

Message Five

Having No Confidence in the Flesh and Counting All Things to Be Loss on Account of Christ and the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ

Hymns:

Scripture Reading: Phil. 3:3-8

- Phil 3:3 For we are the circumcision, the ones who serve by the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh,
- Phil 3:4 Though I myself have something to be confident of in the flesh as well. If any other man thinks that he has confidence in the flesh, I more:
- Phil 3:5 Circumcised the eighth day; of the race of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee;
- Phil 3:6 As to zeal, persecuting the church; as to the righteousness which is in the law, become blameless.
- Phil 3:7 But what things were gains to me, these I have counted as loss on account of Christ.
- Phil 3:8 But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ

I. We who believe in Christ should have no confidence in the flesh; our confidence should be wholly in the Lord—Phil. 3:3b:

Phil 3:3b ...the ones who serve by the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh,

A. The flesh in Philippians 3:3 and 4 comprises all that we are and have in our natural being.

Phil 3:3 For we are the circumcision, the ones who serve by the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh,

Phil 3:4 Though I myself have something to be confident of in the flesh as well. If any other man thinks that he has confidence in the flesh, I more:

B. In these verses confidence in the flesh refers to all the good items or qualifications that we have in the flesh; the honorable, lovable, and superior aspects of our natural being are still the flesh.

C. The greatest problems among God's children are that they do not know what the flesh is and that their flesh has not been dealt with—Rom. 8:8; Gal. 5:24:

Rom 8:8 And those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Gal 5:24 But they who are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and its lusts.

1. Self-confidence is the characteristic of the flesh; the most obvious sign of unchecked flesh is self-confidence—cf. 3:2-3.

Gal 3:2 This only I wish to learn from you, Did you receive the Spirit out of the works of law or out of the hearing of faith?

Gal 3:3 Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?

2. Confidence in the flesh keeps us from Christ—Phil. 3:3-4, 10.

- Phil 3:3 For we are the circumcision, the ones who serve by the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh,
- Phil 3:4 Though I myself have something to be confident of in the flesh as well. If any other man thinks that he has confidence in the flesh, I more:
- Phil 3:10 To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

D. As believers in Christ, we should be those who have no confidence in the flesh, no trust in our natural ability or heritage—vv. 3-6:

- Phil 3:3 For we are the circumcision, the ones who serve by the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh,
- Phil 3:4 Though I myself have something to be confident of in the flesh as well. If any other man thinks that he has confidence in the flesh, I more:
- Phil 3:5 Circumcised the eighth day; of the race of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee;
- Phil 3:6 As to zeal, persecuting the church; as to the righteousness which is in the law, become blameless.

1. Although we have been regenerated, we may continue to live in our fallen nature, boast in what we do in the flesh, and have confidence in our natural qualifications—Gal. 3:2-3.

- Gal 3:2 This only I wish to learn from you, Did you receive the Spirit out of the works of law or out of the hearing of faith?
- Gal 3:3 Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?

2. Only when we have been enlightened by God will we be able to say truly that we have no trust in our natural qualifications, ability, or intelligence; only then will we be able to testify that we have no confidence in the flesh and that our confidence is wholly in the Lord—Phil. 3:3; Prov. 3:5-6.

- Phil 3:3 For we are the circumcision, the ones who serve by the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh,
- Prov 3:5 Trust in Jehovah with all your heart, / And do not rely on your own understanding;
- Prov 3:6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, / And He will make your paths straight.

E. If we would experience Christ, we must not trust in the flesh but trust only in the Lord; this is the secret to the experience of Christ—Phil. 3:3.

- Phil 3:3 For we are the circumcision, the ones who serve by the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh,

II. The excellency of the knowledge of Christ is derived from the excellency of His person—v. 8; Matt. 17:5; Col. 1:13:

- Phil 3:8 But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ
- Matt 17:5 While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is My Son, the Beloved, in whom I have found My delight. Hear Him!
- Col 1:13 Who delivered us out of the authority of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,

A. The excellency of the knowledge of Christ is not the knowledge that belongs to Christ, the knowledge that Christ Himself has; rather, this knowledge is our subjective knowing of Christ—John 17:3:

John 17:3 And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Him whom You have sent, Jesus Christ.

1. In Philippians 3:8 knowledge actually means a revelation, a vision, concerning Christ and His excellency—Gal. 1:15-16; Eph. 1:17-23.

