

Fellowship of Joy in the Person of Christ (Part 2)

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[0:00] I love you, choir. Thank you. Thank you so much. Take your Bibles this morning. Open them to our text, Philippians chapter 3, and I'm going to read verses 1 through 11 again.

We have a little unfinished business in that block of text. Philippians chapter 3, verses 1 through 11. Amen.

Rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh. Though I also might have confidence in the flesh, if anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I am more so.

Circumcised the eighth day of the stock of Israel of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews, concerning the law of Pharisee, concerning zeal, persecuting the church, concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

[1:31] For 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.

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, 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 attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Now we'll stop right there. We're going to be focusing on the last few verses of that text that I just read. And Paul opens this by saying, Finally, my brethren, and again I would remind you that this is not in conclusion, my brethren.

He didn't say that, not meaning that. But rather, let me say this to you, my brethren. Or more literally, let me say this to you, my brethren, by way of command.

[2:52] Because he's about to give a command. He does give a command. Rejoice in the Lord. It's a command. It's an imperative. And you will remember, hopefully, as we discussed this last Sunday to, I think, a great extent, Paul has not commanded us to rejoice in our circumstances.

But rather, Paul has commanded us that we always rejoice in Christ. There's a huge difference between the two. We're to rejoice in Christ in spite of our circumstances.

Rejoice in Christ. In, or rather, no matter what the circumstances may be. And what he means is rejoice in who Jesus is to you.

Rejoice in what Jesus has done to you, for you. Rejoice in what Jesus has done to you. Or rejoice in the person of Christ.

Rejoice in the person of Christ. Now, this is not always easy. I think we would come to that agreement. That is, some tough things happen to Christians. Do they not?

[4:12] Some tough things, terribly tough things have happened to many of you right here this morning. To some degree or another, tough things have happened to all of us.

And we have yet to see some tough things, possibly. But tough things happen to Christians. And it happens all the time. Life is not easy for the Christian. When you were saved, God did not give you a promise that he would then shield you from all difficulty, all suffering, all problems.

Certainly not. We know that's not the case for believers. Life is hard for Christians. We suffer pain. We suffer persecution. We grieve over losses in life.

Family members, friends that we have lost. We hurt. Sometimes deeply hurt. Physically as well as emotionally. And Paul says, yes, I know about that.

We won't take the time this morning, but you can just jot down 2 Corinthians 11, 24 to 28. Read that some other time. Find out that Paul knew exactly what it meant to suffer. He listed this huge list of things that he had experienced in life.

[5:25] To the very point of death. And eventually Paul did die a martyr's death. And so Paul says, yes, I know all about that. I know life is hard.

I know about pain. I know about losses. And he says, here is what to do. Rejoice.

Rejoice in the Lord. And after we initially respond by saying, what? Is that it? Then we respond, how? How, Paul?

How are we to do that? How is it possible to rejoice in the Lord while bad things are happening to us? And bad things are happening all around us.

How? And Paul tells us how. In fact, for Paul, I think he had boiled it all down to these three things. And so if he did, then we ought to, I think, three supreme priorities in life.

[6:28] And I would just be so bold as to suggest to you that these, if you and I will embrace these three priorities, then we will be able and enabled to rejoice in the Lord no matter what.

No matter what happens. Now, there are three big things, okay? There's no cakewalk. And you can't do this on your own. You'll need the grace of God.

But these are the three things we ought to focus on, ought to embrace. I gave all three of them on the front end last week. We only got through one of them.

Let me give all three of them again on the front end. Three priorities, supreme priorities of life.

Priority number one, what you should value more than anything else in this world.

Priority number two, what you should want to know. A lot of things we want to know. But what you should want to know more than anything else in this world.

[7:44] And priority number three, what you should long for, desire, long for, look for, more than anything else in this world.

All right, now, priority number one we looked at last week. Let me give a little bit of a review. What you should value more than anything else in this world.

