

Knowing Christ

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[0 : 00] Turn with me now please for a little time to Philippians chapter 3. Listen to the Philippians chapter 3 reading from verse 7.

But what things were gained to me those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and to count them but done that I may win Christ and be found in him not having my own righteousness which is of the law but that which is through the faith of Christ the righteousness which is of God by faith that I may know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings being made conformable unto his death if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

And we are focusing this morning upon the element of knowledge that arises in Paul's testimony in these verses. We've already looked at some aspects of the subject of knowing God looking at it in terms of something of a definition of it then looking at it in relation to Christ and his death we then looked at a couple of studies as how we come into the inside if you like of that knowledge that it is through repentance and then last time through faith in Christ that we come into the experience and the knowledge that's spoken of here of knowing the Lord.

And today we're looking at that knowledge in terms of how it itself is something that must be seen as increasingly what we must apply ourselves to because the Apostle is here concerned to set out that knowledge that he has of Jesus Christ not only what are related to it but what it itself is designed to be.

Because he is telling the Philippians that here is something that in the past he came into but now he wants wants more and more to set out increasingly as his own experience.

[3 : 03] These are very well known verses we've looked at them more than once and the title if you like for our study could be today the inestimable gain of knowing Jesus Christ. The inestimable gain of knowing Jesus Christ.

These things that were gained to me says the Apostle those I counted loss. Yea doubtless and I do count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.

Now he's putting things in terms of spiritual accountancy. He's talking in terms of profit and loss. He's looking into his spiritual balance sheet.

And as he does so one of the things that he obviously brings before us is the importance of knowing the principle of profit and loss.

Every good successful business knows about the principle of profit and loss. Every successful business indeed lives or proceeds on the basis of turning losses into profits or gains.

[4 : 28] The more a business goes on successfully the more losses are indeed turned into gains. That's how a business proceeds. In the simplest terms proceeds successfully. A successful business is one that is more and more turning losses into gains. Into profit.

Profit. And there is a spiritual equivalent the Apostle is telling us. You have to take that principle of gain from loss or loss into gain and you have to apply it in a spiritual fashion.

Profit. It doesn't mean of course that the Apostle is not a spiritual basis. It doesn't mean of course that the Christian life is really all about the kind of things that you find in ordinary business. That it's simply that and no more. But there is an application of the principle and the Apostle is telling us something about it so that you and I ourselves will engage in something of that activity to count up our spiritual balance sheet. To look into our accounts book today.

And to especially realize how the knowledge of the Lord, how this knowing of Christ is something that gives us to look into our balance sheet, to look at what it's like.

Now verses 4 to 6 tell us what the Apostle himself was setting out for these Philippians. We're going to look firstly at Paul studying his own accounts book or looking at his own balance sheet, spiritually.

[6 : 07] And then secondly that will take us on to looking at the state of our own account book. And remember that at the center of it all there is this matter of knowing Jesus Christ. That is what he is concerned above all things to set before the Philippians.

That is what is at the heart of his own testimony. It is that especially that lies at the heart of studying his own accounts book. Well what is he saying? Here he is looking at his own accounts book. He's first of all looking at the early pages of it.

The entries that he put into his own accounts book early on in his spiritual experience. Notice what he is saying. First of all even in his accounts book before he became a Christian. He wasn't a new religious man. He had an accounts book before he came to the knowledge of Christ.

He had an accounts book drawn up all tidily made up. Every day he entered minutely in this accounts book as he saw then the entries that were for him a matter of profit and loss.

What is he saying? He says that being a Jew and being a Pharisee and being a zealous Jew and being a legalistic Jew was something that he equated with profit.

[7 : 26] That was my gain. That was my loss. That was my gain he says. But it's now my loss. But as he looks at these early entries in his accounts book what is he saying?

These things were once gain to me. I made up my balance sheet he said in the past in a way that's very different to what I do now.

