

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**

Scripture Reading: Phil. 3:3-8

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

- A. The flesh in Philippians 3:3 and 4 comprises all that we are and have in our natural being.
- B. In these verses *confidence in the flesh* refers to all the good items or qualities 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:
  - 1. Self-confidence is the characteristic of the flesh; the most obvious sign of unchecked flesh is self-confidence—cf. 3:2-3.
  - 2. Confidence in the flesh keeps us from Christ—Phil. 3:3-4, 10.
- 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:
  - 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.
  - 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.
- 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.

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

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

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.
- C. If we would experience Christ, we first need to have the excellency of the knowledge of Christ—Phil. 3:7-10:
  1. We cannot experience Christ without knowing Him through a revelation of Him—Gal. 1:15-16; 2:20; 4:19.
  2. If we do not have a higher revelation of Christ, we cannot have a higher experience of Christ—1 John 5:20.
  3. Our experience of Christ cannot surpass the excellency of our knowledge of Christ—Eph. 1:17-21; 3:14-19.

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

- 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.
- 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.

**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:**

- 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.
- 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:
  1. The Greek word for *gain* in verse 8 means “to secure, to obtain, to lay hold of.”
  2. To gain Christ is to gain His person, to experience, enjoy, and take possession of all His unsearchable riches—Eph. 3:8.
  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).
  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.