In verses four through six, Paul gives us, so to speak, the assets side of the balance sheet of his life. That is, his life prior to meeting Christ.

And then in verse seven, we're not going to read over those again, but in verse seven, he moves all those assets over to the liabilities column. Literally.

He said, what things were gained to me, assets, these I've counted loss for Christ.

[8:41] Loss for Christ. And then Paul says one of the most astounding things. Verse eight. Indeed, I also count all things loss.

For what? For the excellence. Or we could say the surpassing value. Or surpassing worth.

One translation put it, the priceless gain. Of what? Out of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord. That's a grand statement.

An astounding thing. You see, here's what he's saying. Everything in this world that one would ascribe value to. And there are a lot of things that would fall into that list.

Into that list. All the things in this world that we would ascribe value to. Paul counted as rubbish.

And that's a strong word in and of itself, if you will remember.

[9:38] We can translate it refuse. King James uses the word dumb. That's pretty graphic. He says it's all rubbish.

I count it as rubbish as compared to what? His salvation. His salvation in Christ.

Or the way Paul termed it, gaining Christ. That's what it means when he says the surpassing value of the knowledge of Christ. He's talking about knowing Christ savingly.

The salvation knowledge of Christ. That is the surpassing value. And so he's saying stack it all up in one huge pile. All of it that you hold valuable.

And he's not saying that they're not valuable. He's just making a comparison. He said just stack it all up in one huge pile. And it will never ever equal.

[10:35] Not even come close to equaling the surpassing excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. And so when you suffer the loss of something.

Or the loss of something or someone. You can rejoice in the Lord because you can never lose him. That's Paul's point.

Because he. His salvation in him. Is worth more than anything else in this world. Anything. Priority number one then.

What you should value more than anything else in this world. And it is your salvation in Christ.

Priority number two. What you should want to know.

More than anything else in this world. Paul says in verse 10. This. Verse 10 is. Is what Paul wanted to know more than anything else in this world.

[11:38] Do you see it verse 10. It's very simple. That I may know him. That's really boiling it down. That's one thing I want to know.

More than anything else in this world. To. Know. That I may know him. Now you should notice that priority number one. Is foundational.

Now think of it in these terms. Priority number one. Is foundational. Because you can never rejoice. Come what may. Until you have. Valued your salvation above all else in this world.

It's foundational. Priority number two. Is very practical. Practical. Very practical. Something you need.

Every day. Every day. To enable you. To empower you. To rejoice in the Lord.

[12:41] Come what may. That's something you need. And Paul describes this thing you need. As knowledge. Or.

Something he wanted to know. What he wanted to know. Now. Obviously. He's speaking very generally here. Alright. We want more. And we'll get more.

But this. This statement. To know him. Is a very general statement. It's very general. What. Do we know. About.

The word know. Biblically speaking. Well. We know. That the word know. Can refer to. Three kinds of knowing.

Did you know that? I packed that word know in there. About as many times as I could get it there. Three kinds of knowing. And. As soon as I define these.

[13:37] You're going to say. Well yeah. Yeah. That's. That's right. I know that. There is. We can put it in these terms. There is the physical dimension of knowing. There is the practical dimension of knowing.

And then there is the personal dimension of knowing. So. The physical. The physical dimension of knowing.

Is just simply the function of your brain. Hopefully your brain is functioning here this morning. It's just. It's just how the brain works.

How it was created to work. You know. You learn facts. They may be true. They may be false. Concepts. Other things. And. And. You know. It's just.

All going into the brain. This is just the way the brain functions physically. And all of these concepts and facts and different things. Things are going into the brain without necessarily there being any connection with how you use those facts.

[14:39] Or respond to those facts. It's just simply the physical thing of learning things. All right. And so the brain is loaded with that kind of information.

And every day more of that goes in there. Some of it is. You know. Conscious. Some of it.

Subconscious. It's imperceptible. Things are just going in. Being stored there.

