

## Intro - Open to Philippians 3:7-11

A few years ago, our pastor's son was diagnosed with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy. As many of you know this is a muscular degenerative disease where your muscles, which were once healthy, degrade to where you lose muscle mass, body function and its fatal in your 30s. Isaiah, at 3 years old was walking and running. Now he is slowly losing his ability to walk and will one day not be able to. His body is dying at a rate faster than most, but in Christ, he has hope. A resurrected body. In our text tonight, we will consider the hope Paul had for resurrection and how we should see what we have on earth, in our possession and in our body in comparison.

### **All we lose and experience is for our gain in resurrection and God's glory.**

The context of any text is important but since I want to get to verse 10 and 11 and how it connects to the topic of suffering, I don't want to backtrack too far. So here is the brief summary of verses 2-6. Paul was a Jew, so as he came to Christ, he rejected Jewish religion. He now warns Christians to "beware of the dogs" the Jewish Christians who were trying to convince Christians they must become Jews first, and obey all the laws of the Old Testament. This is foolish to Paul and he shows it by naming all his Jewish claims to fame. He says he inherited and acted to earn his own righteousness. He was in the right family and did the right actions to be considered the most righteous but... Christ changed him.

### **One – Gain counted as Loss**

[Read Philippians 3:7-8a](#)

Paul had a lot to lose. All of his previous life amounted to privileges that he considered of the greatest value. But Christ showed him that all he claimed of Gain, those things, his family, his inheritance, his self-righteous actions are now in the loss column because he has gained Christ.

If you face a big decision you may be a pro and cons list maker. You consider the new job and you weigh in your current vacation days you will sacrifice, but consider the pay raise. Or you will get that sign-on bonus which can help you pay down debt but you have to move and take on debt for a new house. Not to mention changing churches and moving away from family. Very rarely do we face a decision where everything is in one column. If that was the case you wouldn't have even busted out the chart.

But when we experience salvation in Christ, when he gives us eyes to see the beauty of the cross and the wonderful salvation, we move everything in our former life to the loss column and Christ becomes the sole occupier of the gain.

For you this evening, most of you are Christians. You have at one time had to put away the things of the flesh, the ways of your old life, and the things you thought were important. No matter if you were born poor or rich, if you had all the advantages or you had few. Before Christ, you viewed value like the world. You saw being rich as an advantage, but now you see how it can leave you like the rich young ruler, far from Christ and sulking away because of your love for your wealth. You saw the car that you wanted, but now you see the car as a privilege that the Lord will give or he won't. It is not status you are after; it is Christ.

It is not a merely intellectual knowledge of Christ. "Knowing Christ Jesus my Lord" is an intimacy in relationship. It's cliché to say that Christianity is not a religion, but it is a relationship. But do not strip out the truth there if cliches sound tired. Paul speaks of Christ Jesus THE Lord many times, it's the article for "the" that is used most, but here Paul uses the possessive "my" indicating his relationship. His intimacy to not know facts but to truly know him deep down.

That is what it means to have what you once considered as gain, to now be considered as loss. But the opposite is true as well.

### **Two – Loss Counted as Gain**

[Read Philippians 3:8b-9](#)

Here Paul says that he suffered the loss, not just of "those things" which were his Jewish credentials and privileges, but suffered the loss of "all things", counting them as rubbish, dung, lower than trash.

Here is what I want us to begin to see, is that when we come to Christ, and truly know Him. We see his surpassing value that would tip any scale. A value so immense it would make any man desire him if he has spiritual eyes to see. It drowns out not just the good, but I think by expanding here, Paul extends it to the bad as well. Our blessings and privileges along with our suffering, our losses, and our tragedies are exchanged for "the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith".

Commonly when we read these verses, we are inclined to take the good things, the worthy things and think we must see them as unvaluable, negative value in comparison to Christ. This is right. It is true. It is a great reversal to count what once was gain as loss.

But what I want to introduce tonight is that if you will truly put all things, the good and the bad in the loss the category, they are used for your gain. Christ's value and his righteousness cannot be diminished nor added to by our suffering.

