

Monday, September 12, 2022 • Philippians 3:7–4:1

Questions from the Scripture text: What has the apostle counted as loss (v7)? For Whom? What else does He count as loss (v8)? For what? Who is Christ Jesus to Him? What has the apostle suffered for his Lord? As what does he count them? In order to gain what (Whom)? What else does the apostle want to do with Christ (v9a)? Of what does the apostle have none of his own? What is the only righteousness that he can have? From Whom is this righteousness? By what is this righteousness? What three things does the apostle come to know/have through the knowledge of Christ (v10)? Of what is the knowledge of Christ the only means to the attaining (v11)? What hasn't the apostle already done (v12)? What hasn't already been done to him? So what does he do? In order to lay hold of what? What doesn't he count himself to have done (v13)? Upon how many things does he focus? What does he forget? In order to reach for what? Toward what does he press (v14)? What is the prize? Whom does the apostle now address (v15)? Whom does he include in this group? What are they to have? Who will do what if they think otherwise? What are they to do with whatever they have already attained (v16)? By what should they walk? What should they be? Now whom does the apostle address in v17? What does he tell them to do? And at whom else to look? For what purpose has God given the apostle and such other men? Who walk (v18)? When has the apostle told them? What is he doing as he writes this now? As what do they walk? What is their end (v19)? What is their god? What is the true nature of that in which they glory? Upon what do they set their mind? Where is our citizenship (v20)? What else is in heaven? For what are we eagerly waiting? Who is that Savior? What will He do to what (v21)? What will He make our body like? What is He using the same power to do? How many things is He subduing to Himself? What four things does the apostle call them in v1? What does he command them to do?

The things that “were gain” in v7 and the “all things” that are loss but counted as rubbish in v8 are the religious things of v5–6. Some of them were gifts/commands of God, but there is just no spiritual value apart from Christ Jesus. Whatever we must lose in order to gain Him is worth it. And only those things which God commands, by which to look to Christ for life, are worth doing.

The greatest spiritual treasure is knowing Christ (v8), because it is through faith in Him that we get righteousness from God (v9). Whatever superficial spirituality or religiosity is lost in order to gain this is worth it in order to have Him. Even with respect to physical/material blessing, Christ is all. Christ is the greatest thing that we can have even in a physical sense because we will be conformed to His resurrection and enjoy the new heavens and new earth—emphasis here on “earthy”—in resurrected bodies that are glorious like unto His. Certainly, an eternity of that enjoyment is an almost infinite physical/material treasure compared to whatever we might lose, or whatever we might suffer, in this world. Christ prevailed by suffering and prevailed by dying. The believer should be glad to do the same (v10–11).

The apostle is determined to lay hold of that all that is in Christ (v12–14). Why so urgent? Certainly not for the possibility of failing to obtain it. This is what Christ has laid hold of him for (end of v12). Who can take him out of Christ's hand? Was it not Jesus himself Who said that no one could take us out of His Father's hand or His own hand (cf. John 10:28–29)? Instead, the greatness of the urgency is because of how gloriously valuable it is. If it what Christ wants for him, then it is something that he wants for himself.

Not just the apostle, but all mature believers, have this mindset (v15). And all genuine believers, even if they are immature, God will reveal to them whether they are valuing what he values (end of v15). What a great encouragement to us who know that we are not going after it or valuing it like we should! And how humble the mature ought to be, since it is God Who gives maturity. But this determination should be the mindset of all believers (v16).

Not everyone in the church who thinks that he is mature is actually mature. Some, like in v17, are given to us as examples like the apostle; they do not think that they have attained to anything yet. Ironically, the self-satisfaction of those whom he describes in v18–19 itself exposes that they are not mature in Christ. For they are satisfied enough, though they are not yet resurrected (“their god is their belly”), and they are proud enough, though they are not yet sinless (“they glory in their shame”). This is all the satisfaction and glory they will have. “Their end is destruction.” Not only do they show that they are too easily satisfied with their fools’ gold in spiritual things, but also that they have an inordinate love for the things of this world. Rather than receiving them as good gifts from God, Who will give them so much better, these enemies of the cross of Christ (v18) too happily settle for less than Christ earned on that cross.

Those who are mature in Christ identify not with earth, but with heaven (v20). In heaven, saints are already sinless and enjoy the immediate presence of the Redeemer. And they are no more satisfied with physical imperfection than they are with spiritual perfection. They are eager not just to be sinless but for Christ's return (v20b), and for the physical perfection that comes on that day (v21).