It's just information. It's the way the brain works physically. There is also the practical dimension. The practical dimension of knowing.

Dimension of knowing. And this is knowledge carried over and expressed through practice. Decisions you make.

A lifestyle. Directions you go. Conclusions you make. It's the practical side of all that stuff that's going into your brain.

[15:34] I mean we have billions of things coming through the eyes into our brains. Through our ears into our brains. And we dismiss most of it as irrelevant. But some of it we latch on to.

Some of it makes some kind of a difference. Some of it affects us in practical ways. It's experiential knowledge. For example. You might hear someone say.

All my life. All I've ever known. Is hard work. That's kind of a practical expression of this kind of knowledge. My kids would say.

All I've ever known is the church. Church life. You know. Every time the doors open. It's all I've ever known. So it's a practical kind of dimension of knowing.

And then finally of course. And you've guessed where we're going. There's the personal dimension. A personal dimension. And the Bible uses this dimension of knowing when it describes the marriage union.

[16 : 31] It describes the intimacy in a marriage. Though it means more than that. You know the context. Genesis 4.1 is a good example.

Adam knew Eve. His wife. I don't have to explain what that means. He knew her. This is intimacy. This kind of knowing is personal.

Personal. It speaks of union. And yet it is not confined. Let me quickly add. Not confined just to the context of sexual intimacy.

It means more than that. Because you see. This is the dimension of knowing that Paul is talking about here. Obviously. He's not wanting to learn more facts about Jesus.

That's not what he wants to know. He wants to know him. Intimately. In a communion way. You see. And so this is what he means.

[17 : 31] Intimate knowledge of Christ. That's what Paul is talking about. Now the fact is. That all knowledge moves through. Each of these three dimensions.

Does it? For example. First there is the physical knowledge of Christ. The physical knowledge of him. That is your brain. Gets information about him.

Just the particular biblical facts about him. And this is where a lot of people are in our world today.

They know facts about Jesus. Has made any difference in our life.

Hasn't become practical. But they have information. And then there is the practical knowledge of Christ. And so then you experience the life changing power of those facts.

Those biblical truths. And you're born again. And then there is the personal knowledge of Christ. Communion with him. Love for him.

[18 : 31] Intimate spiritual intimacy with him. And sadly not every believer is there. This is what Paul wanted to know.

This is what Paul wanted to know more than anything else in this world. And so Paul being very general here isn't he? That I may know him. But then Paul gets a little more specific.

Paul wants to know. Not physically. Not practically. But personally. Intimately know. He wants to know two.

Powerhouse truths about Jesus Christ. Two truths. Verse 10. The power of his resurrection. The fellowship of his suffering.

Being conformed to his death. I like the King James Version there. In the last part of that second one. Being made conformable unto his death.

[19 : 38] Alright? Now. This is what Paul wanted to intimately know. More than anything else in this world. And when we intimately know these same things.

Then. Among other things. We'll be able to rejoice. Come what may. When we know. These things. About Christ.

Alright. So first of all. What does it mean to know the power of his resurrection? We like the sound of that. Don't we? Though we don't really know what it means. I'd venture to guess.

And then. What does it mean to know the fellowship of his suffering? And we certainly do not like the sound of that. But we don't really know what that means. And nor do we care very much for the second part of that.

Being made conformable to his death. We don't like the sound of that. Do we? Let's look at each of these briefly. What is the power of his resurrection?

[20 : 43] Dear people. When. We get a hold of this. This kind of knowledge. That we know this. It'll be a great.

Great, great day. What does it mean? Well just what this power is. Paul really has already told us. And we'll get to that here in a minute.

But first let me take you to something he said to the Romans. In Romans chapter 4 and verse 25. This is what Paul said.

He's speaking of Jesus. He said Jesus was delivered up for our trespasses. That's a reference to his sacrificial death on the cross.

Right? Delivered up for our trespasses, our sins. But then notice what he says next. And raised. Resurrected. For our justification.

