

That I May Know Him!

• THE PUTRID

Philippians 3

7 But 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. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as dung, in order that I may gain Christ

“...furthermore, I count everything as loss compared to the possession of the priceless privilege (the overwhelming preciousness, the surpassing worth, and supreme advantage) of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord and of progressively becoming more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him [of perceiving and recognizing and understanding Him more fully and clearly]. For His sake I have lost everything and consider it all to be dung, in order that I may gain Christ”

- It is worth taking a moment to consider EVERYTHING that Paul is describing as dung. He is talking about anything that is gain to the flesh life. EVERYTHING!! Reputation, education, stability, achievement, relationships, work and health...

- Consider everything in your life. Consider the small comforts and most valuable gains. Paul is saying they are DUNG/WASTE/LESS THAN WORTHLESS compared to gaining and learning more of Jesus!

- There is nothing in this world that compares to Jesus. All of it is dung and waste compared to knowing Him! All of it! There is nothing in this life so worthy of our time, attention, interest, affection and love. What can you hold up next to Him? What in your life could compete with knowing Jesus? Not fortune, not fame, not family, not comfort, not pleasure, not convenience, not achievement or success or recognition or influence or power or strength or good works or selflessness or discipline... It's all DUNG!!

- You might say well that's Paul's opinion. He just loves Jesus more than me. He's a fanatic... I'm a Christian, I'm just not as into it as Paul... What difference will it make if I feel like Paul? I've got too many things to do to be as passionate as Paul...

2 Peter 3

10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will vanish (pass away) with a thunderous crash, and the [material] elements [of the universe] will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and the works that are upon it will be burned up.

Luke 3

17 His winnowing fork is in His hand to thoroughly clear and cleanse His threshing floor and to gather the wheat and store it in His granary, but the chaff He will burn with fire that cannot be extinguished.

“and the works that are upon it will be burned up” / “the chaff He will burn”

- All of this life, all the fleshly things that we think are so important are going to be burned up. They are counted as nothing, worthless and waste! Do we understand that?

- In God's eyes these things are corruption. They are not of eternal significance. If we have the heart of God within us, we will understand the heart of Paul. We would at least recognise the truth of what he is saying and desire to understand it more.

Job 23

10 But He knows the way that I take. When He has tried me, I shall come forth as refined gold.

1 Peter 4

12 Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.

13 But rejoice, in that you are sharing in Christ's sufferings, so that when His glory is revealed [in you], you may also rejoice with exceeding Joy!.

“refined gold” / “the fiery trial”

- There is a burning up of what isn't perfect. Everything that is not Gold is consumed and done away with. Everything that is not Christ!!
- There is a fiery trial, burning up the flesh in you so Christ's glory is revealed! HIS LIFE, HIS TESTIMONY!!

Do we have such a heart/mind? Can we say amen with Paul? Do you understand or relate to this heart for Christ? Do we truly see the “precious” things of this life as dung compared to Jesus? If we don't then we don't know Him.

• THE PRECIOUS

Philippians 3

10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, 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.

- When we truly and Spiritually consider the greatness, majesty, love and awe of Jesus it is utterly ridiculous to think that anything else could possibly distract us from Him. And you may well say amen and be in agreement with me. It's an easy truth to declare.

- But the sad fact is that we all must acknowledge and confess how foolish we are in our flesh and to recognise how utterly sinful it is to let anything hinder His glory in our lives.

- As His beauty, holiness and glory are revealed to us; As we start to understand Him through His word, we start to see and understand the futility and depravity of sin within us.

Isaiah 6

1 In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple.
2 Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.
3 And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!"
4 And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke.
5 Then said I, Woe is me! For I am undone and ruined, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!

Revelation 1

17 When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as if dead.

- The light exposes the darkness.
- It's easy to say and do enough to look holy. We can get so dangerously comfortable and secure in our religious routine at times. We can convince ourselves we are doing well. But when The Lord reveals Himself, when He shines His light upon us... Oh how much is revealed!

Lamentations 3

22 It is because of the Lord's mercy and loving-kindness that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not.

Psalm 103

10 He has not dealt with us after our sins nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

- We foolish, weak and sinful creatures do in fact struggle to make Christ Lord and Master of our lives! We forget.
- I know I am labouring this point... But my heart is that The Lord might reveal His holiness and His purity and that we might grasp a little of the fear, awe and wonder that Isaiah and John saw... Truly He is terrible to look upon in His purity, power, righteousness and authority but then oh how much more beautiful He is in His love, forgiveness, grace and patience!! Oh how loving, gracious and compassionate our Father is that He would care for such despicable people like us.
- That is someone I want to know!!!