And the way that he looks back into his accounts book in the past shows that the things that he now counts as loss were then counted as gain.

His early entries, the early pages are such that these things circumcised the eighth day of the stock of Israel, the tribe of Benjamin and Hebrew of the Hebrews, a Pharisee concerning zeal, persecuting the church, touching the righteousness which is in the law blameless, the rigidity, the application, the zeal, the Pharisee concerned to meet the details of the law and the Pharisee legislation around the law.

That says the apostle was my gain. And I looked at one time at my balance sheet and I saw that I was doing all of these things and I was writing at the foot of the page a good performance, a profitable business, a gain.

[8 : 59] But he says, what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ, yea doubtless and I count all things but loss.

You see he's now bringing us somewhat further on in his accounts book. He's left behind the pages of Saul of Tarsus the Pharisee and he's moved into the pages where he began to write entries that have to do with coming to know Christ.

And when he came to know the Lord, his entries changed. What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. I did away with the importance of being a Jew and being a Pharisee and being a Hebrew of the Hebrews and the legalistic approach that I had to the word, to the law of God.

These things I counted loss. They were self-righteousness. They were nothing to do with acceptance with God. They were entailing an irreparable loss. The more I followed them. But the recent entries are even more interesting. Not only does he say, those I counted loss for Christ.

[10 : 17] But he's coming to the most recent entries in his accounts book and he's saying, Yea doubtless and I do count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.

Not only is he saying, I have no regrets about the fact that I came to know the Lord. I have never looked back upon it in such a way as sought to go back to where I was. But he's doing much more than that.

He's saying, I've advanced on that. My coming to know the Lord and the entries that I made in my spiritual balance sheet then.

Even they have been taken over by the entries that I'm writing up now as I write to you for the business.

Because he's moved on from saying, I counted them but loss. To saying, I presently count. And not only is he saying, that was something which happened in the past.

[11:19] So that I might indeed come, as he says here in verses 7 following. He's saying, and that I might win, that I might gain Christ. And verse 9, that I might be found in him.

And verse 10, that I might know him. He's not just saying, I counted things but loss. So that all these things would then take place. But I am now counting all things but loss.

So that all of these things will be further explored and known by me. He's not at all happy with the idea of resting upon what he came to know of the Lord.

So that he would then on the way to Damascus. Enter into this matter of gaining Christ. And being found in Christ. And coming to know Christ. He's saying, I am now counting things but loss.

So that I can now and every day that I live. Say that I am being found in him. And gaining him. And might know him. All of these things for the apostle.

[12:24] Are things which he is concerned to enter more fully into. Every day that he lives. That is why the importance of the knowledge of Christ.

Is so central to his thought. And so we come to the more recent entries. The early pages have been left behind.

Even those that he entered records into when he came to know the Lord. To some extent have been left behind. Though the principles continue to follow.

But he's advanced on that. And you can see his advance. In the very words that he's using. He's advanced in the knowledge of Christ. He's gained even more of an appreciation of his Lord.

He's entered more into what it means to be found in him. He's entered more into the knowledge of him. And the power of his resurrection. And the fellowship of his suffering. He's gained increasingly.

[13:23] As we look into his spiritual accounts book. What is he saying? He's made a sound investment. Yes. But he's added to that investment. He's now in a position to say. He has more and more.

Of a profit margin in his accounts book. How can you see that? Well you can see it in three elements. Because you notice the differences between verses 7 and 8.

He is saying in verse 7. The things that were gained to me. Those I counted lost for Christ. But then you see he's saying in verse 8.

Yea doubtless and I count. All things but lost. For the excellency of knowledge. He said at one time. The very things which were gained to him.

Then I was willing to count these things but lost. So that I might have this knowledge of Christ. For the excellency of knowledge. Of Christ Jesus my Lord. But now he's saying yea doubtless and I count.