And what treasures will we then be able to take from this life, besides our sanctification? Besides Christ Whom we have by His spirit? We will take with us only other believers, and the fruit which God gave them through our edification and fellowship in the Lord... not carnal fellowship, but gracious fellowship that is actually aimed at edification. This is why the apostle calls them his “joy and crown,” and this is why in this life, our greatest investment ought to be in serving God in the gathering and building up of His saints.

Upon what do you spend discretionary time? Upon what do you spend discretionary funds? At what do you aim in fellowship? What is the Lord showing you about your mindset by comparison to His?

Sample prayer: Lord, forgive us for being puffed up about ourselves or satisfied with this world. And forgive us for when our effect upon others is to bring them down to such things. Make us to press toward the goal for the prize of Your upward call, and to be examples and helpers to others, that they may be our joy and crown with You in glory, which we ask in Your Name, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP73C "Yet Constantly, I Am with You" or TPH446 "Be Thou My Vision"

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Philippians chapter 3. Verse 7, through chapter 4, verse 1. These are God's words but what things were gained to me? These, I have counted loss for Christ yet. Indeed, I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ. Jesus, my Lord for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish that I may gain Christ and be found in Him not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ.

The righteousness, which is from God by faith that I may know, him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings being conformed to his death. If by any means I may attained to the resurrection from the dead not that I have already attained or I'm already perfected but I press on that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has laid.

Hold of me rather than I do not count myself to have apprehended but one thing I do forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things, which are ahead. I press toward the goal for the upward prize So I pressed toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Therefore, let us as many as our mature have this mind. And if anything if in anything you think otherwise God will reveal even this to you? Nevertheless, the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule. Let us be of the same mind, brethren join and following my example and not those who sell walk.

As you have us for a pattern for many walk. If you might have told you often and now tell you even weeping that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, who's God is their belly and His glory is in their shame who set their minds on earthly things for our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior.

The Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to his glorious body according to the working by which he is able even to subdue all things to himself. Therefore my beloved long for Brooklyn My joy and crown. So, stand fast and the Lord loved so far.

God's inspired and generant worked. So he starts out saying what things were gained to me. These I have counted loss for Christ and we didn't read the first six verses about the things that were gained that he's not counting loss. Are spiritual advantages that he had had circumcised in the eighth day of the stock of Israel of the tribe of Benjamin Hebrew of Hebrews Pharisee.

Full of zeal outwardly blameless toward the loss. Outwardly blameless toward the law and these are the things that he's lost. He's not talking about losing material wealth, and those kinds of things. Talking about losing the idea that these things made him better than others. That the advantages that he had were things that gave him confidence in himself.

In other words, he's saying here that he used to be the kind of guy that we have heard him criticizing in Romans 2, who had these advantages, which are wonderful advantages. If God uses them to bring us to repentance and faith, but they hadn't brought him to repentance and faith.

He had abused them to have his confidence in himself and his confidence, his use of his privileges. So some of them are good things, but if we think of them as being to our credit instead of to God's credit, then we need to lose that credit. We need to be humbled.

And so, he was happy to lose those things in order, that Christ alone would get all the credit. What things were gained to me or credit to me. These have counted loss for Christ. And so perhaps there are some things for you my dear children. Whether it is your part and the church or the good theology that the Lord has allowed to have or ways in which he has grown your thinking, or behavior that you also are in danger of slipping into, considering to be to your credit instead of to Christ's credit.

And you need to lose the idea that you are to be credited in anything or that you are better than others, but that Christ is here, only credit. So you lose all things but you gain Christ and you gain, not just having him transactionally. But having him personally the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus knowing him verse 8, the greatest spiritual treasure is knowing him.

And it's for him himself but in order to know him himself and for that to be a good thing, you do have to have the transaction. You have to have his righteousness. So you look at verse 8, the excellence of the knowledge of Christ, Jesus my Lord, but in order to know him you have to gain him.

Look at the end of verse 8, that I may gain Christ and be found in him. Why not having my own righteousness? Which is from the law, but that would just through faith in Christ, the righteousness, which is from God by faith. It is not a pleasant thing to know, Jesus, unless you are forgiven of your sin, unless you have been made right?

With God, There are many, who won the last day, will encounter Christ, and not like it, and not like him. So we do need his righteousness first and foremost so that we can be made right with him so that we can be forgiven of our sin so that we may enjoy him.

He's not only the greatest thing that we can have spiritually speaking. He's also the greatest thing. We can have physically speaking. If you notice at the end of verse 10 and then we'll work backwards in the verse 9 and verse 10, if by any, sorry if you notice in verse 11, if by any means, I may attain to the resurrection of from the dead.