[21 : 47] Raised for our justification. Therefore since we have been justified by faith. We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. A tremendous verse of scripture. Delivered up for our trespasses.

Went to the cross. Went to the cross. For our sins. And was raised up. Resurrected for our justification. And so through him we have peace with God.

It's a tremendous statement. Alright so. Here's the part of it we want to focus on. Jesus said raised for our justification. And so I would say to you. That will bear some explanation.

The power of the resurrection. Is justification. The power of the resurrection. The resurrection of Christ. Is justification.

But what is that? Well it's something wonderful. More wonderful than we know I think. Justification. Now. Justification.

[22 : 46] Is. The gracious act of God. Where through faith. The believer is made just.

Before him. Blameless. Yeah. Praise the Lord. Blameless. As though the believer had never sinned.

Ever. As though the believer had always perfectly obeyed. God and his word. That's the best. I can do.

To define. In short terms. Justification. And it's the gracious act of God. Through faith. Now basically.

In justification. The gracious God. Has done two things for the believer. Two things. Forgiving all sin. And credited righteousness.

[23 : 42] That's what he's done in justification. Forgiving all sin. All of it. Past. Present. Future. All sin forgiven. And then credited righteousness to our account.

Or literally. To. Make the believer. The believer is now. In the right. With God. That's a tremendous thing.

Now this is key. Because I'm not just desiring to teach a doctrinal lesson on the term justification. Here's the key. Here's where it connects with what Paul said in Philippians.

Now listen. The resurrection of Christ. Is where God. Announced his verdict. On all of that. The forgiveness of sin.

And the crediting of righteousness. He said. I don't know if I'm following you. Let me illustrate it this way. Some of you have been through faith evangelism training.

[24 : 42] Some years back. And you will remember a certain picture that was used. To illustrate the sinner's complicity in the cross. And you remember the picture.

There's the cross there. At least the bottom part of it. And you see the feet of Jesus. So Jesus is hanging on the cross. And then surrounded around the cross. There are people standing there. And they're not dressed in old time biblical clothing.

They have contemporary clothing. Just like clothing we would wear today. And they're standing there. Looking up at the cross. And they have in their hands. A hammer. Nails. And it's a graphic. Very powerful illustration. Of the sinner's. Part in the cross. Or complicity in the cross. Because it was our sin. That compelled Jesus to go to the cross.

It was in a sense. It was our sins that nailed him there. Graphic illustration. Beautiful picture. Now. I propose. To illustrate the power of the resurrection with a picture.

[25 : 43] I don't have the picture. You'll have to imagine it in your mind. And the mind is powerful to do that. So. Imagine this picture. It will be a picture of the tomb.

Where Jesus' body was laid. His crucified body. His dead body. His tomb where he was laid. And we can all kind of picture that. We're on the outside. Looking at the tomb.

And the rock is still over the front of it. Because it is the dawning of the third day. Jesus' body is still in there. It's dead.

He's been crucified. And picture people. Standing outside of the tomb. All standing there. Looking at the tomb.

And they're all waiting. To see what will happen. And they are very interested in what is going to happen next.

[26 : 42] Because they are all waiting. As it were. For God's verdict. On the cross. God the Father's verdict.

On the cross. Eternity hangs in the balance. Jesus went to the cross. He bore all my sin.

Your sin. He took upon himself our sin. And he paid the price. He died. On the cross.

Judgment for our sin was poured out upon him. And he died. On the cross. And what would God's verdict be?

Would he just stay dead in the grave? And his body rot. And disappear. Disintegrate.

[27:45] Or would he live? Huh? And so picture yourself there. You're a believer.

And you're there outside the tomb. With all those other believers in Jesus. And you're waiting. Because if he lives.

You live. If he remains dead. All hope is gone. Are you getting this picture?

It's a very theological picture. And suddenly. On the third day. The stone is rolled away.