[14:26] All things but lost. Not just the things that were gained to me. Not just the things that had to do with him being a Pharisee. And a Jew. And a zealous persecutor of the church. But all things.

Every single thing that is a hindrance to me in my knowledge of Christ. Every single thing that I myself might cultivate. In the place of knowing Christ. That he says to me is now lost.

I put it behind me. I want no more to do with it. If it's going to hinder me in the knowledge of Christ. Yea doubtless I count. All things. But lost. And you can see how he's advancing.

Secondly. When he's saying. What things were gained to me. Those I counted. Those I counted. Lost for Christ. In verse 80 he's saying. Yea I count them.

But done. That I may win Christ. He's moved. Not just from saying. These things to all things. He's moved from saying.

[15:25] They were lost. To saying. They are actually. Worthless rubbish. They are. As the word literally means. In Greek. They are garbage.

Now Paul wasn't despising his birth. Or the fact that he was a Jew. What he was despising. What he was putting his back to. What he was leaving behind. What he was saying was worthless garbage.

Was trusting in these things. Was making such an issue of them. As sought to find acceptance with God through them. These things he says. I now regard.

Not just as lost. But as worthless. Rubbish. It has absolutely no value. I realise now he's saying. In the accounts book of God.

In the way that God pronounces righteousness. And I count them. But done. That I may win Christ. You can see it in that.

[16:25] You can see it thirdly. In the way he speaks about Christ himself. These I counted loss. Loss for Christ. For Christ. But now he's saying. Yea I count all things but loss.

For the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus. My Lord. He came to know him on the way to Damascus. As his Lord. As his Lord.

From then on he was his Lord. But he knows him as his Lord. Now much more than he is. His conception of his Lordship. Is greatly increased over what it was then.

You can see it in the title. There isn't another phrase like that in the whole Bible. You don't find that description anywhere else in the New Testament. Christ Jesus my Lord. Is unique to Philippians 3 verse 8.

Why is that? What is Paul telling us? When you say. Why is that? Well he's comparing it. I think with verse 7. Where he's saying. This is my advance. What I have come to gain more and more of.

[17 : 25] Is the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. Every single aspect of what Christ means to him. Is packed into that wonderful phrase.

The excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. The Lord's total ownership of Paul. And Paul's total possession.

Or possession of the totality of Christ. It's a wonderful two-fold emphasis. Everything that is in Paul's life.

Belongs to Jesus Christ. That's what knowing Christ is about he says. He possesses me. He owns me. I know him in such a knowing.

As knows that I am his. And I am his entire. That is Lordship means. He has a claim over me. That is absolute and total.

[18 : 25] But the other side of it is also included. That everything in Jesus Christ that belongs to God's people. Belongs to Paul.

As he writes. He's conscious of the enormity of his possession. He goes on later to speak about being apprehended of Jesus Christ. So that I may apprehend.

That for which I have been apprehended. And what is that? The prize of the high calling of God in him. This heaven. This glory. This likeness to him. This perfection.

This being with him in all eternity. That is the goal. That's why Christ has grasped him. But he says. What I am now doing is seeking to grasp more and more of that. To bring more and more of that into my possession.

Even as I live in this world. As he studies his account. You can see. He has moved on from the early pages. He has moved on from the middle pages. The most recent pages. The entries that you see in it.

[19 : 22] Tell you. That Paul. In a spiritual investment. Is a rich man. Not only is he rich. But he is so content with his riches.

He knows Jesus Christ. He talks of the excellency. Of the knowledge. Of Christ Jesus. My Lord. Everything that is mine in his days.

Makes my spiritual balance sheet now. To be so different. To what it used to be. It is now indeed. A prophet.

And a gain. The things which were gain. I count them but loss. What is the reason.

For his profits. Why is this the case. What is the secret behind the apostles. Account here. As he gives it to us.

[20 : 22] His spiritual accounts. Well it is. That wonderful phrase. In verse 8. The excellency of the knowledge. Of Christ Jesus. My Lord.

