may do that.

I can think of various new revelations he's made to me of himself. I remember, but I don't always live in the good of them. I need to go back and learn them again.

How I was struggling so hard, but my life should be Christ. I remember the day when he began to show me that Christ was my life. I didn't become quite so occupied with my life being Christ.

I saw Christ was my life. Fetters fell off. I found it wasn't me trying to be a evangelist.

It was someone mightier than me doing it. See, I've seen grace in him. This Jesus is bigger than I ever thought he was.

There's surprises in him all the time around the world. It was a further revelation when later I saw the power of the blood. It was something all the time for a man like me.

I really didn't know what to do with sin. I didn't know that there was a position that anticipated me being what I was, that could give me liberty to go into the holiest, if I was willing to be cleansed continually at that open fountain. What a wonderful surprise.

Till then I was striving to be better and think if I could be better and overcome, I'd be at peace with God. I found the blood had dissipated that and finished it for me. You see, knowing him, but these are things

we've already known, they're much else.

Only a little while ago it came a new insight. Alas, I don't always live in the good of them. I have to learn them again.

I remember in Pakistan, I'm thinking of the big day ahead. Oh, it's a big day Lord, I must have a big prayer. And the Lord seemed to say to me that morning, well you can have a big prayer if you like, but it's the finished work in either case.

And I saw the finished work of Christ, it don't relate to my sins, but to my enemy. And that victory wasn't dependent on me having a big prayer. Yes, you can have a big prayer, they'd like to have a big prayer, but it's a finished work in any case.

Do you know what effect that had on me? I wanted to pour out my heart in prayer and praise more than ever before. If God had said it's dependent on a big prayer, my praying would have shrunk up. When I saw it wasn't dependent on it at all, but on grace, my heart poured out.

That's the way it works. Oh, this knowing Him. And oh, none of us, we've only got little, little, tiny little knowledge of Him.

What surprises of grace. How do we get to know Him more? In this way. This verse, this scripture tells us that we might count all things lost.

The one way is counting lost my own strength, my own righteousness. It's that, that I may know Him. Well, we must think all these things over on our own.

We must pass on to the fourth game, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection. Now, I think this is something very characteristic of the life in Christ, it's resurrection life. And I've often wondered what this meant.

I've sometimes tried to speak on the seven I am's of John, but I've never managed to speak on I am the resurrection. Didn't quite see until a little while ago. Now, it doesn't say that I may know the power of His resurrection.

His power to give life. That I may know the power of His resurrection, to give life where there was the opposite. That's what was in His case.

There was no resurrection till there'd been a death. And when there was a death, then God raised Him from the dead. Now, the life which we receive in Christ has that great characteristic.

It's a life like a sorghum ball. The harder you push it down, the more surely it comes up. Now, says Paul, I want to know that sort of life.

And he did. It's not the, some people say, you know, I don't believe in this up and down Christian life. You seem to be speaking about an up and down.

We're not preaching an up and down Christian life, but we are preaching a down and up life. As surely as you go down, you're going to come up. As you choose to die to yourself, as you choose to bow at Calvary, there's always an outcome.

And that's expected. That's not our expectation to be repentant and that's all there is to it. No! I'm to expect an up in proportion as I'm willing to go down.

And it isn't only in the matter of my repentance, in the matter of my circumstances, the devil knocks me down. But the wonderful life which I have means that I'm going to come up again. Rejoice not against me, for when I fall, I shall arrive again.

It's characteristic of this life. It was seen in Jesus, in his death and resurrection, and it's to be imparted to us. And Paul says, I want to know more and more of that down and up life.

Now, he had the down, but he tells us about it, how he came to know the up as well. Look at 2 Corinthians 4. Here you have the down and up life. Here you have Paul knowing the power of his resurrection.

Again, I say there's no resurrection without a downness about it. Verse 7, we have this treasure in earth and vessel, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us. We're troubled on every side, yet not distressed.

