

Philippians
“Living above the Clouds”

III. Main Teaching: C. 3:1-21 Joy in spite of things

1. 3:1-11 Past

3:8-12

“Counting a loss a gain”

I. Intro.

II. Vs. 8 What counts

III. Vs. 9-12 Three things to lose if we are to gain

I. Intro.

Paul has described in verses 4-7 how religion dominated his life prior to becoming a believer and even as a believer for the first 14 years. But in verse 8 **Paul found in Christ the One that made religion obsolete so much so that the loss of everything religious was seen as a gain. Jesus is the missing person of everyone’s life He alone is what makes living a blessing ill respective of adverse circumstances and adversarial situations.** Saints, a good thing can become a bad thing if it keeps out the best thing! It is important to see the total message of this chapter before examining it in detail, so perhaps the following outline will be helpful.

- Vs. 8-11 Past “I count”
- Vs. 12-16 Present “I press”
- Vs. 17-21 Future “I look”

II. Vs. 8 What counts

Vs. 8 That little word “*indeed*” in verse 8 in the Greek, stresses the idea that “*Though, indeed, therefore, at least, doubtless,*” ***I have counted all things but loss that I might gain the surpassing worth of Christ.*** Notice also that he changes verb tenses here between verses 7 and 8. In verse 7 he says, “*but whatever gain I had I counted (past tense) as loss*”. In v. 8 Paul writes “*but indeed, now, therefore, doubtless I count, am counting (present tense) everything as loss.*” In Acts chapter 9 verse 25 we are told the day that all that Paul had placed on his training, his background, his intellect, his achievements, his morality, came crashing down around him, as he was let down the wall of Damascus in a large basket. Next we are told that Paul went up to Jerusalem and was rejected of the apostles who wouldn't have anything to do with him. Neither his Jewish nor his Christian friends would take him in, and discouraged, defeated, he went to the temple for consolation and there the Lord met him and sent him home to Tarsus. We are told that for some five to seven years in Tarsus he did not minister or preach or at least there is no record of any of it occurring. All of that is summed up in verse 8 where we read “*Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ.*” I know of no greater loss in human existence than the loss of our dreams and hopes because for the most part we have so much invested in them and have paid so much to indulge them. Yet with that said Paul makes this remarkable statement that the “*loss of all things*” was well worth the price for what he had gained in the “*excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.*” The use of the word “count” at the end of verse 8 ought to be rendered “*I am still **COUNTING**” the things lost as*

rubbish. The word for “rubbish” is a word that means dung not just worthless but offensive. This indicates that Paul saw the loss and gain as a process that the more he lost of the “*things*” of religion the more he gained “*excellent knowledge of Christ Jesus.*” Looking at the first century church and comparing it with the Westernized Church of today we can see that the fundamental difference between the two can best be explained in what essentially would be their practicing mission statements:

- **Modern Westernized Evangelical Church:** *Showing the world how much WE can do for Jesus!*
- **First Century Church:** *Demonstrating to the world how much Jesus has done for us!*

Which of those two mission statements is religion and which one is a relationship?

Which one represents your life or the life of this fellowship? Do these things define you or are you now defined as Paul said by the “*excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord*”? In Jeremiah 2:13 God spoke through the prophet and said to Israel “*For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, And hewn themselves cisterns--broken cisterns that can hold no water.*” We cannot drink from our empty cistern of religion and at the same time drink from the inexhaustible rivers of water that flow from Christ. Are we free from our broken cisterns that cannot hold water because we will not be free to drink from the fountain of living waters until we are!

