

Philippians 3:1-16(tx: 10,11)

KNOWING CHRIST (I)

I. Knowing His person

II. Knowing His power

INTRODUCTION

Well we have celebrated **Easter** again with shouts: “He is Alive! Jesus Christ is risen from dead!”

- & because He lives, we live.
- salvation & eternal life are now ours.

But, I hope our commemoration & celebration are a lot more than just a lot of shouting.

- or more than just a customary thing we do 1 day each year.
- you know, we can be a lot like that little lad who was walking one night in a garden with his dad.
 - he saw the moon, big & bright & full-faced, just coming over the tree-tops.
 - the boy was delighted & exclaimed: “Oh, look! Get it, Daddy!”

Well, many of us Christians can be like that little lad.

- we think we are so wise, but yet are so spiritually childish.
 - we think we can get Christ like that small boy thought he could get the moon.
 - we have received Him as Lord & Savior, read our Bibles daily, say our daily prayers, go to church & worship regularly, & we are active in it.
 - & we think that’s all there is to know Jesus, & to be a Christian or follower of Him.
- but that’s as infantile as the little fella’s idea of getting the moon.

For the question is: do we really believe & live the Biblical truth that Jesus actually lives as our Savior & Lord?

- do we really personally possess & experience & enjoy & exercise the fact of His resurrection in our everyday living?
- is it seen in all of our talk & walk wherever we are?

Well, if **Good Friday & Easter** are going to mean anything to us, then it must be our desire & delight to daily commune with the risen Lord & Savior.

- our text says: “That [we] want to know Christ & the power of his resurrection & the fellowship of sharing his sufferings, & become like him in death, & so attain the resurrection from the dead.”
- that’s what it means to be a real disciple of Jesus.
 - that we have this sole life’s aim & ambition: that I may know Christ.

We consider then the meaning of this Biblical truth of **KNOWING CHRIST**.

- **1st**, knowing His person, & **2nd**, knowing His power.

I. KNOWING HIS PERSON

Now, here in **Phil.3 Paul** is stressing the truth that he formerly possessed & prized all the privileges & position & attainments he had achieved.

- all his former religion & what the world had to offer.
- but he says all that he counts as loss—a real liability & an actual disadvantage that stood between him & Christ & his salvation.
 - he says in vs.7,8 they are all a loss, for they don't compare to the surpassing worth & priceless privilege of knowing Jesus as Lord & Savior.

(OVER)

- th'fore, he concludes that he is willing to suffer the loss of everything for Christ's sake.
 - & he counts them all as worthless garbage in order to attain Christ.

So here we see a person rejoicing about the treasures he possesses because Jesus is his Lord & Savior.

- but then he suddenly realizes he wants to gain another, an even greater, new prize.
 - that of more & more gaining Christ or being like Him.
- th'fore, Paul says he count everything else as worthless rubbish as he makes his life's desire & delight & determination to possess & experience the priceless prize of being Lord's.

Now, of course, **Paul** has already known & believed, loved & obeyed Jesus for over 30 years.

- but he wants to increasingly experience an even fuller, richer, deeper gaining & appreciation of Christ.
 - for he realizes, being in Jesus by faith, involves so much more to know & live.
- he realizes he has only begun to discover the exceeding, exhaustless, unsearchable riches in Christ.
 - so he is eager to personally claim & experience these treasures more & more in his present life.

Th'fore, **Paul** continues in **vs.9** that to more & more grasp & gain Jesus involves that we be "found in Him".

- that our vital, saving union with Him becomes a far greater & more intimate experience in our lives, so that we will more & more know & live its wonderful reality.
- & then the results will be possessing & living a new & true righteousness from God by faith in Christ.
 - one of being in a right relationship with Lord so that we live right only according to His will.
- so it is this righteousness that he now prizes & is determined to exercise more fully in his life.

But, being a Christian who strives to fully gain Christ & to experience the actual living this joyous, saving relation with Lord in true righteousness also involves “knowing” Him more & more as our Lord & Savior.

- th’fore, Paul adds in vs.10 his passionate longing is to “know [Jesus] and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his suffering, becoming like him through his death.”
- in other words, he wants to have a greater, growing experience of knowing Christ with its glorious life of living the power of His resurrection.
 - & to more & more live for all that is good & true, holy & right.
 - & to share Christ’s sufferings, conformed to His cross so that he dies more & more to sin.

Now, here in **Phil.3**, we are told that’s way it is to be with all Christians.

- that, as Christians, right with God in Christ, it must be our all-consuming & continuous ambition & aim to know & experience Jesus in an increasing richer, fuller, deeper measure.
- how can be otherwise when we consider all He is & has become & done for us.