The spiritual. Excellency. The surpassing worth. The incomparable gain. Of knowing Jesus Christ. It is the fact.

It is the fact. It is the fact. It is the fact. It is the fact. It is the fact. That he knows the Lord. That lies behind. The state of his accounts book. How much it is in craft. It is the fact.

Of what he has made. With that knowledge of his Lord. That lies behind the state of his accounts book. How much it is in craft. So that brings us to look at.

The state of our own accounts book. So I preach some. Three or four times.

[21 : 19] I think. On these verses. But the very nature. Of the verses themselves. Lend themselves. Not only to. The necessity.

Of preaching on them. But surely on the benefit. Because the nature of the verses. As we see. Is concerned with growing. In the knowledge of Christ. And I have to put it to myself.

As I preach from them today. As I look into my own. Spiritual accounts book. What is it with me. As I proclaim these things to you. In relation to the last time.

That I preached. Have I actually grown. So that I am able to preach more. From these verses now. Than the last time. That I preached. Have I made such an advance.

In terms of my own. Spiritual accounts book. That my understanding. Of what's in these verses. By the knowledge of Christ. That's in the heart of them. Is such that I am now able to.

[22 : 15] In a more advanced way. Proclaim the gospel. From these verses. That is something. That I have to look to. As I proclaim them to you. That is something. That I must seek to do.

Even before I proclaim them to you. It's something in which. I have to open up. My own spiritual accounts book. If you allow me to be so personal. And before the Lord. Ask him.

Lord. In the knowledge. In the knowledge. Of thee. That I have. Can I preach. More from these verses now. Than I ever did before. And before the Lord.

I have to do that. But you too. Must do the same thing. It's not just for me.

In terms of preaching the gospel. It's the entirety. Of the Christian life. That's concerned. That we're concerned with here. It's not you. In terms of hearing the gospel preached. It's your whole.

[23 : 14] Relationship of knowledge. To Jesus Christ. That really is at the heart of this. When the apostle is giving us. To see his accounts book. And calling upon us. To look into. Our own today.

How is it with your accounts book? How is it with your balance sheet? Look at the records. Look in upon.

At this very moment. Look into the entries. In the columns. Of your spiritual accounts book. Look at the column.

Of the way you know the Lord. Look at the column. Of what it means to be found in him. Look at the column. Of gaining Christ. And all that comes with him.

Look at the column. Of your service to Christ. And the entries. That must be found in that column.

Look at what it means to share with him. In his sufferings. In the sense in which.

[24 : 11] Our service for him. Will bring in along with it. The reproach of Christ. That which it means. In terms of. Experiencing the opposition.

Of the world. And of evil. And of our own hearts. All that it means to suffer. In whatever way. Would have us suffer. As Christians. Look at the column. That has to do with. The fellowship of our suffering.

And look at the foot of the page. Do you have a curse balance? Is it a loss? Or are you in profit? Is it gain? Or is it showing a deficit? This is what.

The passage. Is calling upon us to do. It's not simply a matter of saying. Why wasn't Paul a wonderful Christian? That's not why he's writing this to the Philippians. That's not why this passage exists in the Bible.

[25 : 14] So that we can admire. The balance sheet of the apostle. We can do that. But fail to look into our own. And as we look into his. It's the state of our accounts book.

Today that is crucial. As we would stand before the Lord. There are some of you unquestionably. That are showing a healthy balance.

Oh I know you would not say such of yourselves. You complain of how little you do indeed know your Lord. You complain of how much you find in your heart of sin.

You complain of how little you understand the Bible. Compared to what you know of the treasure that is in it. You complain of how little you are able to do for your Lord. Compared to what you desire to do for him.

But your life shows that you have made gains. Your life shows it in the way that you live your life. In the way that you use the means that God has given you. Not just do you attend to them.

