

## THAT I MAY KNOW HIM

### ARE YOU PREPARED TO GIVE UP EVERYTHING FOR JESUS CHRIST?



We live in the time which Jesus described to John as the church of the Laodiceans. When we look around us, we see an abundance of wealth. Many people always want more, bigger, higher, everything. They often cling to this as their saving grace. In Paul's time the same attitude prevailed. He describes it to the readers of his letter to the church of the Philippians:

<sup>3</sup>For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. <sup>4</sup>Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: <sup>5</sup>Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; <sup>6</sup>Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. – **Philippians 3:3-6**

Paul explains the reasons why he could have relished in what he had and had become (the flesh, as he puts it). In fact, he says he had even more reason to be very happy with that he was and had:

1. He was circumcised on the eighth day, thus upholding the requirements of the Jewish faith. Uncircumcised men were considered heathens.
2. He was from the right nation, God's chosen people, Israel.
3. He was from a recognisable tribe, Benjamin, who was loved by his father Jacob.
4. He was recognised as an important Hebrew, well-schooled, and well-spoken.
5. He was a Pharisee and thus respected for his position.
6. He was very active in persecuting the church and this gained him favour with his peers.
7. Lastly, according to the law he was never on the wrong side.

This is indeed a pedigree that many would be proud of, and he gained a lot from it (Philippians 3:7).

Then he makes this statement:

<sup>7</sup>But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. – **Philippians 3:7**

He gave it all up and counted it a loss. In fact, and the King James Version of the Bible often uses vocabulary that we would deem unfit, and he refers to what he had as **dung** (Philippians 3:8). Thus, he refers to all of the advantages of having his background as, well, excrement (The Greek word is *skubalon* [σκύβαλον] and it is only used here.) when compared to what he has gained. Paul then mentions what can be seen as the central theme of his letter:

1. That he may **win Christ** and **be found** in Him (Philippians 3:8,9); and
2. That he may **know Him** and the power of His resurrection (Philippians 3:10)

Only two things were important to this apostle who previously had everything going for him: he wants to win Jesus as a prize, and he wants to know more of Him and the incredible power of the Holy Spirit that raised Him from the dead. Compared to what he has gained, he counts what he had as worthless excrement.

### **Have you won Christ and are you found in him?**

Have you made an effort to win the prize, which is Christ and eternal life, or are you happy to go along with what the world gives you? Are you going to be found to belong to Him or are you one day going to hear these words out of His mouth: “I never knew you” (Matthew 7:23)? For Paul, what he had accomplished up to that day when he encountered Jesus on the road to Damascus, is now counted as a loss (Philippians 3:7).

If you have won Christ, then He is the greatest prize you will ever win, and He should always be on your mind, and your focus should be on Him. You must be found in Him, always.

### **Do you know Him and the power of His resurrection?**

Do you know Him personally, or have you just heard about Him? What does it mean to know someone? I cannot say I know the president of whatever country unless I have actually met the person and have a relationship that goes further than a short greeting and meeting. I know a person when they share more than superficial information about them with me. I know a person when I have heard of and experienced their heart. Paul says he wants he wants to know more about the power of the Holy Spirit that resurrected Jesus from the dead.

## **CONCLUSION**

Many of us proclaim to be believers in Jesus Christ but we still cling to our worldly achievements. When you get to the point where you are confronted with the reality of the risen Jesus, and you choose the new way, it brings an end to what you had. It is difficult to part with the comfort and security of what you had. Paul had security because of his nationality, religious grouping, and standing with the law. He could have had an easy life. What followed was a lifelong battle; endless distances travelled to bring the Good News to nations; locked up in jail, probably lying in excrement; and then unceremoniously beheaded.

For Paul, three things happened:

1. He came to know the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ
2. He shared in the suffering Christ had to go through.
3. He was conformed to Him through His death.

He finally tells his readers the following, and this is what we should focus on:

<sup>13</sup>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,  
<sup>14</sup>I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. –

**Philippians 3:13-14**

What is your challenge as believer in Jesus Christ today? Forget those things that are behind us: the status, wealth and security; and focus on the prize you will gain: eternal life with Him.