For, if we have been saved from sin & death by faith in Jesus, brought back to God to live forever & enjoy His presence & power now & eternally through H.Spirit,--

- if we are experiencing His forgiving grace & real, eternal life,--
- then we know how exceedingly inexhaustible & unsearchable Christ is.

Then, how strange it would be if it weren't our primary, burning, continual seeking & striving to know & experience Jesus’ power & saving suffering & death better & better.

- that we wouldn't want to constantly explore His boundless being & glorious love & amazing work.
- instead, as true Christians, it would be our desire & determination, as the old hymn puts it: “More about Jesus would I know. More of His grace to others show. More of His saving fullness see. More of His love who died for me. More about Jesus let me learn. More of His holy will discern. More about Jesus in His Word. Hearing His voice in every line. Making each faithful saying mine.”

Th’fore, being in Christ, redeemed by His saving grace, & reflecting on that great & glorious fact,--

- that surely should cause us to desire & be determined to know Him more & more.
 - to want to experience & enjoy & exercise Jesus better & better as we continue to explore His boundless nature & awesome, amazing love.
- as I said, it would indeed be strange, wouldn't it, if we Christians did otherwise or anything else.

So then, to be true followers of Jesus, we will be longing & living to 1st **KNOW HIS PERSON.**

- & that, of course, 1st means we must know the Biblical facts about Him.
- that He is God Almighty Himself who became a real human being as Jesus of Nazareth & walked & talked with us as the friend & helper & healer of sinners.
 - that He lived a perfect life, suffered & died, arose from the dead, now rules over the universe, & will return again to judge & reward all.
- He did all that to be our Savior & Lord to rescue us from sin & give us real eternal life with God.

But to desire to know Jesus is more than just knowing about Him with an intellectual, theological, theoretical, creedal knowledge & acceptance of the historical facts about Him.

- for such a knowledge doesn't involve real self-surrender & service, & the suffering of the loss of everything for Jesus' sake.
- for, if we endure suffering & loss just to gain a more accurate knowledge about Christ, then that certainly would be a bad bargain & a waste of time—not worth the price.

Th'fore, to know Jesus doesn't mean merely knowing a Christ of a creed, or the Jesus of tradition, or one interpreted in a sermon or a book.

- or just knowing Him historically—just believing He really lived & died & arose, as Bible says.
 - just accepting Him only with our minds that He is the Son of God, the Savior.
- neither is it to know Christ by just having Him as Savior, but not as the only Lord of our total life.

And yet, sad to say, how many Christians, & I hope you aren't one of them, have gotten the idea that when **John 17:3** says to have eternal life we must know God & Jesus whom He sent.-

- they have gotten the idea that all it means is to have a correct creed, or a right knowledge of Bible & its doctrines, or a sound system of conservative theology.
- that this then is eternal life or the way to be saved & to live eternally.

But that's not what **Scriptures** mean when it states we must know Jesus.

- for the word “know” in our text means an intimate, personal, loving, living, experiential knowledge.
- a knowledge that involves our all: our entire life--our head: our intellect & our will; our heart: our feelings & emotions; our hands: all our actions.

In other words, to know Jesus is to know Him as a real, live person.

- it is to be in a living, loving relationship with Him, as a real, live being in our lives.
 - as Someone we continually communicate & commune with in our daily living.
- that we know & experience Him directly & personally with all our heads & hearts & hands.

To be sure, to do that we need to 1st know Jesus through what is taught about Him in **Bible**.

- we've got to know & believe, of course, all the facts & truths about His being & life & work.
- but we must not ever stop there, thinking that's all we need to know to be saved & a follower of Christ.

Instead we must go beyond a mere intellectual acceptance of what **Bible** teaches about Jesus.

- we must personally & intimately apply these truths to our hearts & lives.
 - we must, so that these historical facts about Jesus are changed into a personal experience of a constant heart-to-heart fellowship with Him in all our daily living.
- (OVER)
- that's what Scriptures mean here in Phil.3 when it says we must know Jesus.
 - that we must love Him so that we are completely wrapped up in Him.
 - & so He is then all the world to you & me personally & practically.

But to have such a knowledge of Jesus we must also have a growing awareness & fellowship with Him.

- you see, Paul isn't desiring to know Someone he hasn't known yet.
 - he had met Jesus years before & had known Him in a saving union & life with a transforming experience since his conversion.
 - he was a spiritually mature, born-again, Christian believer.
- yet he realizes he must not to stop with his conversion—vivid & thrilling as it was, for he knew that was only the beginning of being a follower of Christ—the starting point, not the goal.
 - he realizes becoming a Christian in Christ only made him see how much more there was to discover & experience.
 - so he was determined to strive, as his life's ambition & aim, to know Jesus better & better.