Perplexed, but not in despair. Persecuted, but not forsaken. Cast down, but not destroyed.

Philip says, knocked out, knocked down, but not knocked out. We always come up before number 10 is counted. Always.

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. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake. One way or another.

If not by actual persecution, by circumstances, by the trouble with the children, they all get on top of it. Always to be delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, in order that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. I'm thinking of a friend of mine, some of you know him and love him well, he's often here with us, and he's been very ill lately.

And I thought, well that's it. We'll all have to rally around. It's going to be six weeks in bed on milk.

And so I rang up and I said, well if I can help on this and help on that, you see. And we're all ready, almost ready, with the flowers. He went down, but he's up.

No need for us to rally around. You see that's how it is physically. You feel complete at the end of yourself.

But you've got the down and up life in you. You've got a resurrection life. And God knows how to bring us up again.

There are so many times when people are almost ready to order the flowers. They always get disappointed. Until the last time, as William Lagenda says, the devil's going to bounce us so hard we're going to go right down I'm going to bounce right up into glory.

But I've seen something practical in this. I wonder am I right when I say the teaching of this passage I've just read in Corinthians is this. That in as much as I have some of the depth of the Lord Jesus worked in me, I can put in my claim for a corresponding amount of the life.

I think that's here. You see, but I don't, my troubles aren't really for Jesus' sake. It's according to how you look upon them.

Paul had sickness, ordinary straightforward sickness, ordinary straightforward lack of finances, all sorts of things. And they might not all have been attributed directly to his witness for Christ, but he said they're the dying of Jesus nonetheless. I'm going to claim that everything that comes to bring me down is part of the dying of Jesus, part of my union with Christ.

Because if I can only look at it that way, then I've got the right to claim so much more of the life of the Lord. Which of course, which brings us to the next one, it gave him a new hunger for the fellowship of his suffering. There's gain in it.

He became almost greedy for a bit more of the down, because he knew it was always going to qualify him for a bit more of the up. Sometimes the times of the greatest display of the power of God of his ministry when he was most down. But he said I've got a life that fits into that.

It's the power of his resurrection. I remember one little case like that years ago. I felt I'd been slighted in a certain matter a long time ago, and I felt a bit hurt in the meeting.

It's a foolish thing. It's hardly worth even sharing with you. It's ludicrous, but we are ludicrous people.

And somehow this had been coming home to me. And in that meeting I embraced this thing that happened as part of the dying of Jesus. Thank you Lord.

Any more that's coming? Very welcome Lord, because I'm going to put in my claim for so much more of the life. And an hour or two later, I found myself being able to point an unsaved minister to Christ. I said what's the connection between those two? If I'd gone home and saw, there'd be no new life.

But as I said Lord, this is part of the dying of Jesus. And I'm putting my claim in so much more of the life. I believe it works that way.

I don't know what would act that way. I wish I did. I want to be taught more to do it.

And therefore Paul said I count all things but last, not only to know him and the surprising grace in him, but to know this wonderful life. And if anything in the way of stopping it, I'm prepared to count it last. And the fellowship of his suffering.

Well that's linked. And I believe he did look upon his ordinary difficulties as part of the sufferings of Christ in him. Because thereby he was able to claim just so much more of the resurrection life of the Lord Jesus.

I wonder if we do that enough. Even the ordinary thing, part of his suffering. Fellowship of his suffering, because it's always linked then with this resurrection up-and-coming life that springs up within us.

So let's do that shall we? So we'll praise the Lord for these difficulties. Praise the Lord I got to take a meeting when I feel completely hopeless. Praise the Lord that I feel like this.

It's part of my union with thee Lord. Part of thy dying. Death works in me but life in others.

And that's worthwhile isn't it? If new weakness in you eventuates in somebody else getting blessed. Because frankly we're often too strong for God. Never too weak but often too strong.

And his life is most manifested when ours is brought down either through slight or through infirmity or through frustration. Let's embrace it. Paul says he took pleasure in it.