And Jesus comes bursting forth out of the grave. Alive. And so the verdict is in. The verdict is in.

[28:46] The resurrection is God the Father pronouncing his holy verdict concerning his son. My son is not guilty. My son is sinless.

My son is just and righteous. My son is perfect. And listen to me. So are all those who believe in him. You see?

Because all those who are in him. The verdict is perfect. The verdict is saved.

In Jesus. And this ties us back to Philippians chapter 3. And what Paul wrote in verses 8 and 9.

Look at it. That I may gain Christ.

And notice this. Be found in him. Found in him. That takes us back to the resurrection. He came out alive.

[29:50] And God the Father pronounced his verdict. Perfect. My perfect, sinless, blameless son. And all those who are in him. And Paul says that I may be found in him.

Justified. Not guilty. Not having my own righteousness, he says. Which is from the law. A works righteousness. Which is worthless, by the way.

But that which is, that righteousness which is through Jesus. Through faith in Christ. And what kind of righteousness is that? The righteousness which is from God.

On the basis of faith. Glory, hallelujah. That's the power of the resurrection. Forgiveness.

Absolute forgiveness. And righteousness. Without which you could never see God. The righteousness of Jesus Christ.

[30:55] For all believers. And that is what Paul wanted to know. That's what he wanted to know. And you say, well, didn't he already know that? Do you?

Do you know that? Then tell me, why do you continue to feel guilty? Tell me, why do you think you must continue to earn his forgiveness and his love?

Tell me, why do you keep on trying to atone for your past sins? Tell me, why then, if you know the power of the resurrection, forgiveness and righteousness.

Tell me, why do you keep on grieving over the terrible sins of your past? Why do you? Tell me, why do you keep on going to God?

And expressing how sorry you are for your sin, your wicked life. Why do you keep going to God? Get over it and go on.

[32:16] Do you remember when Jesus saved that adulterous woman? There she is. She's about to be stoned. The men are there with the rocks in their hands.

Now, I'm not going to tell the story. You know how it ends. Well, I am going to tell you how it ends. Jesus says to her, Your sins are forgiven you.

Can you imagine how she felt at that time? She felt as we should feel. Jesus just said, your sins, all of them are forgiven you.

They're forgiven. This is the power of the resurrection. To know without any doubt that all our sins have been forgiven.

And Jesus said to this adulterous woman, this woman who had lived a wicked life, she was caught in the very act of it. And He said to her, your sins are forgiven.

[33:24] And then He said, go and sin no more. Don't ever live your life anymore according to this pattern and under the dominion of sin.

Go and sin no more. What a great day it was for that woman. See, here's the idea. Know the power of His resurrection. Full acquittal.

Absolute forgiveness. Righteousness. The righteousness of Christ. And listen, we have God's Word on that. It's the empty tomb.

That's God's Word. Jesus was raised for our justification. But Paul wanted to know something else. Something else about this knowledge that he needed.

Something he wanted to know more than anything else in the world. And that is the fellowship of his sufferings. What is the fellowship of his sufferings?

[34 : 34] That doesn't sound very good to us. Well, suffering is not good. I mean, it's not. The Bible doesn't sugarcoat that.

But the fellowship of it is good. It's very good. And so Paul is saying to us, you live in a fallen world. You know, you live where suffering, where there's suffering and pain and heartaches and tragedies. One right after the other.

And even death. And all of these are simply the natural characteristics of a world that is infected by sin. And that's where you live. And it touches every life.

Every single one. Without an exception. That is, even God's people are going to suffer. Experience hardships and pains. And trials and sufferings.

[35 : 29] And death. And all these things. But this is what I want to know, Paul says. This is what I want to know. And this is what you and I should want to know about that.

That all of our sufferings are producing Christ-likeness in us. That's what he wanted to know.

That's what Paul meant when he said, being made conformable to his death. But I don't misunderstand this.

Someone has put it this way. Put Paul's words this way. This is what we need to get. That Paul was saying, I don't want one iota of my suffering to be wasted.