III. Vs. 9-12 Three things to lose if we are to gain

Paul goes on in verses 9-12 to give us three areas where the loss of religion gained him the superiority of the “*excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.*”

1. Vs. 9 **Morality**: The phrase “*be found in Him*” is one that suggests investigation by others. Paul wasn’t concerned about passing the test as to being Holy and right because His rightness wasn’t external based upon his works but it was internal and based upon God’s work! Paul’s right standing wasn’t a list of things he didn’t do instead his morality was found in the rightness of Jesus that had positive traits expressed in, “*Love, patience, kindness, compassion, and forgiveness.*”

2. Vs. 10 **Ministry**: Another thing that changed for Paul was **what ministry was all about**: It was no longer about doing things for God; instead **it was about personal, experiential, relational knowledge and friendship with God.** Paul is very careful not to say that this was academic as he doesn’t say “*That I may know **ABOUT** Christ*”. Someone has well said, “*Knowing about something has **value**; whereas knowing relationally has **vitality**!*” Paul is not speaking of knowledge that can be learned through a book or a casual acquaintance, he is speaking of a deep continual abiding relationship where two share experiences together. Paul says that **in this shared experience that there were three experiences he continually walked with Jesus in that deepened their relationship. And these three areas changed how ministry operated through him:**
 - a. **The power of His resurrection: POWER! Paul’s ministry went from the power of humanity and self-effort to the power that raised Jesus from the dead.** And in this new resurrection power, Paul found a power supply that was more than adequate for every possible circumstance a person could ever encounter. This “*resurrection power*” works when all other hope is gone, and every situation has been exhausted. It was at work when Jesus lifeless body was on the cross. It was

- at work when his dead body was placed in that tomb and sealed for three days! It was always at work even though human despair and doubt covered it and encased it. Resurrection power turns: “*Failure into victory, sorrow into joy, and despair into hope.*” Walking with Jesus in the “*power of His resurrection*” each and every day Paul found the only power to transform life!
- b. **The fellowship of His sufferings: COMPASSION!** The amazing thing about sufferings of Christ is that they were always for someone else. Paul was gaining a new compassion as he shared in those sufferings he understood the sufferings of others. Our sufferings are not for ourselves primarily they are for the benefit of others. Loving anyone always involves suffering with them, as parents we know this all too well. Paul said that walking where Jesus went in His sufferings gave him a new compassion for people that religion never did.
- c. **Being conformed to His death: PURITY!** Being conformed to His death meant that Paul had come to the end of his self-pleasing life. By walking with Jesus in the area of being conformed to His death Paul’s ministry wasn’t about him it was truly about others. He wasn’t concerned with what happened to him, how he may be inconvenienced, instead his concern was about what happens to Jesus and His glory and the benefit of others. Self-living was gone and replaced by being an instrument of God’s abounding grace. All these things were not a by-product of study, hard work and effort. No they were a by-product of walking with Jesus in those three areas.
3. Vs. 11-12 **Motive**: The last area where the loss of religion gained Paul the superiority of the “*excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord*” is to be found in a

change in his motives. This verse sounds as if Paul was concerned that he would not be resurrected but that is because the word for resurrected isn't the same word used in verse 10. In fact the word for "resurrection" in verse 11 only appears this one time in all the New Testament and means a selective resurrection of believers from among all that will be raised from the dead. We know Paul isn't afraid he won't make the resurrection of the dead as he already wrote in Romans 8 that "*those whom Jesus justified He will also glorify.*" What Paul is saying is that **his motivation in life has changed because his concern is no longer about himself it's about others!** He knows that one day he will be "*perfected*"; God has begun a good work in him will see it to the day of his completion. His concern now is that he will take as many as God enables him to take with him. Paul's pressing on was that he may lay hold of as many as Jesus had for him to lay hold of. Dear ones there is a sense that every believer has access to other people's treasures and we have the great opportunity to distribute their winnings to them! Paul is saying, "*I want so to lay-hold of him that he might use my life as an instrument to lay hold of everything he had in mind when he arrested me on the Damascus road, hoping it might fulfill the purpose of his coming and we might all be together at the out-resurrection of the dead.*"

This all boils down to a great question we need to ask ourselves: **What am I living for?** Though it may seem as though this is true, religion is self-centered as our concern has to do with our self. Paul discovered that the loss of religion gained him power, compassion and purity.