And so knowing Christ is the only spiritual credit that you can have is worth losing everything else for that. And he's also the greatest knowing Christ is the greatest physical.

Blessing. That you can have. Why? Because we're all going to suffer and we're all gonna die. This is the age of sin and misery and dust. We are into dust we shall return. So the question isn't, are you going to suffer? It's what kind of suffering. The question isn't, are you going to die?

It's what kind of death you are going to die. Love each of you but you are going to die and it is it would be unloving to ignore it or not, think about it or not prepare for it.

But here you see that he's talking about having the righteousness of Jesus. Why? Because if you have the righteousness of Jesus, when you're suffering, then you know, you're not suffering. As a penalty for sin, God has already fully penalized your sin. You may be suffering as discipline and we could call that punishment in a way if we're talking about chastening.

Jesus didn't even suffer for for discipline, Jesus. Suffered as a means to the end of his glory. He suffered for arson on the cross. But his suffering was victorious suffering. It was gaining for him that which he intended in that, which his father intended. And so when he talks about the fellowship of his sufferings, he's talking about something that sweetened by the personal union that we have with Christ.

But he's also talking about a victorious, sort of suffering. They purposeful sort of suffering and he talks about being conformed to his death that his death was how he won. Wasn't it? It was how he fulfilled and completed what he came to do. And is that not similar for the Christian?

Has he not taken the sting God of death for us? So that death is how we win. That's how we come into the completion of that. Work of sanctification and that's how we get prepared for resurrection. And so having Christ means having all that he is for all of your spiritual benefit, but it also means having all that he is for all of your physical benefit, not that you can have a healing there and a healing here, and the healing there, on the way to your your grave.

But so that every suffering is accomplishing, you're good, and your death is your victory and your resurrection is sure.

There are many things that we go after in life and often, so someone will have in the back of his mind. That next big thing that he's hoping for working towards. Can't wait to get. We need to have those things redirected to Christ Christ is what we need that.

We may gross spiritually Christ is what we need that. We may know all of our sufferings, even to be a blessing, let alone all of our comforts and benefits to be a blessing. And then of course, our death to be a blessing. Well, that gets us through verse 11 verse 12.

He talks about pressing on and verse 13, forgetting everything behind, and reaching forward towards the things that are ahead. And verse 14 pressing toward the goal for the prize. Why. So urgent, it's not because he's at risk of losing it. Is he? It can't be because you look at the end of verse 12 that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus is also laid.

Hold of me. Well, if Jesus has laid, hold of you for it, can it be? Lost, isn't he the Jesus of John 10 verse 28 and 29 who says that, no one can take his sheep out of his own hands and no one can take them out of his father's hands with that.

They're the same hands. And he and the father are one and the Jews. Understand what it means. When he says, when he basically says, you always hands are my hands. He's making a claim to be Jehovah and they take up stones to stone him there in John 10. Well, if he's laid, hold of me for it, then the urgency isn't because I might not get it.

The urgency is because of how good it is. We know it's good because Jesus wants it for us, and Jesus, died, and rose again to get it for us. But we also,

Consider anything that Jesus wants to be what I want, not just because he's better at evaluating value than I am. But because his wanting it for me, makes it desirable because I love him and trust him. And so if he is laid, hold of that laid, hold of us in order to know him in order to grow in him in order to be resurrected, then we need to press towards sinless, perfection.

And we need to not be satisfied with any physical circumstance or treasure this side of glory. Yes content to receive what comes from the Father's hand but not to live for it as if it's an independent self because even physically speaking it's so much less than what Jesus has secured for us.

And so he has this pushing forward, pushing forward pushing forward, pressing upward refuses to be satisfied with anything else other than sinlessness, in the spiritual realm and resurrection in the physical realm. And he says that's what a mature Christian verse 15. That's how he thinks he want everything that Christ has earned for him.

That Christ has won for him factors. However, many of us are not mature and so he says, if in anything you think otherwise God will reveal even this to you. And so verse 15 is describing the fact that you when you hear or read a passage like this or devotional like this, you may ask yourself.

Am I really pressing forward and sanctification? Am I? Am I mature in a way that refuses to be satisfied with anything less than sinlessness spiritually, refuses. To be satisfied with anything less than resurrection physically. And we have a tendency to think that we we are. And he says no if anything you think otherwise God will reveal even this to you.

In other words, There are those who think that they have this Christian maturity, that is aiming at it holiness and aiming at eternity, but they're really aren't. I'm so God use this passage like this or certain moments of providence or whatever it is to bring it to our attention.