To be wasted. On the ultimate goal of my maturing to be more like Christ.

[36 : 32] That's quite a statement. I think that's what Paul's saying. What he wanted to know. He was saying, I want to know that no trial I experience is wasted.

You know, sometimes we can waste the trials God allows to come into our lives. Not be changed by them.

Not drawn near to Christ through them. Stand against and attempt to thwart God's plan to make us and mold us more into the very life and image of Christ.

And Paul is saying, I know that the trials are coming. God is not going to spare me of those things. There's no promise in Scripture that says that they won't come.

But I want to know that they're not wasted. I want to know that no pain I experience is squandered. I want to know that every difficult thing that happens to me is eternally profitable.

[37 : 48] And I might add, I want to know that I do not have to go it alone because there is the fellowship. The fellowship of His suffering.

Yeah, Jesus suffered. He suffered and died and He's in heaven. And don't get the idea that He's up there and we're down here and He's already done His suffering and now we're down here.

It's time for us to have ours. That somehow we're detached in that way? No. The point is that He is with us. Fellowshiping with us.

You remember when Paul was on the Damascus road and he met Jesus? And Jesus said to him, Why are you persecuting me? Huh? Was he persecuting Jesus directly?

Well, yes, he was. Through his persecution of God's people. There's the fellowship. This is what Paul wanted to know. I want to know that everything that happens to me is worth it.

[38 : 53] I don't want to do anything that would short-circuit it or thwart it or avoid it. I want to know all of that. Yeah, listen, we do not invite suffering.

We do not go out looking for it. We're not wanting to suffer or any of those things. And nowhere in Scripture are we told to think otherwise. That's not the point.

But we are to know that all suffering is for the purpose of making us more like Christ and bringing us closer into fellowship with Christ.

And that is what we ought to want to know more than anything in this world. The fellowship of the suffering. And some of us here do know that.

Some of us in this room know it more than many others. Finally, what you should long for more than anything else in this world.

[39 : 57] Verse 11, If by means, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

That's a little confusing maybe. What does he mean by that? What does he mean by any means? Some versions have possibly.

Paul's not expressing any doubts about something here. He just doesn't know how it's going to come about or when. But if by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

This is what Paul longed for more than anything else in this world. What is it? Well, the word attain means simply to come to a place.

It means to arrive, finally arrive at a place. Attain. That's what the word means. Now, what place would that be?

[41:11] Do you think? To where did Paul want to arrive? His resurrection.

His resurrection. It's what he longed for. In a sense that this life would be over and I would reach resurrection, get to the resurrection.

He's not worried about it coming about. He just doesn't know when it's going to happen. But it was what he longed for more than anything else in this world. His resurrection. To see Jesus face to face.

To walk with Him without any barrier, without any separation whatsoever. To love Him without any hindrance of sin.

Not even have sin. Not even the possibility of it. To enter into the very bliss of heaven and eternal life with Christ. And to realize the completion of God's refining work in His life.

[42:22] That is that this, that I'm going through now, the problems I face, and I rejoice in the Lord over them because they're making me more like Christ. But they hurt their heart.

And I long for the day when that's done. It's done. And the work is complete. And I have arrived where God is leading me to.

And I have become what God, through His work, has been forming me into. So I can see Jesus face to face.

And I know it's all done. That's what He longed for more than anything else in this world.

What you should value more than anything else in this world, and it's your salvation in Christ Jesus.

What you should want to know more than anything else in this world, forgiveness, the power of His resurrection, forgiveness, and righteousness, and the fellowship of His suffering, being made more like Christ every day.

[43:35] And what you and I should long for more than anything else in this world is the coming of Christ. Our resurrection, whether we're going to be resurrected out of the grave, or whether we're just going to shoot up into the sky and be transformed on the way.

We're looking for Jesus, longing for Jesus, because then the work will be done. It'll be done.