"that I may know Him"

- Oh, to know Him... Oh, to know Him and the power of His resurrection life! There is nothing that compares to Him!

Psalm 63

1 O God, You are my God, earnestly will I seek You; my inner self thirsts for You, my flesh longs and is faint for You, in a dry and weary land where no water is.
2 So I have looked upon You in the sanctuary to see Your power and Your glory.
3 Because Your loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise You

Habakkuk 3

17 Though the fig tree does not blossom and there is no fruit on the vines, [though] the product of the olive fails, and the fields yield no food, though the flock is cut off from the fold and there are no cattle in the stalls,
18 Yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will exult in the [victorious] God of my salvation!
19 The Lord God is my Strength, my personal bravery, and my invincible army; He makes my feet like hinds' feet and will make me to walk [not to stand still in terror, but to walk] and make [spiritual] progress upon my high places [of trouble, suffering, or responsibility]!

- David and Habakkuk had the same heart and desire. To know God is far more precious than life. Paul is not an exception.
- Everything truly is dung compared to knowing Him. Take my comfort, take my pleasure, take my desires, take my family, take my health... Take it all but give me Jesus!!

"that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead."

- Paul was so determined in heart and mind to know Christ that whatever it cost, whatever it meant He was willing. The loss of all things and the giving of His life in service and conformity... Paul would give all of Himself just to know Jesus more.
- Paul's whole life focus was to be better acquainted with Jesus. He didn't say this is an overarching life goal. It wasn't something that was happening in the background of His life... He said this meaning that every morning he woke, in every moment of that day, in every job, journey, discourse and effort he desired to know Jesus more! In EVERYTHING he sought to know Jesus; to fellowship with Him, to be conformed into His image and example!!
- Paul was a man still learning; still seeking after Jesus; He recognised, even in all His revelation and knowledge, that there was so much more to have of Jesus; he was a man in love with The Lord.

Revelation 22

16.... I am the Root (the Source) and the Offspring of David, the radiant and brilliant Morning Star.
17 The Holy Spirit and the bride say, Come! And let him who is listening say, Come! And let everyone come who is thirsty; and whoever earnestly desires to do it, let him come, take, and drink the water of Life without cost.

- The invitation is for all. All who are thirsty...
- It is not to all who are smart, or all who are Spiritual, or all who are in leadership...

May we seek for and may The Lord give us such a heart of love for Himself. Lord may our hearts and whole lives be so given to you as Paul's was. Teach us Lord to fellowship with you, to pray, to seek and to live in Your word and to walk in Your Spirit, to be daily, utterly dependent upon your life. And the truth is, if His life is within us... Then His life will hunger and thirst for more and more of Him. If the hunger isn't there, the life isn't there.

• THE PURPOSE

"That if possible I may attain to the [spiritual and moral] resurrection [that lifts me] out from among the dead [even while in the body]."

- Paul is not talking of knowing Him only in this life but Paul is longing to be united with Christ in body! To be with His Saviour! We say that we are saved and we call ourselves Christian but do we have this same longing? Is there a life within us longing for a closer intimacy with Jesus above all else?

- To live eternally with God. To see Him face to face! To abide in His physical presence and glory in Him forevermore! Everyone wants to go to Heaven but that eternity starts now! Our eternal intimacy with Jesus MUST start now or there will be nothing to continue into eternity.

- There is the acknowledgement here that 'the resurrection' is something that is to be attained. He does not have it yet. It is something he is working towards and living for! And it is attained by growing in the knowledge of Jesus through His Word and by abiding in intimacy with Him through His Spirit. There is a working out that must be done!

Hebrews 2

3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;

- There is a resurrection to be won. There is Life to be gained. So how shall we escape if we neglect all that God has provided for us? Paul did not want to neglect any part of Christ. His heart rejoiced in Jesus and he desired all that Jesus offered.

- *Oswald Chambers: The Sermon on the Mount is not an ideal, it is a statement of what will happen in me when Jesus Christ has altered my disposition and put in a disposition like His own. Jesus Christ is the only One Who can fulfil the Sermon on the Mount.*

- The work, the battle is not so much in trying to achieve a level of righteousness or holiness but in maintain and nurturing our relationship with Jesus; being baptised into His death, abiding in Him and conforming to His image as more of it is revealed to us!

v12-14

"but I press on to lay hold of and make my own, that for which Christ Jesus has laid hold of me and made me His own."