[26 : 15] But the spirit in which you attend to them. It shows that you have made advance. That you have grown. And other people will tell you. Who know the Lord. That yours is a life.

That is seeking these things. In verses 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. Your life shows. Even though you may feel at times.

That it's not the case. The way that you appear to others. Who know these issues. Tell us. That you have indeed. Acknowledged that you have not yet attained. But you are pressing on.

You are forgetting the things which are behind. You are seeking to apprehend that for which. You have also been apprehended of Christ Jesus. You are pressing towards the mark. For the prize of the high calling of God.

And other people will tell you as well as I. That they know your life is progressing steadily. Heaven works. But it's not so.

[27 : 13] With everybody. I cannot say that of all those. Before me here today. Some of you have not made such advance.

Some of you in the knowledge of God. Have not shown the progress. But this passage says. Ought to be characteristic of a Christian. Some of you were promising.

But have declined since then to show. The promise. There were great hopes concerning you. That you would take up the places in God's visible church.

That had been created by God. Taking away some of his aged people. You were flourishing under the gospel. But then.

The fruit of it. Is not. What it promised to be. Even the apostle Paul. Had to say. Had to say.

[28 : 19] Of some of those that. Had been under his ministry. That he was concerned. That he was concerned over them. And he was concerned. To show them.

These things. Such as in Philippians 3. You remember he said to the Galatians. When he said in Galatians 4. And verse 11. I am afraid of you.

Lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain. Brethren. I beseech you. Be as I am. For I am a skia. You have not injured me at all. Where is the blessedness.

He speak of. For I bear you record. That if it had been possible. You would have plucked out your own eyes. And given them to me. Am I therefore become your enemy. Because I tell you the truth. What is the apostle concerned for there. His concern for these Galatians. That as he says. Began so well. Oh he says. Who did hinder you. What happened to you.

[29 : 16] He is concerned. To place before them. That the fact that he is. He is wrestling with these things. In putting these things before them. In no way means.

That he has become their opponent. In fact he is emphasizing. That he is concerned. To put these things before them. As one of their greatest friends. Am I he says.

Become your enemy. Because I tell you these things. Because I say that I am anxious over you.

Lest my labor over you. Should have been in vain. And every preacher of the gospel.

Is concerned. Over those he preaches to us. It's not that we are without fault.

I acknowledge that as soon as anyone. My own spiritual account book. As I've said. Must be gone over in the presence of the Lord. But this.

[30 : 19] Is the concern. What is your spiritual account book like. To what extent have you profited.

From my ministry of the gospel to you. What is the end to which God's word. Has come into your life. To what extent is your knowledge of God.

To the good of his church. Of his cause. Of his kingdom. Is the knowledge you have of him. Is it something that you have put.

To such a use. As you yourself have gained spiritually. And you have been to the benefit of God. My dear friends. These things I say to you.

As repent. These things I say to you. Because I know they are the will of Christ. These things I say to you. Because I know. That out of the will of Christ. In the scriptures.

[31 : 20] These spiritual balance sheets. Apply to us all. And today. We have to look into them.

We have to tally them. We have to see. That they show. A profit. Now there are others of you.

But have not shown at all. A concern to be profitable spiritually. What is your balance sheet like today?

You have never come to Christ. You have known so much about him. But still. Whose balance sheets. Show so much in us.

Are you still like the apostle Paul was. Many years ago. That he's been telling us. Of here. So that we can benefit from it. Have we come to the point. Where we have to say.

[32 : 22] And acknowledge before the Lord. That whatever entrance. Whatever entries there are. In the columns of our spiritual balance sheet. If we don't have.

Christ. It is a disastrous loss. We cannot be in spiritual credit. Gain. Balance. Profit.

If he is absent. If we are not found in him. If we are relying upon our own righteousness. Or the righteousness of someone else.

Or if we are relying on any such thing. But the Lord himself. And if we have not come to him. And through faith and repentance. Come to know him. Our spiritual balance book today.

