

God's amazing grace in and through Christ Jesus. Paul mentions in Philippians 3:21 how one day also in view of Jesus' resurrection, a fact which all true Christians can be sure of, the triumphant Saviour will also change our vile body, "that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself."

The Christian has a future to which not all the immediate gratification in all the world can compare! As one commentator puts it, "From beginning to end salvation is a process of transforming us into the likeness of Christ. At first this involves being given heavenly birth into His family by the renewing converting work of the Holy Spirit with the gospel, then throughout our lives the graces of Christ are increasingly reproduced in us, and then the staggering finale is, these lowly bodies of ours, made from the dust of the earth, weakened by sin and disease, and subject to the shame of death and disintegration, will be transformed by Christ when He raises them from the dust!"

What a glorious perfect future the Christian has to look forward to, living here and now with the passion of Paul, by God's grace, "that I may know Christ and the power of His resurrection." How different it will be for the unconverted and unbelieving. Think, unsaved sinner, of your eternal end without Jesus as your Saviour! What terrible punishments and agonies you will endure in body and soul forever, when living this life now discounting and rejecting the gospel of Jesus Christ, living and dying in unbelief. But the Saviour still calls today, also through this message. Will you hear His gospel call and repent of sin and believe in Jesus Christ, the once crucified, but now all time risen and exalted Saviour, and the only Saviour of sinners?

God's true people live in this world as strangers and pilgrims looking heavenward to the city which is to come. "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord!" [Romans 8:] Even so, is there anyone listening who won't know Christ and the power of His resurrection truly, and more and more? Amen.

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April 30, 2006

Publication No. 256

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 [2]

This is a second message based on Philippians 3:10a, where the Apostle Paul states his prayer and care concerning Jesus, the resurrected Saviour, "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. Last time we saw that 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 know Christ in the way of living in close and conscious 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 that 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. This is what describes the true believer in Jesus Christ. Are you a true believer in Jesus Christ, dear friend?

In studying these words of Paul, "that I may know Christ and the power of His resurrection", we saw how this desire shows not only so much confidence in the gospel, but also so much challenge yet in the Christian life. For Paul, certainly he knew that believing in Christ and belonging to Christ and following Him as his only Saviour and Lord was not only the one thing most needful, and the one thing most wonderful, but also something not without it's challenges. There is the constant challenge with our sinful self by nature still as long as we are in this life, and there is the challenge of trials and dealing with hardships and what looks like real setbacks and disappointments that can come our way, especially also in the Christian life and service. Paul certainly had to deal with many trials and he needed persevering grace and strength. Where could he find that in an abundant and almighty way except always and again with Jesus, the risen triumphant almighty Saviour? We looked in more detail at this last time.

Continuing now, surely another reason that made Paul long to know Christ more and the power of His resurrection was not only the challenge of remaining sin and sinfulness in his life and the trials and difficulties in life, but consider too the challenges Paul faced in his calling and mission in life to bring the gospel to others, especially even to all the Gentile heathen world. Paul saw what a great calling he had and how overwhelming the need

and the obstacles were in bringing the gospel to others, and for this too he cries out, *“that I may know Christ and the power of His resurrection”*. The word for ‘power’ in our text literally has reference to dynamite, and Paul is looking for more of Christ’s divine almighty power for him to move mightily and with success with all his gospel outreach.

The Christian’s calling, even if we are not called to be an apostle, is to live for Jesus and to be a witness of the gospel wherever we go with whoever we may be. We are to be bright lights for the gospel in this dark world of sin and unbelief. And don’t you think too sometimes how impossible it all seems to be an effective witness for Christ and to make a difference for God and good in people’s lives, even often in our own families and church, let alone in the world out there? But when a Christian keenly feels his smallness in the calling to live to God’s praise, and that challenge leads to this aim and ambition, to know more of Christ and the power of His resurrection, who knows what things might then yet be accomplished in Christ’s service and for the glory of His name? When we are weak in ourselves but leaning on Almighty God as revealed in Christ the Saviour, then we are strong! Just think here of Paul and the early church leaders, how in the Name of the Lord they were mightily used for the world-wide spread of the gospel. While we can accomplish nothing in ourselves and by ourselves, what great things can be accomplished in and through Jesus Christ, the crucified and risen Saviour!