Pity is a difficult concept to place in our culture today. There are those who are worthy of pity because of what they suffer. Their house burns down, pity is the care and hopefully the sacrificial giving we make out of pity for them. But in some cases the prideful will not accept pity. For some of us, our pride keeps us from seeing our helpless condition and accept help. I don't want your pity, is the phrase that comes to mind.

When we suffer, will we consider that God will have pity on us and reverse our fortune? Could we see that because we have lost so much, that by trusting in him, he will use his power to redeem what was lost?

DA Carson tells a story of an Anglican Bishop who was an evangelist and church planted in three African nations. When Carson met him later in life his Parkinsons disease was so advanced that he could no longer talk. He could only write, with great effort and barely understandable letters. He says as he prompted him with mostly yes and no questions he sense a man of unshaken faith. Carson asked "After decades of immensely productive activity, how was he dealing with his own suffering, with the temptation to feel he was now useless and fruitless?" In other words, how do you see value, stay hopeful in all that you have lost? He wrote out with much effort "There is no future in frustration".

When we are tempted to look at all we have lost. Whether it was fleshly gain, God's discipline in stripping something from us, or a trial and trouble which seems completely without purpose, we must see that it is within God's power and purpose to take all we have lost and turn it to gain.

This is where Paul will give a knockout blow to self-righteousness and any gain he would have. Let's see what gain he has made.

## Three – Resurrection Hope

Read Philippians 3:10-11

What we gain with knowing Christ, not in facts, but in spiritual intimacy, in relational closeness is power, fellowship, and resurrection.

The power of his resurrection, his power over life and death is married in this verse to "the fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed to His death". Resurrection power is as important to life in Christ as being with Christ in suffering. To be persecuted, to even die is to be like Christ.

Now I am about to go all over Philippians so keep up with me. Conformed to his death, is the death Jesus humbled himself in 2:8, humbled himself in the incarnation to the point of death. Which is connected even further back to Paul's axiom of life in Chapter 1 verse 21, "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain." The often-quoted Philippians 4:13 "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me" is coming up. It is preceded by verse 12, all about Paul's contentment to live in poverty or prosperity. So verse 13 is not based in wishful thinking that God can give us all the desires of our heart, but that he is so powerful, that if we have access to resurrection power, what can God not provide for us? Therefore, we can have full contentment with whatever comes our way. The God of resurrection power is able.

He will in chapter 3 verse 21, "transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the (resurrection) power that He has even to subject *ALL THINGS* to Himself." There it is again, all things. God, through the power of resurrection, even being in suffering with Christ, is subjecting all things, good and bad, right and wrong, blessing and suffering, is subjecting all of it when he transforms our earthly humble state of our body. Whether the body has turned to dust, become decrepit with old age, or has deformity of mind or body, it will be transformed like Christ's body. It will be perfect in every way.

We can look forward with resolute hope, that what Christ has gained, we will gain. Why? Because we will lose like Christ has lost. We are fellowshipping in his sufferings and all the while the power of God, the power of resurrection will bring us to attain the resurrection from the dead.

## Conclusion

Jesus tells the disciples in Matthew 16 to take up their cross and follow him. To sacrifice their lives and follow him. Because what will it benefit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his soul.

For us tonight, we are focused on the opposite. What great benefit is there if a man loses the whole world, every child, every parent, every dollar, every possession, every bit of his health: but he gains Christ and his soul with it.

My friend's son Isaiah, who I mentioned at the start, will one day not be able to walk. But what he can look forward to today, is a body one day freed from sin and death that reigns in our mortal flesh. It will be free of muscular decay, every type of decay and he will run into the arms of the savior. I pictured that as I prayed for their family in the early day of the diagnosis.

I pray for you tonight, that you will consider all your loss, all your pain in light of the surpassing hope of resurrection. A resurrection that is based upon the grace of God when we turn from sin and death, put our old life in the loss column and run to Christ. The only one who has raised himself from the dead, the only one with power to do so in your life. He takes **all we lose and experience is for our gain in resurrection and God's glory.**