

Guidelines for the Exercise of the Lord's day Prophesying
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

I. Overview:

We who believe in Christ should have no confidence in the flesh; the flesh in Philippians 3:3-4 comprises all that we are and have in our natural being, and the honorable, lovable, superior aspects of our natural being. 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. The excellency of the knowledge of Christ is not the knowledge that belongs to Christ; rather, this knowledge is our subjective knowing of Christ. When Christ was revealed to him by God, Paul saw the supereminence, the supreme preciousness, and the surpassing worth of Christ. On account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, Paul counted all things to be loss. On account of Christ, Paul suffered the loss of all things and counted them as refuse in order to gain Christ.

II. Truth and Enlightenment:

Day 1 —

A. Expound the meaning of flesh in Philippians 3:3.

We may think that the flesh includes only evil things but not good things. Nevertheless, the honourable, lovable, and superior aspects of our natural being are still the flesh. All that Paul did as to the law and as to zeal was flesh and of the flesh. His righteousness as to the law was also flesh.

B. The greatest problem among God's children is that they do not know the flesh. What is the flesh? Many Christians know the flesh is merely related to the matter of sin. Roman 8:8 says that "those who are in the flesh cannot please God." This means that the goal of flesh may not be to try to offend God but has tried to please God. However, our experience tells us that it is comparatively easy to deal with the sining flesh, but it is very difficult to deal with the flesh that tries to please God.

Day 2 —

A. Explain What Paul said in Philippians 3:1-6 is related to the experience of Christ.

Had Paul remained a Judaizer, it would have been impossible for him to experience Christ. But because he became one who served by the Spirit of God, boasted in Christ Jesus, and had no confidence in the flesh, he could enjoy Christ and experience Him in a very rich way. We also should be those who have no confidence in the flesh, in our natural ability, or in our heritage or tradition.

B. How can we be deeply and personally touched by these verses in Philippians 3?

We need the Lord's light to shine on us concerning our nature, our deeds, and our confidence in the flesh. If we are enlightened by the Lord, we shall confess that although we have been regenerated to become children of God with the divine life and nature, we still live too much in our "dog" nature.

Day 3 —

A. Why is the excellency of the knowledge of Christ derived from the excellency of His person?

The Jews consider the law of God given through Moses the most excellent thing in history. Hence, they are zealous for the law. Paul participated in that zeal. But when Christ was revealed to him by God, he saw that the excellency, the supereminence, the supreme preciousness, the surpassing worth, of Christ far exceeded the excellency of the law. His knowledge of Christ issued in the excellency of the knowledge of Christ.

B. Explain that Paul speaks of the excellency of knowing Christ in Philippians 3:8.

The knowledge in this verse is not the knowledge that belongs to Christ, the knowledge that Christ Himself has; it is our subjective knowing of Christ. The excellency of the knowledge of Christ is derived

from the excellency of His person. There can be no doubt that in Himself Christ is excellent. But if we lack the knowledge of Christ's excellency, His excellency will not mean anything to us.

Day 4 —

A. Why do we first need the knowledge of Christ as Philippians 3:8 speaks of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ?

This chapter stresses very much the knowledge of Christ. Verse 10 says, "To know Him and the power of His resurrection." Therefore, to know Him is crucial to our experience of Him. We cannot experience Him without knowing Him. The knowledge of Christ is excellent, and this knowledge is even an excellency. We must stress here the knowledge of Christ. The revelation is for knowing.

B. Expound the spiritual significance of Colossians 2:16-17.

These verses indicate that Christ is our eating, drinking, feast, new moon, and Sabbath. He is the body, the reality, the substance, of all the positive things in the universe. He is the reality of the air we breathe, of the food we eat, and of the sunshine we enjoy. Christ is all-inclusive.

Day 5 —

A. What is the point of the words "my Lord" Paul added in Philippians 3:8?

The addition of the words "my Lord" indicates that as Paul was writing, he was filled with intimate, tender feelings concerning Christ. Tender feelings concerning the preciousness of the Lord Jesus rose up within him, causing him to speak of "Christ Jesus my Lord." Paul placed great value on the excellency of the knowledge of his dear Lord Jesus Christ.

B. Explain holding to our domestic logic and national philosophy depriving us of Christ.

In a sense, this drives Christ away from us in our experience. In a subtle, secret, and hidden way, the religious, philosophical, and cultural things occupy the believers and keep them from the experience of Christ. Today you and I will find that Christ simply does not have a way with any nationality or group of people.

Day 6 —

A. Why is to gain Christ to gain His very person?

Christ is the embodiment of the fullness of the Godhead and the reality of the shadows of all positive things. It requires us paying price to gain something. To gain Christ is to pay price to experience, enjoy, and take possession of His unsearchable riches. There is no comparison between any gain and Christ. If we make such a comparison, we shall count everything loss.

B. Explain that the things which really frustrate people from experiencing Christ are mainly the things of religion, philosophy, and culture.

If we get into Paul's spirit and thought in Philippians 3, we shall realize that as he was writing he was thinking of religion, philosophy, and culture when he spoke of "all things." The all things are actually dominated by religion, philosophy, and culture. In order to gain Christ, we need to count all things as loss, including the things of religion, philosophy, and culture.

III. Conclusion:

Paul in Philippians 3:8 says, "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." Here the excellency of the knowledge of Christ is not the knowledge that belongs to Christ; rather, this knowledge is our subjective knowing of Christ. When Christ was revealed to him by God, Paul saw the supereminence, the supreme preciousness, and the surpassing worth of Christ. On account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, Paul counted all things to be loss; thus, to Paul, the loss of all things was the loss of everything. On account of Christ, Paul suffered the loss of all things and counted them as refuse in order to gain Christ. If we see how glorious the prize will be in the future, the price we pay today will be negligible.