



Sunday School- January 20, 2013

GAIN AND LOSS

Unifying Topic: GAINING IN JESUS CHRIST

Lesson Text

I. Loss For The Sake Of Christ (Philippians 3:7-9)

II. Knowing Christ (Philippians 3:10-11)

The Main Thought: But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. (Philippians 3:7), KJV).

Unifying Principle: The self-worth of many people resides in the things they have accomplished in life. What is the true value of our lives when stripped of our achievement? Paul believed that none of the achievements of this life are worth anything when compared to the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus

Lesson Aim: To help students see how Paul placed far greater value on knowing Christ than on any accomplishment or distinction in his own life.

Life Aim: To help students imagine what this would look like in their own lives and to help them examine how they have or have not put Christ ahead of everything else.

3:7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

3:8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,

3:9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

3:10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

3:11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

HISTORY:

Philippians 2:1-4 Paul continues with the call for unity, providing reasons why we should desire unity, the nature of our unity, and attitudes necessary to maintain unity

Philippians 2:5-11 Paul gives the perfect example of the mind which Christians should possess, which was in verses 3-4. ¹*"You should have the same attitude as that of Christ Jesus. He always had the nature of God. But He did not think that He should hold on to His rights and honour as God. Instead He made Himself have no reputation. And He became a servant. He came in the form of a man. As a man He was humble. He obeyed God. So He was prepared to die – even to die on a cross. For this reason God raised Him up to the highest place. God has given Him the name that is higher than any other name. So in honour of the name of Jesus, every being in heaven, on earth and beneath the earth shall kneel. And all will declare that Jesus Christ is Lord. In this way, honour will come to God the Father"* (The EasyEnglish Bible Version).

Philippians 2:12-18 ²He continues with another exhortation to "shine as lights in the world" as they work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. Doing all things without complaining and arguing, while holding fast the word of life, they will prove themselves to be children of God in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. This will also prove to Paul that his labors have not been in vain, and any persecution he endures is viewed as a sacrifice in the service of their faith and a cause for mutual rejoicing.

Philippians 2:19-30 He then writes of his plans pertaining to Timothy and Epaphroditus. He will send Timothy shortly that he might know of their condition. But Epaphroditus is coming at once in order to set their hearts at ease about Epaphroditus' brush with death due to a recent illness.

PAUL WARNS THEM AGAINST FALSE TEACHERS:

3:1 *"Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe."* At the beginning of Chapter 3, Paul says, "Finally." This is not the close of the letter but the beginning of Paul's last main teaching topic, warning the Philippians against false teachers. Paul explains that the believer must press on for Christ, first guarding themselves by:

1. rejoicing in the Lord (v1).

¹ <http://www.easyenglish.info/bible-commentary/philippians-lbw.htm>

² http://executableoutlines.com/phil/phil_02.htm

2. heeding to what is written (in the scripture) (v1).
3. watching out for false teachers (v2).
4. Knowing that you are the true (spiritual) circumcision (v3).

3:1a IN ORDER TO REJOICE, KNOW TO:

1. Guard yourself by rejoicing in the Lord. As the believer walks through life, two things are always confronting him: circumstances and false teaching. No matter where he goes, the trials of life, both minor and major, confront him.
 - enticing temptations
 - lust of the eyes
 - lust of the flesh
 - greed
 - selfishness
 - arguments
 - divisions
 - Inhuman behavior
 - criminal acts
 - death
 - accidents
 - disease

The list could go on and on. False teachings of this life also confront him. The point is this: If the believer is to press on in his Christian life, he must walk about rejoicing in the Lord. The great thing about rejoicing is that it places and keeps a person in the presence of Christ, knowing what **He** has done. Our mind cannot be in two places at once. If it is upon the Lord and His glorious salvation, then it cannot be upon the trials and false teachings of this world.

No matter what confronts the believer—no matter how terrible the trial—he knows that nothing can separate him from the Lord and His love—that he shall never die, but rather live eternally. Therefore, he knows that whatever comes upon him, it can never conquer and overcome him. Christ will give him supernatural power and strength to overcome it. And if he is called upon to lay down his body and move on to heaven, he knows that he shall never taste or experience death; he knows that Jesus Christ is going to escort him right on into God's presence immediately—quicker than the eye can blink—about $\frac{11}{100}$ of a second. The believer is forever secure in the keeping power of the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, he walks rejoicing in the Lord: he rejoices no matter what confronts him. Real joy is only found in fellowship with God.

