

you are without sin in your life, but it is your sorrow and grief that there is still daily a mighty stream of foul transgression all too often in your life and you cry out for God and His saving power in your life to more and more rid you of all your sins and sinfulness. The Christian is known in that like Paul his aim and ambition in the battle against sin and Satan and this world is that he may know Christ and the power of His resurrection! And that more and more through His saving power, sin may be put down and righteousness pursued and the fruit of the Spirit shown in all our lives. Can you identify with this challenge?

It was the remaining challenge and struggle with sin that made Paul long to know Christ more and the power of His resurrection. We can say too, surely, it was also going through difficult times and situations that made Paul long to know Christ more and the power His resurrection. Sometimes, isn't it true, you may think and say while in a trial of sorts, 'Why couldn't I be stronger and trust and be at peace more in the trials of life? When I all of a sudden needed that major repair job on my vehicle, or when I go through this period in my life where the harder I work, it seems the more behind I get, or when I have this ongoing struggle in my marriage or family, or when I have to deal with this physical or material loss of sorts, or when things just go so differently than I planned and had hoped for, then isn't it true, we can still so easily lose focus, and become all discouraged in one way or another? For sure, we don't always handle every disturbing situation in a positive and trusting manner.

It is these difficult stressful situations in life that call all the more for us to lean on Christ and draw from Him, to know Him and the power of His resurrection. With Jesus' resurrection from the dead, we know the worst of situations can be transformed into something good by His almighty hand, and the darkest of times can yet become the brightest of times through His saving power and help. Again, what marks a true believer is not that you always handle difficulties so very well, but that you know then the way to handle difficulties and stresses well and to be more than conqueror, time and again, is to know Christ and the power of His resurrection. What a changed perspective on things we can immediately get when Christ becomes the focus. And, what peace one can find when drawing from Him and His gracious strength and love and support in time of need.

Dear friend, do you so know and seek to know Christ and the power of His resurrection? Next week we will continue with our study of this verse to draw still more from it, as to the way you should go, at least if you will be wise and be led in the way everlasting. Amen.

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BANNER OF TRUTH RADIO BROADCAST

Radio Ministry of the FREE REFORMED CHURCHES of North America

Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee that it may be displayed because of the truth. (Psalm 60:4



KNOWING CHRIST AND THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION [1]

For this message, still in view of remembering the glorious historical event of Jesus' resurrection from the dead and its timeless gospel significance, consider with me the Apostle Paul's words in Philippians 3:10a, "that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection...." Here Paul tells us about his aim for life, his ambition for as long as he lived, namely, that he might know Christ and the power of His resurrection. "That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection" was the longing Paul always maintained after his conversion to the Christian faith.

Let us reflect on this aim of the apostle for surely you will agree that the resurrection of Jesus is something that shouldn't only impact us for a time but for always. The gospel of Jesus' resurrection from the dead is meant to be a gospel that affects us deeply and motivates us immensely every day for as long as we live. When Paul says to the Philippians his aim is that he may know Christ, he doesn't mean to say that he didn't know Jesus as his Saviour and Lord, but his longing is to enjoy Him intimately, so to know Christ that he is ever living in close fellowship with Him. Even so, when Paul says he aims to know the power of Jesus' resurrection, that doesn't mean he still needed to come to know that Jesus was alive but Paul means he longs more and more not only to understand, but also to live out of the truth that Jesus arose from the dead for our wellbeing as Saviour, Defender, and Good Shepherd of His sheep. He wants Jesus and the power of His resurrection to be something ever real and present in his life. In Philippians 3:10a, Paul is stating he desires to be entirely wrapped up in Christ so that Jesus would be all the world to him. Is this what you, by God's grace, long for and aim for in life? Then you can identify for sure with the words of the person who wrote:

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—
Spirit of God my teacher be!
Showing the things of Christ to me!

Do those lines, *“That I may know Christ and the power of His resurrection”*, strike a chord in your heart and life? Let us notice several thoughts about this aim Paul had.

See what a confidence in the gospel his aim speaks of. Indeed, for Paul longing more and more to be captivated and motivated by the crucified and exalted Saviour, he is saying there is nothing that can surpass being all into Jesus Christ, the Saviour! That is the way to be truly blessed in life and to become a real blessing to others. Paul’s passionate longing to know Christ in the power of His resurrection proclaims there is nothing else and no one else so important to know and so blessed to know as Jesus Christ, the Saviour! His longing in other words expresses confidence in Christ, the living Saviour.