He says that you know in 2 Corinthians what 11 is it? He takes pleasure in infirmity. He took pleasure in the rheumatism because he knew Lord the next time I'm going to give a word there's going to be so much more your life in it. You see the rheumatism whatever it was wouldn't have meant any blessing had he not accepted it as part of the dying of the Lord Jesus.

As coming from him and embraced it. And sure enough this new life it's characteristic always to him come in and lift the man up who feels himself down. But of course not a cup up from our faith.

Well there's the fetishist sufferings we hardly go into detail. Quickly being made conformable unto his death. New English Bible very nice here in a growing conformity to his death.

Now we've seen his death in Philippians 2. Now he says Paul says I'm anxious to have a growing conformity to that death. Did he give up his rights? I want to be conformable to him in that. Did he make himself of no reputation to bless others? I've got to be willing.

Did he bow his head? That I want to be. A growing conformity to his death. We haven't time to go through it all but you can see what his death for him involved in Philippians 2. The seven steps down and they're similar things for us.

A growing conformity to his death. How helpful it is when you feel you've been put upon and remember that he took a towel and went lower than you did. You bow your head and repent of your reaction and it always means life every time.

Wherefore it says in Philippians 2 God has highly exalted him. Why did God highly exalt his son? Because he was his son not basically but because he went so low. It was simply a demonstration of the thing that he said so often.

He that humbles himself shall be exalted. It seems supremely in him. It's the same for his children and therefore Paul saw this extraordinary paradox.

He said I'm hungry for more of that and that I might know more. Everything lasts to know him and all this in him. And the last gain is if by any means I might attain to the resurrection of the dead.

Literally the resurrection from the dead. Now I have used to be very puzzled about this verse. It looks as if Paul was in doubt as to whether he might enjoy the resurrection of the righteous.

Whether he should enjoy that first resurrection as the second resurrection. Whether unsaved or resurrected to stand before the great white throne. But before that happens there's the first.

A thousand years before the first resurrection. Whether saved or resurrected to sit and reign with Christ. Well now I thought that was part of my common lot in Christ.

And yet Paul puts it into some doubt. And so I remember years ago as a young Christian I met Dr Basil Atkinson. I asked him and he's a scholar.

And he helped me so simply. He says it's really a continuation of the same structure. All things but loss and again Christ.

All things but loss and I know him. All things but loss but this. All things but loss and I might have the resurrection of the dead.

If at all costs. Oh what a thing it would be. Just because of my pride.

I wasn't willing to confess the Lord and bow at the Calvary. Because I wanted the good opinion of the world not to be saved. And lose that glorious resurrection.

And so I believe that's what he means. Could we just as we close look at that glorious day. Because it is a glorious day.

Don't take it for granted. Let's rejoice in it. Revelation chapter 20.

Verse 4. And I saw thrones and they sat upon them. And judgment was given unto them. And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus.

And for the word of God. And which had not worshipped the beast neither his image. Neither had received their mark upon their forehead or in their hand.

And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection. On such the second death hath no power. But they shall be priests of God and of Christ.

And shall reign with him a thousand years. And that was his last day. Didn't take it for granted.

It was worth all that he suffered to enjoy that. And so the way to enter into our game is to count everything else lost as it may come. He says I don't reckon I've got entered into them all.

Neither do I. Neither do you. But as God shows me I'm prepared to count any new bit of self-righteousness or anything else lost to enter more fully into these glorious games until I enjoy my part in the second resurrection. And I stand with the Lord Jesus in glory.

Praising the Lamb by whose blood I stand there. Let us pray. Lord Jesus we would hear the words of thy servant of old and receive his testimony again.

What things were gains to me. Those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless I count all things but for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.

Show us more of this excellency Lord Jesus. And may it work in us a willingness to bow our head to forsake our righteousness to go to thy feet. To give up every idol that competes with thee.

That we might have this surpassing advantage and worth of knowing thee and enjoying all that we've been speaking about together this morning. We ask it in thy dear name. Amen.

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