3:1b AS PAUL KEEPS WRITING, KNOW TO:

2. Guard yourself by heeding to what is written, that is, in the scriptures. Paul says that he is writing some things that he had apparently written before. Therefore, it must be repeated and the church must do what is being said. What scriptures says, was written to instruct us, and help us in pressing on for Christ. No person can press on apart from heeding the scriptures. If he fails to study and obey the scripture, he will cave in either to the trials of life or to false teaching. Only as we obey the scripture—the commandments of the Lord—can we show our love and loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ.

AS THE WORD KEEPS YOU SAFE, SO DOES A WARNING:

3:2 "Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision."

3. Guard yourself by watching out for false teachers. Paul was always facing false teachers who were savage in their attacks upon him. He mentions three groups of false teachers in this verse.
 1. Beware of false teachers who act like "dogs" (*kunas*). The word "dogs" was the lowest title possible to convey contempt and ridicule. They were the scavengers and snarlers who could be very vicious and dangerous. They were the false teachers who boasted in their religion, trusted in human attainment rather than divine atonement, trusted in the works of man rather than the grace of God. They perverted the gospel and substituted something else for the blood of Christ. These false teachers dogged Paul's footsteps snapping and snarling, biting and barking.
 2. Beware of the false teachers who are evil workers.
 - a. This refers to those who hold to and teach high standards of righteousness, morality, and religion being absolutely sure that they are righteous and good—at least good enough to be acceptable to God. There is just no way God would ever reject them—so they think.
 - b. They were mischief-makers who disturbed both the faith and the peace of believers. They were wolves in sheep's clothing, deceiving, deluding, and destroying the flock.

The point is this: There are those who are always opposing the Lord Jesus Christ and His salvation by grace alone. They do not accept that He is God's Son—that He is the Lord of man's life; the Lord who is to be given all. Therefore, they accept Christ's teaching, but ignore or deny salvation by His blood. They stand opposed to the gospel of salvation by His grace alone. They go about establishing their own way to God, doing whatever good they feel is needed to make themselves acceptable to Him. The result is false teaching—a way to God that stands against the Lord Jesus Christ and His way. Such false teachers are evil workers—stand opposing to the truth.

3. Beware of false teachers who are of the concision. "*Concision*" refers to mutilation (*Gr katatomē*) in contrast to circumcision (*Gr peritomē*).³Circumcision had now lost its spiritual significance, and was now become to those who rested on it as any ground of justification, a senseless mutilation. Legalists have only "*concision*," that is, the cutting off of the flesh. What God required was a "*circumcision*" of the heart.

³ <http://bible.cc/philippians/3-2.htm>

Note: These Judaizers were men who mixed ritual and law with the gospel of Christ. Paul's argument was that this teaching was the very opposite of the true gospel. A man is not saved by fleshly signs nor by rituals, or by his own ability to keep the law and regulations and rules. However, these men still hung on to their Judaistic religion, in particular to the rite of circumcision and to the Law of Moses. They believed a man became a Christian...

- by first becoming a Jew—with all its rituals and ceremonies and be circumcised...
- then the man could accept Christ as his Savior.

AS WE WORSHIP:

3:3 *"For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."*

4. Guard yourself by knowing that you are the true circumcision. Note believers are called "*the circumcision*." What does Paul mean?

1. Believers are those who worship God as He really wishes to be worshipped: in the spirit; that is, they have circumcised or cut away the flesh as the means by which they worship God. Most people worship God...
 - by attending church services
 - by being circumcised or baptized or undergoing some other ritual
 - by praying
 - by keeping the rituals and ceremonies of a church
 - by making occasional gifts to needy causes
 - by joining a church
 - by thinking of God occasionally
 - by observing special days

But note a critical point: As good as all of these are, they are not the basis of true worship. They are things that we do because we worship; they are the result and activities of worship. They are not the basis or spirit of worship. True, they may help us focus upon God and stir us to worship Him, but as stated, they are not the basis and spirit of worship. True worship has to be of the heart and spirit. Why? Because a man can attend church, keep all the rituals and ceremonies, and still be living in the depths of sin. But if a man's spirit is right with God, he worships God with a clean and pure heart, free from all sin and defilement. The truly circumcised person is the person who worships God in spirit.