Phil 3:8 But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ

Gal 1:15 But when it pleased God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me through His grace,

Gal 1:16 To reveal His Son in me that I might announce Him as the gospel among the Gentiles, immediately I did not confer with flesh and blood,

Eph 1:17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him,

Eph 1:18 The eyes of your heart having been enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

Eph 1:19 And what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the operation of the might of His strength,

Eph 1:20 Which He caused to operate in Christ in raising Him from the dead and seating Him at His right hand in the heavenlies,

Eph 1:21 Far above all rule and authority and power and lordship and every name that is named not only in this age but also in that which is to come;

Eph 1:22 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,

Eph 1:23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.

2. When Christ was revealed to him by God, Paul saw the supereminence, the supreme preciousness, and the surpassing worth of Christ—Acts 9:3-5, 20, 22; 22:13-16; 26:13-16.

Acts 9:3 And as he went, he drew near to Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him.

Acts 9:4 And he fell on the ground and heard a voice saying to him, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?

Acts 9:5 And he said, Who are You, Lord? And He said, I am Jesus, whom you persecute.

Acts 9:20 And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, that this One is the Son of God.

Acts 9:22 But Saul was all the more empowered, and he confounded the Jews dwelling in Damascus by proving that this One is the Christ.

Acts 22:13 Came to me, and standing by, said to me, Saul, brother, receive your sight! And in that very hour I looked up at him.

Acts 22:14 And he said, The God of our fathers has previously appointed you to know His will and to see the righteous One and to hear the voice from His mouth;

Acts 22:15 For you will be a witness to Him unto all men of the things which you have seen and heard.

Acts 22:16 And now, why do you delay? Rise up and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on His name.

Acts 26:13 At midday, on the way, I saw, O king, a light from heaven beyond the brightness of the sun, shining around me and those who journeyed with me.

Acts 26:14 And when we all fell to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew dialect, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.

Acts 26:15 And I said, Who are You, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus, whom you persecute.

Acts 26:16 But rise up and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a minister and a witness both of the things in which you have seen Me and of the things in which I will appear to you;

B. The excellency of the knowledge of Christ is the excellency of Christ realized by us—John 16:13-14; Gal. 1:15-16:

John 16:13 But when He, the Spirit of reality, comes, He will guide you into all the reality; for He will not speak from Himself, but what He hears He will speak; and He will declare to you the things that are coming.

John 16:14 He will glorify Me, for He will receive of Mine and will declare it to you.

Gal 1:15 But when it pleased God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me through His grace,

Gal 1:16 To reveal His Son in me that I might announce Him as the gospel among the Gentiles, immediately I did not confer with flesh and blood,

1. We need to have a vision of the preciousness of Christ and the excellency of the knowledge of the all-inclusive, unlimited Christ—1 Pet. 2:4, 7; Col. 1:12, 15-19; 2:2-3, 9, 16-17; 3:4, 10.

1 Pet 2:4 Coming to Him, a living stone, rejected by men but with God chosen and precious,

1 Pet 2:7 To you therefore who believe is the preciousness; but to the unbelieving, "The stone which the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner,"

Col 1:12 Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you for a share of the allotted portion of the saints in the light;

Col 1:15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation,

Col 1:16 Because in Him all things were created, in the heavens and on the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or lordships or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through Him and unto Him.

Col 1:17 And He is before all things, and all things cohere in Him;

Col 1:18 And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;

Col 1:19 For in Him all the fullness was pleased to dwell

Col 2:2 That their hearts may be comforted, they being knit together in love and unto all the riches of the full assurance of understanding, unto the full knowledge of the mystery of God, Christ,

Col 2:3 In whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden.

Col 2:9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily,

Col 2:16 Let no one therefore judge you in eating and in drinking or in respect of a feast or of a new moon or of the Sabbath,

Col 2:17 Which are a shadow of the things to come, but the body is of Christ.

Col 3:4 When Christ our life is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory.

Col 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,

2. The excellency of the knowledge of Christ comes by revelation; without the revelation concerning Christ, we cannot know Christ—Matt. 16:17; 11:27; Gal. 1:15-16; John 17:3.

Matt 16:17 And Jesus answered and said to him, Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in the heavens.

Matt 11:27 All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one fully knows the Son except the Father; neither does anyone fully know the Father except the Son and him to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.

Gal 1:15 But when it pleased God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me through His grace,

- Gal 1:16 To reveal His Son in me that I might announce Him as the gospel among the Gentiles, immediately I did not confer with flesh and blood,
 John 17:3 And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Him whom You have sent, Jesus Christ.