To Jesus, the resurrected Saviour, belongs all power in heaven and on earth, and as Paul says in Ephesians 1:19, *“the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe”* is indeed beyond human expression. To Jesus, the resurrected Saviour, belongs the kingdom, the power, and the glory and none shall be put to shame, expecting all from Him, while all others most certainly will be sorely disappointed in turning away from Jesus and rejecting Him alone as Saviour and Lord. To live apart from Christ is death, but it is good His face to seek. With the news of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead, the message goes out, Jesus has suffered and died and arose again to give life and that more abundantly, and triumphantly! May it be a message everyone will take to heart and one that so grips you in daily life that you aim and pray always with Paul to know Christ and power of His resurrection and so to live for God and for good!

Saying that brings us also now to our third main point where we think about the way he lived with this aim and ambition, *“to know Christ and the power of His resurrection”*. For one, it is clear Paul always tried to remind himself of his new identity in Christ and with Christ. In II Corinthians 5:17 he asserts, *“If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new.”* God’s people, though sinners always still of themselves, are regenerated, justified and adopted children of God in and through Jesus Christ. When that is the case then the believer, through God’s Spirit in him, also seeks to become more and more what

actually is already by God’s grace. The aim and ambition of Paul and all true Christians is to know Christ and the power of His resurrection, and more and more so, that more and more we might be made conformable unto the Saviour Himself. Is your desire to not only know God, but to be like Christ? Don’t assume you are a Christian if you don’t also daily pursue after Christ and holiness in and through His Name.

Paul’s course in life with his aim to know Christ more and the power of His resurrection was not only to see his identity with Christ and to be made conformable to it, but also it is clear that he always kept involved in the Christian church. Paul’s life was wrapped up in and with the church even as he had this ambition to know Christ and the power of His resurrection. You can’t think of Paul without thinking of the Christian Church that sent him out and which he served tirelessly, which was blessed and expanded by God’s grace also through his ministry. Beware of seeking growth in grace while at the same time being detached from the Christian church. Faithful, diligent, consistent, humble involvement in a local body of Christ’s church is key also to knowing Christ and the power of His resurrection. Are you involved and committed in a faithful, Bible believing Christian church? It is basic to being a true, healthy, fruitful Christian.

One other clear mark of Paul’s course of life with his aim and ambition to know Christ and the power of His resurrection is that he always kept in view his goal of following after the person and perfection of Christ, as he says in verse 14, *“pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”* Paul knew no matter what successes he made in this life, he still fell far short of the perfection that is to be attained through Christ and he kept on realizing with humbleness that he needed to move on and on. He knew the Christian life isn’t a brief sprint, but a marathon race over a life-long course, always and again looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of the faith. If Paul so stayed the course in his Christian life, who of us thinks we can do so in any other way. *“Brethren”*, says Paul Philippians 3:17, *“be followers together of me, and mark them who walk so as ye have us for an example.”*

Paul’s life’s ambition, his prayer and care as a Christian was focused on Christ, *“that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection.”* So far we have seen how this ambition of Paul shows such confidence in the gospel of Jesus Christ, such challenges in the Christian life, and the course of the Christian life. Does this all strike a chord in your heart and find an echo in your life? Then you also will not be put to shame in the Christian life, but you will with Paul, and all God’s true people, go forward and onward upward and heavenward with great hope and blessing. This is the great comfort that Paul also had with this aim and ambition, *“that I may know Christ and the power of His resurrection.”*

The comfort in and with this aim to know Christ and the power of His resurrection is that one day it will be perfectly and completely realized by