2. Believers are those who rejoice as God really wants us to rejoice: in Christ Jesus. How can we boast and rejoice in ritual and ceremony and religion, when the Source—the Author and Finisher—of our faith, is Christ Jesus? Therefore, the true circumcision, the true believer does not boast in anything physical or material—not in ritual or ceremonial or religion. The true circumcision rejoices and boasts in Him who has given us Salvation and access to God, even in Christ Jesus our Lord.
3. Believers are those who have no confidence in the flesh. The flesh ages, deteriorates, and corrupts. And no matter what the flesh has done and accomplished in this physical world, it takes all its ability of works to the grave with it. The flesh dies and all that concerns the flesh dies with it. Therefore, the true circumcision, the true believer, has no confidence and puts no stock in the flesh. He has confidence only in Jesus Christ.

NOTE: Before Christ, circumcision was the physical sign that a man was a follower of the true God. It was the sign that a man believed the promises that God had made to Abraham and Israel. God never intended circumcision to have any value other than being a sign. It was not to bring righteousness to any man—not even to Abraham. It was given only as a sign—a sign of the faith that a man already had in God's promises.

PAUL'S ADVANTAGES:

3:4 Paul says, *"Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any man thinks he can trust in the works and attainments of his flesh, I more."* In other words, *'I can trust and boast in the goodness and morality and works of the flesh as much as any man who has ever lived'*. Paul had achieved the height of self-righteousness. He ranks among the greatest of men who have attempted to work their way into God's presence. He did all the good he could to secure God's approval. Few, if any men, have ever attained what Paul did by human effort. Yet, it was all to no avail. His goodness and his attainments did not make him acceptable to God. And there is one primary reason: he could not make himself perfect. Paul presented his pedigree and claims to have more ground for boasting than anyone else, however, it falls short of God's holy standards, no matter how impressive. Paul lists seven privileges and achievements which show the total inadequacy of man to save himself, and he divides the list under "*Privileges of Birth...*"

Verse 3:5 begins the advantages from his family: *"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;"*

1. ⁴*"Circumcision the eighth day":* Paul was saying that he had the right birth. So his Jewish parents obeyed the command that God gave to Abraham (Genesis 17:12). He was a true child of Abraham. **It cannot save you:**

⁴ <http://www.easyenglish.info/bible-commentary/philippians-lbw.htm>

Paul was saying that goodness and righteousness are not found in birth or in religious rituals and ceremonies. Yet, how many people think they are acceptable to God because they...

- have godly parents? • have godly grandparents? • have kept religious rituals and ceremonies?
- have a godly spouse? • have godly friends? (and they're all praying for you)

How many expect the godliness of others to just rub off on them –to count them and make them acceptable?

2. **"Of the stock of Israel":** Paul is saying that he had the right national heritage and a very special relationship with God. Israel was the name that God gave to Jacob (Genesis 32:28). When a Jew wished to stress his special relationship to God, he called himself an Israelite; that is, he was of the nation and descent of Israel which had a very special relationship with God and who had received a very special name from God. **It cannot save you:** Paul was saying that goodness and righteousness are not found in ancestors or in social superiority. Yet, how many think that being born in a Christian nation and surrounded by Christian principles carry some merit with God?
3. **"Of the tribe of Benjamin":** Benjamin was the child of Rachel whom Jacob loved; the only son of Jacob that was born in the promised country (Genesis 35:16-18). And because Benjamin was considered the aristocratic tribe and of the tribe's courageous acts throughout Israel's history (Judg.5:14; Hos.5:8), it was a shoe-in. Paul was saying that he was of the highest aristocracy of the most noble of the most respectable persons of Israel. **It cannot save you:** Paul was saying that goodness and righteousness are not found in social or religious status. Yet, how many feel they are more acceptable to God because they belong to...
 - an upper class? • a more elite church? • a more dynamic church? • a more active ministry?

If **"Privileges of Birth"** are not impressive enough, then **"Achievements by Self-Effort."** Verse 5b-6 begins achievements by self-effort:

4. **"An Hebrew of the Hebrews":** Paul claimed to have the right language and the right customs. He had deliberately kept the Hebrew tongue and refused to forget it. In his day, this was extremely difficult, for the Jews were literally scattered across the world and the world had one common language, Greek. Paul had gone to Jerusalem in order to learn from Gamaliel, a famous Jewish teacher (Acts 22:3). Now Paul was well versed and speaking Hebrew, the Jewish language. **It cannot save you:** Paul was saying that goodness and righteousness are not found in religious faithfulness, nor in a spiritual language, nor in the ability to know and speak in religious terms. Yet, how many think that they are acceptable to God because they...
 - do good and are faithful in being good? • are faithful in talking about and sharing spiritual things?
 - are faithful in studying their religion, the Bible, and the great doctrines of the faith?
 - know and use religious terms and languages?
5. **"A Pharisee":** Paul claimed to have had the right religion; to have been a Pharisee. He had chosen to be a Pharisee like his parents (Acts 23:6). Pharisees were the strictest of Jews; so strict that their very name meant **"The Separated Ones."** He devoted his life to the most **"separated"** and demanding religion ever known to man. He achieved **"separation"**, exacting separation from other men. **It cannot save you:** Paul was saying that goodness and righteousness are not found in religion, nor even in being a follower of the true religion. Yet, how many feel the very opposite?