In other words, being converted & born again are never a one-time event as if that's all there is to it.

- becoming a Christian is only the starting point, not the goal, so that believing & belonging to Jesus can never be anything static & final.
- nor may we ever think repenting once of our sins & putting our faith in Christ, believing Bible, going to Church, praying & doing few a good deeds is to fully know Him.
 - so we can stop there & rest & just sit back until He returns to take us to heaven.
- such beliefs & doings only lead to spiritual decline & danger--to a static, joyless Christianity & not being a real Christian at all!

Instead, to be true, happy Christian, we must be like **Paul** & have the earnest desire to know Jesus

- & notice: the sentence doesn't end there, for it must always be: "That I may know Him, and..."

- it must be our constant, controlling, & complete desire & determination to increasingly comprehend & experience Jesus & His being & work.
- it must be our joy to more & more discover Him in whom “are all the treasures of wisdom & knowledge,” Col.3 says--all the limitless gifts of salvation.
 - & desire a better & richer & deeper experience of salvation’s magnificent breadth & width, heights & depths every day of our life, & for all eternity too.

And so our hearts & lives must be totally mastered by 1 thought: that we may know Jesus.

- now surely that can't be ever done with hurried snatches of 2-3 minutes praying & Bible reading.
- or being once or twice in Church on Sunday.

But to really know Him & be mastered by that one thought,--

- that can only be done by daily withdrawing into Lord's presence & lingering there.
- & only by constantly walking & talking with Him in all we think & say do.

Th’fore, **Christians**, we must desire to develop a personal know ledge & experience of Christ with a constant, consuming communion with Him.

- we must explore & discover & enjoy the exhaustless Christ & the boundless treasures of wisdom & salvation & life only found in Him.
- we must do that right now as a personal experience here on earth.
- & then it will continue on into eternity where it will take forever to know & experience Jesus as Lord & Savior in an even bigger & better & lovelier context.
 - so even our desire for heaven must center only & always on the fact we may know Him better.

But now, how can we learn to really know & experience Christ in a greater & growing way, now & forever?

- well, 1st of all, we must be in the Word.
- for it’s only in Scriptures where we really do see Him as truly He is.
 - it’s only there that the true facts of His being & work recorded & revealed.

So then, to possess an ever increasing, personal & deep knowledge of Jesus we must have an intelligent & intimate familiarity with **Bible**.

- we must read & study it devotionally & exegetically.
- & let **Bible** dwell in our hearts & direct all our living.

2nd, to rightly know & experience Jesus we must also make & take time to regularly & unhurriedly pray.

- we must daily talk with Him, & be constantly in touch with Him & linger in His presence even when it may seem unrewarding & discouraging.
- we must then discipline ourselves to avoid erratic, irregular, hurried, excited, emergency praying.

- for, “if we will only keep on believing in Jesus’ real presence & loving faithfulness, this is what will eventually happen: there will come a moment, a quiet but a strangely thrilling moment, when quite suddenly, though silently, we shall know with inward certainty that we are really through to God!--that all heaven is open above us!--that prayer is real!— that we are really at feet of our Lord!”

3rd, to know Jesus greater as our loving, personal Savior & Friend & Lord, we must also be regularly at worship & properly use the sacraments.

- be here with His people to pray & sing His praises & hear His word.
- what better way is to really get to know Him.

4th, to get to know Lord better we must practice our knowing Him by being like Him.

- by showing kindness & forgiveness to all.
- by using our time & talents & treasures to witness for Christ.
 - to extend & build His Church & Kingdom everywhere in the world.
- & by learning & striving more & more to be thankful in all things & to praise our God with our all.

CONCLUSION

Th’fore, to be Jesus’ followers, the delight & the desire of our hearts & the determination of our lives must be: **that I may know Him.**

- that I may experience & enjoy Him more & more in a deeper, richer, fuller fellowship in all my daily living at home, in the office & school, on the street—when I rest & relax & play.

O may God give us all the grace to recommit ourselves today to that one desire & aim: **to really know Jesus.**

- to make Him real in our hearts & lives.
- & to do that by praying more, studying Bible more, to worship more, & to live for Him more.

Then, & only then, will we discover the best treasures of all: that we are in Him.

- & then only will we experience the real joy of living eternally with God!

Tonight we will continue & conclude our study of **Phil.3:10,11.**

- & see that to know Jesus is to also know his power.

AMEN