C. If we would experience Christ, we first need to have the excellency of the knowledge of Christ—Phil. 3:7-10:

- Phil 3:7 But what things were gains to me, these I have counted as loss on account of Christ.
 Phil 3:8 But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ
 Phil 3:9 And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is out of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is out of God and based on faith,
 Phil 3:10 To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

1. We cannot experience Christ without knowing Him through a revelation of Him—Gal. 1:15-16; 2:20; 4:19.

- Gal 1:15 But when it pleased God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me through His grace,
 Gal 1:16 To reveal His Son in me that I might announce Him as the gospel among the Gentiles, immediately I did not confer with flesh and blood,
 Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.
 Gal 4:19 My children, with whom I travail again in birth until Christ is formed in you,

2. If we do not have a higher revelation of Christ, we cannot have a higher experience of Christ—1 John 5:20.

- 1 John 5:20 And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding that we might know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

3. Our experience of Christ cannot surpass the excellency of our knowledge of Christ—Eph. 1:17-21; 3:14-19.

- Eph 1:17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him,
 Eph 1:18 The eyes of your heart having been enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,
 Eph 1:19 And what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the operation of the might of His strength,
 Eph 1:20 Which He caused to operate in Christ in raising Him from the dead and seating Him at His right hand in the heavenlies,
 Eph 1:21 Far above all rule and authority and power and lordship and every name that is named not only in this age but also in that which is to come;
 Eph 3:14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father,
 Eph 3:15 Of whom every family in the heavens and on earth is named,
 Eph 3:16 That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man,
 Eph 3:17 That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

- Eph 3:18 May be full of strength to apprehend with all the saints what the breadth and length and height and depth are
- Eph 3:19 And to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God.

III. On account of (or because of) the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, Paul counted all things to be loss—Phil. 3:8a:

Phil 3:8b But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord,...

- A. Paul placed great value on the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus; this is indicated by the words my Lord, which convey his intimate, tender feelings concerning Christ.
- B. Paul's eyes were opened to see the excellency of the wonderful, all-inclusive Christ; on account of this excellency, he counted as loss all things, whether they related to religious gain or natural gain.
- C. In verse 8 all things indicates that Paul dropped not only religious things but all things on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus; thus, to Paul, the loss of all things was the loss of everything.

Phil 3:8 But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ

- D. The more we have the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, the more we will count as loss everything religious and natural—vv. 4-8a.

Phil 3:4 Though I myself have something to be confident of in the flesh as well. If any other man thinks that he has confidence in the flesh, I more:

Phil 3:5 Circumcised the eighth day; of the race of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee;

Phil 3:6 As to zeal, persecuting the church; as to the righteousness which is in the law, become blameless.

Phil 3:7 But what things were gains to me, these I have counted as loss on account of Christ.

Phil 3:8a But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord,...

IV. On account of Christ, Paul suffered the loss of all things and counted them as refuse in order to gain Christ—vv. 7, 8b:

Phil 3:7 But what things were gains to me, these I have counted as loss on account of Christ.

Phil 3:8b ...on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ

- A. All things in verse 8 includes the things of religion, philosophy, and culture; Paul suffered the loss of all these things because they were substitutes for Christ, hooks used by Satan to keep people from Christ and the experience of Christ.

Phil 3:8 But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ

- B. We gain Christ by suffering the loss of all things that were once a gain for us and by counting them as refuse—vv. 4, 8:

Phil 3:4 Though I myself have something to be confident of in the flesh as well. If any other man thinks that he has confidence in the flesh, I more:

Phil 3:8 But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ

1. The Greek word for gain in verse 8 means “to secure, to obtain, to lay hold of.”

Phil 3:8 But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ

2. To gain Christ is to gain His person, to experience, enjoy, and take possession of all His unsearchable riches—Eph. 3:8.

Eph 3:8 To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel

3. Like Paul, we should not only count all things as loss on account of Christ (Phil. 3:7) but also suffer the loss of all things and count all things as refuse (v. 8).

Phil 3:7 But what things were gains to me, these I have counted as loss on account of Christ.
Phil 3:8 But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ

4. The more we suffer the loss of all things and count them as refuse on account of Christ, the more we will gain Christ for our experience and enjoyment—vv. 7-8.

Phil 3:7 But what things were gains to me, these I have counted as loss on account of Christ.
Phil 3:8 But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