- I press on to (apprehend) claim the purpose for which Jesus Christ (apprehended) lay a hold of me!

- Paul recognised and understood the reason that Jesus had intervened in His life and now he purposed that his whole being and will would be aligned in agreement with Christ to fulfil God's purpose.

- *GILL: he was apprehended of Christ, when he met him in his way to Damascus, stopped him in his journey, laid him prostrate on the ground, and laid hold on him as his own, as one that the Father had given him, and he had purchased by his blood; he entered into him, and took possession of him, and took up his residence in him, ... that he might know Christ himself, and make Christ known to others; that he might be made like Jesus, have communion with Him, and everlasting enjoy Him: and these things the apostle pursued after with great vehemence, that he might apprehend them, and be in full possession of them*

- Jesus Christ is precious to Paul. With all his gifting, knowledge, experience, qualification, passion and discipline... Paul could think of nothing greater than simply to know Jesus more.

- Do we desire to know Jesus more? Are we hungry or thirsty to possess more of Him? To learn more of Him? To enjoy more of Him? What is truly precious to us? What are we truly living and aiming for? Just to get through life comfortably? Just to make it through?

2 Peter 3:18

But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ...

Proverbs 4

18 But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, that shines more and more (brighter and clearer) until [it reaches its full strength and glory in] the perfect day.

"this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forward to those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

- Paul was "looking unto Jesus"! His eyes and his heart were looking up!

- Considering all that Jesus is and has done, considering eternity, it is important to lay aside those things which are now behind us. Those things which would distract us if we held onto them. Forget the good to combat pride, forget the bad to combat shame. What are you holding onto? What dung are your hands full of? Keep your eyes forward and up, looking unto Jesus. Giving Him glory for all things, delighting in Him, seeking after Him, learning of Him...

- The mark, the prize that Paul is aiming for is the High Calling of God. Paul is not living just so he can get to heaven. He is not living for God so that he can have a clear conscience and be good living! This is far more than just being a self-labelled "Christian"!

- Paul, like Moses was looking to the giver of the reward! He was not serving for selfish gain! Paul served because he truly loved The Lord!

Hebrews 11

26 He considered the contempt and abuse and shame of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect to the recompense [the rewarder] of the reward.

- We know Paul's life as a testimony of a man who walks with God and loves to be with Him. We would say he knew his God! We don't doubt his calling and service for The Lord... Yet Paul doesn't consider his reputation or what The Lord has done through him. He is just desperate for more of Jesus! This is why he was a vessel unto honour. He was simply abiding... Abiding is simple.

The putrid: All that is of this life. All that is not Christ.

The precious: Jesus Christ & His Great Salvation

The purpose: To know Him and His resurrection. To live for Jesus and with Jesus eternally.

Paul is not an exception. He is an example. (v17)

Mark 10

17 And as He was setting out on His journey, a man ran up and knelt before Him and asked Him, Teacher, [You are essentially and perfectly morally] good, what must I do to inherit eternal life?

18 And Jesus said to him, Why do you call Me good? There is no one good, except God alone.

19 You know the commandments: Do not kill, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not bear false witness, do not defraud, honour your father and mother.

20 And he replied to Him, Teacher, I have carefully guarded and observed all these and taken care not to violate them from my boyhood.

21 And Jesus, looking upon him, loved him, and He said to him, You lack one thing; go and sell all you have and give [the money] to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me [walking the same road that I walk].

22 At that saying the man's countenance fell and was gloomy, and he went away grieved and sorrowing, for he was holding great possessions/dung!

- This young man esteemed Jesus. He respected Him and revered Him enough that he took this passionate question to Him.

- He knew Jesus life and he knew of Jesus teaching. He knew that he lacked, he knew the law wasn't enough.

- Jesus loved this young man, but this rich, young man loved his dung.

- He neglected Jesus great Salvation. He kept his dung and he was sad.

- Are you walking in the Joy of The Lord? Are you rejoicing in His great Salvation? Are you abiding in His presence where there is peace that passes understanding and fulness of Joy?

- Or... What dung are you holding on to?

I don't intend to finish on a hard note. This message is an exhortation not a rebuke.

Paul is not an exception. He is just one of many examples.

Oh, that we might know Him! Oh, that we might learn Him! Learn Him in His word. Learn Him in your experience! Give all of your heart and thought to seeking Him, knowing Him and glorying in Him!
