
HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS

Let's do a quick review of yesterday's study before we look at today's verses. We talked about how Paul's acceptance of Christ as his Savior changed his view of legalism. Where he once believed legalism to be the proper avenue to righteousness, he realized God's grace is the one and only channel to righteousness. We also explored Paul's consideration of everything he had done as the "perfect Jew" a loss compared to what he gained when he accepted God's grace through a personal relationship with Christ. Today we are going to look at these same concepts in greater depth, as well as the power of Christ's resurrection and our conformity to His death. Here are our verses for today from Philippians 3:8-10.

"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 but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, 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, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death."

Let's start in verse eight. Paul says that he "counts all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord." Let's look at two concepts in this phrase. The first concept comes from the word for 'loss' in the Greek which would better be translated as 'disadvantage.' Paul understood all his perfect, Jewish qualifications were actually a disadvantage to him because he relied on them instead of upon God. He put all of his confidence in the fact that according to the Law his slate was clean. He ignored a relationship with God for his own attempts at righteousness.

Think about and write down a time in your life when you relied on yourself instead of God. Were you successful in your endeavors?

The second concept we will look at comes from the phrase ‘surpassing value.’ Paul came to realize after he entered a relationship with God, that knowing Christ surpassed everything he previously valued. So many times we forget that our relationship with God is the only thing that has true value. It is the only thing that will bring us true, lasting joy. Earthly goods and even relationships will not bring eternal joy and peace. They will only bring temporary happiness.

Looking at the answer you wrote in the previous questions, think about how you felt. If you were successful, was there joy? Was it lasting? If you were unsuccessful, how did you feel?

Moving on to the next part of the verse, Paul says that “I have suffered loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ.” Let’s think back to a few days ago when we talked about Paul’s qualifications as the righteous Jew. He was basically perfect according to the religious leaders of the day. He performed all the external rituals needed to be great. He had friends in high places. He was smart, rich and most likely had everything he needed and more.

But do you remember Paul’s conversion story? He lost everything. He was blinded and eventually lost all of the people he once counted as friends. According to our verse, was Paul

upset? No! He calls the things he lost ‘rubbish’ in comparison to what he gained. Nothing is more valuable than a relationship with God and gaining His righteousness!

Moving on to verse nine, Paul says he is now “found in him.” Paul understood accepting the grace of God meant he would be found in Christ. Titus 2:14 explains this concept as well as verse nine. It was not because of a “righteousness of His own derived from the Law.” Paul’s new position in Christ gave him a spiritual understanding that nothing he attempted to do on his own would give him righteousness. All of the rituals he had performed to gain righteousness on his own had gotten him nowhere. He knew that the only way he could become righteous in God’s eyes was “through faith in Christ.”

When we place our dependency, our faith, in Christ, we are putting our full weight on the fact that we believe Christ is who He says He is. We are putting our full weight upon what Christ did here on earth, His virgin birth, His sinless life, His fulfillment of all the prophecies, His death on the cross and His resurrection on the third day. It is because Christ did the work that our faith is substantial. If He is not who He said He is, our faith in Him would be pointless. But because we know that God’s word is true, we gain “righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith.” There is no other way to become cleansed in God’s eyes. We must depend in faith upon what Christ did. Then we will receive the righteousness of God. Nothing else gives us that righteousness.

Read Ephesians 2:4-9. Write verses 4 -5 here. It perfectly summarizes the concept we just explored.

Let’s continue to verse ten. Here, Paul identifies the results of being in Christ. It is only through faith in Christ that we gain the righteousness of God and have the potential to know

God in an experiential way. Now Paul is moving on to our relationship with God after salvation. It is only once we acquire God's righteousness that we have the potential to know Him experientially.

What does this look like? Our relationship with God, our knowledge of Him and our spiritual maturity only progress when we are in fellowship. We have the potential to be in fellowship, so we have the potential to know God in experience.

Paul also says that he learned the "power of His resurrection." The resurrection of Christ makes possible a victorious life in Him. Once we die with Him and are raised with Him, we have the potential to experience a life of joy. Neither Satan nor our Old Sin Nature has power over us. We have the power of Christ in us to deny Satan and our Old Sin Nature and live a life of freedom.

Not only did Paul learn of the victory of His resurrection, he learned of "the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death." As Christians we are given victory through Christ's resurrection, but we also experience the sufferings of Christ's death because we died with Him. **Read 2 Timothy 2:11-13.** It is so worth suffering in His death to gain life with Him and it is only when we align ourselves with Him that we have the potential for growth.

Is there a time in your life that you suffered for the sake of Christ? End today by writing about it here.

REVIEW

~ Our own attempts at righteousness are actually a disadvantage to us because they cause us to rely on ourselves and not on God!

~ Knowing Christ and having a relationship with God will surpass everything else we can ever know or value!

~ The things we “lose” when we gain Christ are worthless compared to knowing Him!

~ The ONLY thing that gives us God’s righteousness in faith and dependency in Christ!

Ephesians 2:4-9

~ Once we gain God’s righteousness we have the potential to: 1. Know God experientially
2. Live victoriously through the power of His resurrection 3. Understand the sufferings of His death because we died with Him