3:6 **"Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless."**

6. **"Concerning Zeal":** Paul had zealously stood and fought for his religion. He sought to wipe out any cause that differed from his (Acts 22:2-21; 26:4-33; 1Corth.15:8-10; Gal.1:13). He was as zealous as a [person could be in trying to reach converts for his religion and in keeping his religion as pure as he could, but for the wrong reasons **It cannot save you:** Paul was saying that goodness and righteousness are not found in religious commitments or zeal that are misguided. Few have ever been committed to their religion like Paul; few have ever been as faithful to the worship services, ordinances, rituals, and ceremonies of his religion like Paul.
7. **"Blameless":** Paul claimed he had sought to keep the law and he had kept it completely and fully—being blameless. This does not mean that Paul was sinless. It meant that when Paul sinned, he obeyed the law and took his sacrifice to the temple. He obeyed all the commandments, rituals, and ceremonies just like scripture said. He followed all the laws and instructions of the scripture. He was blameless—ritually and ceremonially—in the righteousness of the law. **It cannot save you:** Paul was saying that goodness and righteousness are not found in keeping all the rituals and ceremonies of religion. They are not even found in keeping all the commandments of the scripture, because you can't!

LESSON:

Philippians 3:7-9 Loss For The Sake Of Christ

3:7 Paul says, **"But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ."** "Gain" means asset, profit, anything that

would be an advantage. Paul had (in the past) natural pride in his Jewish attainment, but all these assets did not save him, justify him, give him peace, nor bring him into fellowship with God. As Paul focused on knowing Christ...

1. **Paul had a past experience with Christ:** and he counted his own righteousness as loss. Paul was referring to his conversion experience. There was a time when he had given up his own self-righteousness and works, his own attempts to become perfect—he could not gain righteousness—he could not make himself perfectly acceptable to God.
 - a. **Note:** that this is a definite time when Paul made a definite decision—a decision that he was unable to secure righteousness and perfection himself. He had to trust the love of God.
 - b. **Note:** that this did not mean that Paul quit trying to live for God. On the contrary, it meant that Paul tried more diligently than ever to live for God. When God saw Paul's total commitment to Christ, God knew that Paul's faith was genuine.

3:8 *"Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,"* This reminds you of Jim Elliot's words: "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." This is what Paul experienced.

2. **Paul had a continuous experience with Christ:** he constantly counted all things as loss and as waste in order to win Christ. The word "*count*" is in the present tense; it is continuous action. When a person has made the decision to seek after Christ, he is "*to continue*" to seek after the knowledge of Christ—to learn all he can about the righteousness and perfection of Jesus Christ.
 - It is not a matter of making a decision to follow Christ, and then turning and walking on as a person has always walked—doing his own thing and fulfilling the desires of the flesh and the mind.
 - It is making a decision to follow Christ and continuing to seek after the knowledge of Him—continuing to seek to know him more and more.
 - a. **Note:** that the knowledge of Christ is said to be excellent. The knowledge of Christ is the most excellent way in all the world. No other knowledge can give a person righteousness and perfection or make a person acceptable to God and give him the right to live eternally.
 - b. **Note:** what Paul says: "*I have suffered the loss of all things.*" He now began to receive the persecution he had once dealt out to others. The words "have suffered" mean to forfeit and to cast away. The phrase "*all things*" includes not only the religious position Paul had attained, but the social, financial, intellectual and political gains he had made as well.
 - c. **Note:** his value system has been turned around in that he would even throw away these worldly glories as "rubbish" (really "*dung*"). All he lost was like worthless rubbish (dung) compared to the riches found in Christ.