And however, far he has brought us, we are to walk. According to the desire that he's given us for holiness. And the desire that he's given us for eternal things. Paul tells them in verse 17, that not only is he an example, but there are others who are an example.

So, praise God. He's already doing this work and others which means there's good hope because we all start out dead in sin and he's done it another so you can do it in us. But take warning because verse 18, many walk of whom he is already told the Philippians often.

And now as he tells them as he dictates this part of the letter he says he's weeping crying their tears on the apostles face as he dictates Philippians 3 verse 18, their enemies of the Cross of Christ. And we say, well, that's a title that I would never want to have and enemy of the Cross of Christ.

What can make you an enemy of the cross of Christ? Well in physical satisfaction. Who's God is their belly? They're too easily satisfied with earthly things. They don't say, oh, what a good gift from God. I cannot wait for when this creation that is bound to corruption. And decay is done.

And there's the new heavens and the new earth and I cannot imagine what those delights are going to be. I cannot wait for a resurrection body that is conformed to Jesus's glorious body. No, they are so satisfied. And so lived for the pleasures of this world, that verse 19 says, their God is their belly and then when they're growing and holiness, and the Lord gives them and to be killing one or another sin and growing in one or another grace, rather than rejoicing over what God has done.

As part of a work that is going to end in perfect holiness, the glory in their proud of whatever, they think they have attained spiritually where the apostle here has been saying not that I have already attained verse 12. And then I do not count myself to have apprehended verse 13.

But those who are proud of where they have gotten or where, they think, they have gotten spiritually, they're still full of sin, How can we be proud when there's so much left to cleanse from us? And so verse 19 says their glory is in their shame. So verse 19.

Really is someone who's too easily satisfied. They are puffed up about or full of the the fleshly pleasure of the things of this world. And even their spiritual attainments But Jesus hasn't died for us to be where we are. Now, Jesus has died for us to be perfectly, holy and perfectly happy forever.

And to to be satisfied and puffed up with how far he has gotten us now is to be an enemy of the cross. The cost at which he has purchased perfection for his people that we should strive toward. And so, the heavenly minded person, the one who's citizenship is in heaven, is eagerly waiting for Jesus, and he's not going to be satisfied until he's perfectly.

Holy and perfectly happy in resurrected and in the presence of his resurrected and returned Lord, verse 20 and 21. But those who set their minds on earthly things, they don't have an eagerness for Christ to return. And so I wonder my dear ones. Do you have an eagerness for Christ to return?

Do you have an eagerness to be done with your sin? Do you have an eagerness to be a resurrected and enjoy even the physical enjoyments of the new heavens? And and then you earth and if we are heavenly minded, if we're looking forward to that day then what we will define.

As treasure gets reprioritized, Notice what he calls his joy and crown and verse 1 of chapter 4. It's that it's the Philippians. Therefore my beloved and longboard brethren long for my joy and crown. So stand fast in the Lord beloved because thinking this way about Christ and His return about ourselves and leaving this world and the sinlessness and the spiritual blessedness and the physical blessedness material blessedness of of the next world.

It makes us realize We can't take any of the blessings of this world from it except for the sanctification. The Lord gives us by it concerning ourselves and except for our brothers and sisters in Christ who will be in the next world. And at who's sanctification, we can also aim because the Lord has given us this part that we have, and one another's lives.

And so being heavenly minded redirects us towards fellowship redirects us towards being useful in. God's working and one another's lives. So the Lord make us count. Everything else loss except for the knowing of Christ. That we may be heavenly minded and continually press forward for the same thing to lay.

Hold of the same thing for which he has laid. Hold of us. He has laid, hold of us. It's sure and what he has laid. Hold of us for is worth it. And so we ought to strive for that and then let's pray.

Our Father in heaven. We thank you that you have given us. This portion of your word to think about, We pray that you would make us to enjoy you above all things in Christ, help us by your spirit. Lord. We are so easily earthly-minded in many things. We are not mature in the way that we have just heard about maturity from Philippians 3, but you'll just said that you will reveal it to us.

And so we pray that you would so that we would see it and know that it needs correction and you've just reminded us that Christ has laid. Hold of us. So that we may so that we may have that maturity of knowing him and desiring him above all and so we pray that you would continue working in us.

Lord Jesus, according to that, for which you laid, hold of us, according to that, for which you died on the cross. Do not let us live then as enemies at the cross but make us to be friends of your cross. Who live for the same things for which you died for, we ask it in your name, amen.