This is what marks the true Christian, isn’t it? The true Christian knows and confesses that we have come into this world as guilty, depraved, and condemned sinners and that only through Jesus Christ and Him crucified and risen again on sinners’ behalf can we find salvation. As the Scripture says in Acts 4:12: *“Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other Name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved!”*

Before one is a Christian, what vain and hopeless confidences a person may have. In the verses prior to Philippians 3:10, Paul mentions some of his vain confidences he had before. He trusted in his religious orthodox upbringing, and he took pride in his religious accomplishments as a self-righteous Pharisee. Yet what had Paul discovered when he was shown his sins and sinfulness before the righteous, all encompassing, perfect demands of God’s holy law of love, as revealed in Jesus Christ? Paul found out what a sinner he was still, and how evil he had been in going against Christ and persecuting His church! Paul learned what every true believer comes to learn, that unless we are saved with a righteousness outside of ourselves we never can be saved. For all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags in God’s sight, if we hope ever to be reconciled to God through them. And coming to faith in Christ and His righteousness as his only hope of salvation, we hear Paul testify that he counted all things but loss compared to knowing Christ and living in fellowship with Him. Paul counted all his former confidences as just rubbish, even dung, compared to His sure and blessed confidence in and with Christ the Saviour. Paul knew Christ is the pearl of great price, worth selling everything for, and that nothing at all can be compared to His worth, and relationship with Him counts more than anything in the whole wide world!

Do you see that this confidence in the gospel of Jesus Christ is clearly expressed in Paul’s aim and ambition, *“that I may know Him [Christ Jesus], and the power of His resurrection”*. Having this ambition, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection shows that you are rightly

focused, and not having it indicates not being rightly focused in life, perhaps even not having learned yet the one thing most needful, to belong to Christ and to sit at His feet receiving out of His fullness grace for grace.

With Jesus’ resurrection from the dead, a fact we remembered this past Easter Sunday again, we are reminded what reasons for absolute confidence in the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus has made a complete perfect sin offering on sinners’ behalf, and the proof that God is most pleased with Jesus’ finished work is in the fact of His resurrection, and the truth that Jesus is almighty and all willing to seek and to save sinners still lies in the truth of His resurrection as Saviour.

A Christian is not always on the mountain top of faith, but you can tell a true Christian even in the lowest of times as the person who always will testify that the one way to the mountain top of faith is all and alone through Jesus Christ the Saviour. The believer’s confidence is in Christ Jesus. You know Him then as THE one and only complete SAVIOUR of sinners and again and again you turn to Him. Is this what marks your life, my friend, that you may know Christ and the power of His resurrection? This confidence in Christ alone becomes the stronger with the challenges in life’s journey.

Here let us think of our second main point, the challenge that this verse speaks of. When Paul says his longing is to know Christ and the power of His resurrection, obviously he is being challenged in the faith, in other words, for various reasons he doesn’t always feel the closeness of Christ as His Saviour and Lord, and His sweet power and grace in his life. Paul’s aim and ambition suggests a struggle in the faith, a battle which one day can be more keenly felt than another.

Isn’t this challenge what every Christian experiences in one way or another, one day different from another too? What are the challenges you meet with? What challenged Paul, we might ask? Well, we know for one thing Paul was challenged in the faith with a battle against remaining sin and sinfulness in his life. In Romans he mentions how he painfully experienced that the good he would he did not, but the evil which he hated, that he found himself doing sometimes. Paul battled against indwelling sins of the heart and mind. Isn’t this something real for every Christian? Which child of God doesn’t have to struggle still with sin, especially certain bosom sins? There isn’t a confessing Christian anywhere who is altogether free from sin, except of course in heaven.

Is there a bosom sin or even several sins that keeps plaguing you and even overpowering you still all too often? Do you struggle with being short-tempered, or with a lustful eye or that unhealthy, unholy craving for alcohol? Is pride still so natural to you, and materialistic thinking still all too normal for you? As long as we are in this life, even the most holy Christian has but a small beginning of that obedience to God’s law that the Lord may rightly expect from us. But again what marks a true Christian is not that then