3:9 *"And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:"*

3. **Paul sought a future experience with Christ:** he sought to be found in Christ. Paul was looking ahead either to death or to the return of Christ and wanting to be found in Him. One cannot be truly in Christ while having their own righteousness because they contradict each other. "*Found in Him*" means being spiritually united to Christ and therefore found not guilty before God as divine judge. He would be completely united with Christ in heaven. ⁵Paul states that the righteousness he possessed before true salvation was his own righteousness and a person's own righteousness cannot save them. The law only showed us that we are unable to keep the law and that we are unable to be obedient to God.
 - a. **Note:** a right relationship with God did not come by obeying the Law of Moses. This show us two things:
 - i. Righteousness of the law: trusting in the ceremonies of the Law of Moses for salvation.
 - ii. Righteousness which is through the faith of Christ: obeying the ordinances of the gospel of Christ and being saved by "*faith alone*." Paul received the righteousness of Christ as a free gift.
 - b. **Note:** ⁶Paul wants to live in the righteousness which is of God and comes to the true believer by the faith of Christ and not faith in Christ. The faith of Christ is what saves us and then we are able to have faith in Christ. That faith is the faith which Christ is both the author and the finisher which we saw in Philippians 1:6. When we are clothed in the righteousness of Christ, it is eternal and that righteousness never fades or gives way. The righteousness of the law was only temporary and needed to be renewed consistently through sacrifices and ceremonies. The righteousness of God is Christ Himself. It does not refer to a behavior or works or deeds of righteousness; no matter how

⁵ http://www.scionofzion.com/philippians_3_6_10.htm

⁶ http://www.scionofzion.com/philippians_3_6_10.htm

good the works or deeds may be.

Philippians 3:10-11 Knowing Christ

3:10 *"That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;"*— There is a goal, an aim that Paul was getting to; that we all may need to get to.

4. Paul sought a **victorious experience with Christ**: he sought to know Christ—not to speculate about Him, but to know Him; to know His glorious power over the world and all that is in the world.

a. To know Christ is to ***know the power of His resurrection***. This refers to three great things:

- i. The power to raise Christ shows that God has the power to conquer all the trials and temptations of life. When God exercised this power, He conquered the most powerful trial that faces man—death. And in conquering death, God demonstrated that He has the power to conquer any trial or temptation of man, no matter what it is.
- ii. The resurrection of Jesus Christ shows that God has the power to give man a new life, and the power to live a new life before Him. After Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, man was not living his old life—the life he had before Christ's death. He now lives before God in newness of life, seated with God Almighty, and placed in his rightful place!
- iii. The power to raise Christ from the dead shows that God has the power to raise men from the dead. The believer shall experience the great resurrection power of God and be resurrected from the dead.

The point of God's power is clear: Christ can conquer death, can live in us, and can raise us from the dead.

b. To know Christ is to ***know the fellowship of His sufferings***. Most of us are willing to share in the blessings of Christ but we want nothing to do with the sufferings of Christ. We shrink from the ridicule, questioning, and abuse He had to bear. Paul wanted to share in *the purpose for which Christ was suffering*. Why did Christ suffer? He suffered because He proclaimed the righteousness of God—because He proclaimed the way men could become acceptable to God and live forever. Paul was saying that he wanted to suffer right along with Christ, suffer for the same cause—suffer for proclaiming the righteousness and salvation of God.

Note one other thing: God draws close to the believer when he suffers for the cause of Christ. In fact, God's presence is so near and dear it is called "*the spirit of glory and of God*" which rest upon the suffering believer.

c. To know Christ is to ***be made conformable to His death***. Jesus Christ subjected Himself totally to God. He put his own flesh and desires to death; He did only what God willed and desired. Even when He died, His flesh did not desire to die, but nevertheless... Paul sought to be conformed to the death of Christ. He sought to subject Himself totally to God—to put His flesh and desires to death and to do only the will and desire of God.

3:11 *"If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead."*

5. Paul sought an **eternal experience with Christ**: he sought to be resurrected from the dead. The words "*if by any means*" are not expressing doubt and uncertainty. Paul was not questioning the resurrection nor if he would be resurrected. Paul was simply saying what he had already stated (v.7-11). He uses all he is and has—all the means at his disposal—for this one great purpose: to attain to the resurrection from the dead. Paul knew that he might die soon, but he had faith that he would be raised to life again. His death would not terrorize him. This was an opportunity for a richer and fuller life with Christ. Paul focused on knowing Christ in every way.

SUMMARY:

⁷All such things were considered rubbish in relation to the excellence of knowing Christ Jesus (7-8). Therefore Paul had as his goal to be found in Christ, having that righteousness which is by faith in Jesus, knowing Him and the power of His resurrection, and even sharing in His sufferings, that he might by any means attain to the resurrection from the dead (9-11).

APPLICATION:

Paul's goal was to know Christ. He place great value on know Christ—everything he had. What would you give up to gain and know Christ?

⁷ http://executableoutlines.com/phil/phil_03.htm