

PHILIPPIANS

Message Seven

Taking Christ as Our Goal

(1)

**Counting All Things to Be Loss on account of
the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ**

Scripture Reading: Phil. 3:4-14

**I. Chapter three of Philipians shows us that Christ
must be our goal and our aim—vv. 12-14:**

- A. For Christ to be the goal means that He is the highest enjoyment.
- B. Our goal is the all-inclusive Christ as the prize to be awarded to us; when we reach the goal, the goal will immediately become the prize—v. 14.
- C. Paul's pursuit was toward one goal, one aim—Christ; he took Christ as his goal, pursuing to obtain the prize to which God in Christ Jesus had called him upward.
- D. Since our goal is to gain Christ, we should forsake all other things and pursue nothing but Christ—vv. 7-8, 12-14.

**II. Saul of Tarsus had a vision of the Lord Jesus; this
vision gave him the excellency of the knowledge of
Christ—Acts 9:1-5; 22:6-11; 26:13-16; Gal. 1:15a, 16a;
Phil. 3:8:**

- A. It is important for us to realize that in Philipians 3:8 Paul does not speak directly of the excellency of Christ but speaks of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ:
 - 1. This knowledge is not the knowledge that belongs to Christ, the knowledge that Christ Himself has; it is our subjective knowing of Christ.
 - 2. In verse 8 *knowledge* actually means a revelation, a vision, concerning Christ and His excellence.
- B. The excellency of the knowledge of Christ is derived from the excellency of His person—Matt. 17:5; Col. 1:13:
 - 1. The entire Bible is a revelation of the wonderful person of Christ; how excellent and inexhaustible He is!

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2. When Christ was revealed to Paul, he saw that the excellency, the super-eminence, the supreme preciousness, the surpassing worth, of Christ far exceeded the excellency of the law—Gal. 1:15a, 16a.
 3. The excellency of the knowledge of Christ is the excellency of Christ realized by us.
 4. If we lack the knowledge of Christ's excellency, His excellency will not mean anything to us.
 5. Christ is unlimited; we need to have the excellency of the knowledge of the unlimited Christ—Col. 1:12, 15-19; 2:2-3, 9, 16-17; 3:10.
 6. We need to have a vision of the preciousness of Christ—1 Pet. 2:4, 7.
- C. The excellency of the knowledge of Christ comes by revelation—Matt. 16:17:
1. Without the revelation concerning Christ, we would not know Christ; revelation is for knowing—11:27; Gal. 1:15a, 16a.
 2. We need to see a vision and receive a revelation of the excellency of Christ; if we have a revelation of Christ's excellency, we shall automatically have the excellency of the knowledge of Christ.
- D. In order to experience Christ, we first need to have the excellency of the knowledge of Christ—Phil. 3:7-10:
1. To know Christ is crucial to our experience of Him; we cannot experience Him without knowing Him—Gal. 1:15a, 16a; 2:20; 4:19.
 2. Our experience of Christ cannot surpass the excellency of our knowledge of Christ—Eph. 1:17-21; 3:14-19:
 - a. The excellency of the knowledge of Christ always exceeds our experience of Christ.
 - b. There has never been a believer whose experience of Christ surpassed his knowledge of Christ.
 - c. If we do not have a higher knowledge of Christ, we cannot have a higher experience of Christ.

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III. On account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, Paul counted all things to be loss, and he suffered the loss of all things, counting them as refuse that he might gain Christ—Phil. 3:7-8:

- A. Paul's eyes were opened to see the excellency of the knowledge of the wonderful, all-inclusive Christ; on account of this excellency, he counted as loss all things, whether they related to religious gain or natural gain:
 - 1. All things which were once gains to Paul hindered him and held him back from participating in Christ and enjoying Him:
 - a. In verse 7 *what things* refers to the religious things, the things in Judaism; Paul dropped all those religious things for Christ—vv. 4-6.
 - b. In verse 8 *all things* indicates that Paul dropped not only religious things but all things on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus; thus, to Paul, the loss of all things was the loss not only of his Jewish status but of everything.
 - 2. Paul placed great value upon the excellency of the knowledge of his dear Lord Jesus Christ—vv. 7-8.
 - 3. For the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, which he treasured, Paul counted everything as refuse, dregs, rubbish, filth, that which is thrown to the dogs—v. 8.
- B. The way for us to experience Christ and enjoy Christ is to deny everything we have and are—vv. 4-6, 13b:
 - 1. The greatest obstacle to enjoying Christ is our natural heritage:
 - a. Nothing natural should be allowed to replace Christ.
 - b. Any naturally good thing will frustrate us from the enjoyment of Christ—1 Cor. 2:14.
 - 2. The way to enjoy Christ is to reject everything that we are by nature; everything must go, and only Christ must remain—1:26-30; 2:1-2.

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3. If we have more of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, we will drop everything religious and everything natural on account of Him and on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Him—Phil. 3:7-8.