Can be full of many many entries. And yet. And yet. At the bottom of each page of it. You must write. The loss.

[33 : 21] That is undoubtedly yours. There can be no spiritual gain. Without Christ. Without knowing him. How long will your spiritual balance sheet.

Show such a loss. Now Lord. Amen. Coming to Christ. Is not a matter to be delayed endowment. Coming to have spiritual gain. By coming to him. and coming to know him is not something that you can promise yourself. It's something that you and I must do.

It's a matter of urgency because far sooner than we are away our spiritual balance sheet in this life will become our eternal account before God.

And if we leave this world showing a spiritual loss without Christ oh what a terrible reading our balance sheet will be through all eternity and not only will it show a loss but we will be written off.

[34 : 40] Written off from the face of God we who knew these things in the gospel to contemplate being written off in the words depart from me what a terrible loss that will be.

It's not a matter of how you feel. It doesn't mean that you don't come to Christ till you feel guilty. You may not feel guilty here today but the Bible tells you that you are without Christ without his cleansing, without his forgiveness. Not a matter of feeling things. People tell us we'll come to church when we feel like it.

That's a tragedy my friends. People tell you we'll come to church when we feel we're in a condition to come. They'll never come if they wait for feelings. And you'll never come to Christ if you wait for feelings like it.

Coming to him is coming to him as you are. Whatever you feel it's your duty to come. Whatever you feel it's your privilege to come. Whatever you feel today it's your urgent necessity.

[35 : 51] Oh to come to him. Spurgeon said I never find Christ anywhere telling sinners to wait.

But I find much of him saying to come to him. John Bunyan was one time imagining Peter preaching on the day of Pentecost.

preaching to many people he imagined that would have been instrumental indeed in crucifying the Lord Jesus Christ. And Bunyan gives an account of how he would imagine Peter speaking to those people to repent every one of them.

And the reactions the varied reactions and responses within that great crowd on the day of Pentecost. Bunyan says Peter would say repent every one of you.

But one might stand up and say but I helped to hound Jesus to the cross and yet Peter would say repent every one of you. Another might say but I helped drive the nails into his hands.

[37 : 10] Ah but Peter would say repent every one of you. Another would say but I pierced his side and yet Peter would say ah but repent every one of you. there is no one here today who has a sin that needs prevent you coming to Christ.

though you have rejected him a thousand times under the gospel you will find that he is as ready today to embrace you as he ever has been.

Though you have spent years of barrenness under the gospel and have not come to know himself yet my friends his arms today are as outstretched towards us as they were as you read of him in the pages of your Bible to welcome every penitent who would come to know him.

You must not look to yourself you must look to him and flee to him. Your time is short your urgency is grave you have spent too long already without knowing him take the rest of your life long or short in this world doesn't matter make it about knowing Jesus Christ make it a matter of profiting make it a matter of spiritual gain after all the Lord who knew better than any of us it was he himself who said for what shall it profit a man though he should gain the whole world and lose his soul or what will a man give in exchange for his soul my friend what will you give in exchange for your soul because if you die without

Christ you will have exchanged something for her and that will be a great part gracious God we thank thee for the way that thy word so clearly speaks to us we thank thee for every evidence of thy presence that enables us to hear thy voice we thank thee for the life that was given to thy people we thank thee for thy holy spirit that not only dost thou create life within us that thou dost sustain it also not only art thou the awakener of our souls that thou art the restorer of us also we pray oh lord for both awakening and restoring grace that that that today each one of us according to our need may know thy supply according to thy riches and glory by Christ

[40 : 33] Jesus oh lord receive us we pray thee in all the sin that we find in ourselves and even in our worship we pray that we may look to Christ and we ask that thou would accept us in him and do thou help us lord to have that knowledge of him increasingly that would value thy salvation more

and more go before us now and bless us on the way with thy peace for Jesus sake amen