# I’d Rather Have Jesus

**Philippians 3:7-16**

*4-23-2025*

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WHY? FOUR REASONS IN V. 7-14

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**I. BECAUSE THERE IS NO GREATER <u>TREASURE</u> THAN GAINING CHRIST** (V. 7-8)

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**II. BECAUSE THERE IS NO GREATER <u>SECURITY</u> THAN BEING UNITED TO CHRIST** (V. 9)

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**III. BECAUSE THERE IS NO GREATER <u>EXPERIENCE</u> THAN KNOWING CHRIST** (V. 10-11)

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INTRO: Give examples of what people are looking for in life. They are looking for treasure, $, security, experiences, purpose in life.

In verses 7-16, Paul gives 4 REASONS why he would rather have Jesus than anything else, such as his past successes, past religious works in Judaism, & past strives toward "self-righteousness."

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WHY? FOUR REASONS IN V. 7-14

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**I. BECAUSE THERE IS NO GREATER <u>TREASURE</u> THAN GAINING CHRIST** (V. 7-8)

V. 7 - **"Gain <u>to me</u>"** - Paul before salvation was selfishly proud of his Jewish heritage, his religious achievements, and his reputation as a scholar (Acts 26:24). These were his treasures that brought glory only to him - not to God.

V. 7 - **"Gain....Loss"** - Paul is saying that those things which I formerly viewed as spiritual assets were really spiritual losses. That which I thought I had in my "plus" column was later considered a "minus." That which I esteemed as "profit" became "liability" to me.
When Paul met Jesus Christ as his personal Savior, his values were reexamined and changed. Since then only Christ was what Paul considered (counted, reckoned) as a gain, a plus, a true profit.

**"Counted"** - Paul made a mental decision and calculated that his own fleshly means of righteousness actually made him spiritually bankrupt.

He then "chalked up" his gains as loss so that he could have Christ. In order for someone to get saved, they must first give up their religion, achievements, etc.

**"I counted"** - perfect tense in Greek, meaning: I did count them loss in the past and I still do today."

Illus. - the tendency to go back to and take pride in the old things you once turned your back on.

**"Loss"** - the things Paul took pride in (before salvation) were actually a hindrance to his coming to Christ for salv. It was not bad things that kept Paul away from Jesus -- it was good things! He had to lose his "religion" to find salvation.

EX of "good" hindrances that keep unbelievers from Christ.
EX of "good" hindrances that keep believers from living in the Spirit.

Your prayer needs to be: "God, I surrender all to you that makes me proud: my heritage, my discipline, my education, my morality, my zeal, I now give it all up in exchange for Jesus Christ!"

## A. NOTHING COMPARES WITH HIM (V. 8a)

**"Yea doubtless"** – (Lit. but indeed rather also) = Is like saying: "Yes the previous is true, but more than that..."

**"Excellency"** = lit. to have over & beyond. Personally knowing Christ was not only great, it was a "surpassing greatness"

**"Knowledge"** - A personal knowledge through personal experience. To not merely *"know about"* but to really *"know"*

ILLUS: Hymn "Jesus is All the World to Me" -

"Jesus is all the world to me,
My life, my joy, my all;
He is my strength from day to day,
Without Him I would fall,
When I am sad, to Him I go,
No other one can cheer me so;
When I am sad He makes me glad--
He's my friend."

We can only have joy if our lives don't depend on the cheap "things" of the world, but depend on the eternal values found in Christ. What makes you happy? Now is the time to evaluate the "things" that matter most to you.

**B. NOTHING IS TOO GREAT TO LOSE (GIVE UP) FOR HIM** (V. 8b)

"He is no fool who gives that which he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose" - Jim Elliot

Paul lost his religion and reputation, but he gained much more than he lost!

**"Suffered"** - cp. v.7 - "I was made to lose")- aorist tense points to a specific time in the past (Paul's conversion) when he allowed everything he lived for to be confiscated by God (passive voice).

**"All things"** -every meritorious work. Even those not included in Paul's list (v. 5-6). For Paul, salvation made him conscious of a new order of things. Things really worth living for. --*"Old things had passed away and all things became new"*

I **"count them but dung"** -Paul added up all of the things he previously trusted in for righteousness and calculated them to equal "dung" may refer to both:

1) Filthy lumps of manure; excrement; refuse; a half eaten corpse; or food gone bad.
2) Scraps: garbage; that which is left over and thrown away after a meal. (Hawthorne, p.139)

**"that I may win Christ"** - Paul speaking in retrospect, uses the Aorist Subjunctive showing that He became convicted of the need to once and for all time "gain" Christ even if it meant the loss of everything else He formerly trusted in.

For Paul, salvation made him conscious of a new order of things. Things really worth living for.

--"Old things had passed away and all things became new"

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**II. BECAUSE THERE IS NO GREATER <u>SECURITY</u> THAN BEING UNITED TO CHRIST** (V. 9)

**A. Paul wanted to be "FOUND IN HIM" (V. 9a)**

**"And be found in Him"** - lit. "and (that) I might have been found in Him" - Paul wanted his standing or position to be in Christ.

**B. Paul wanted "THE RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH IS OF *(from)* GOD"** (V. 9b)

Righteousness was the great goal of Paul's life when he was a Pharisee, but it was a <u>self</u>-righteousness (works righteousness that could not save). He was spiritually bankrupt, until Christ's righteousness was credited to his own account.

II Cor. 5:21 - *"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God <u>in him</u>."*

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**III. BECAUSE THERE IS NO GREATER <u>EXPERIENCE</u> THAN KNOWING CHRIST** (V. 10-11)

**"that"** - gives the idea of purpose or result

Three experiences the believer looks forward to:

**A. <u>PERSONAL</u> KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST**

**"That I may know Him"** = means much more than knowing <u>about</u> Christ.

**"To know"** = to personally come to know through <u>experience</u> (an active knowledge)
As opposed to the idea of to conceptually know; to know in theory, to know in the brain.

I Cor. 13:12 - in Heaven we shall know Him even as we are also known.

Does He know you?? The most dreadful words any one could ever hear are the words: "I never knew ( )
you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Mt. 7:23)

APPLI: Paul never got into a rut. He wanted greater daily communion (fellowship) with Christ. Is this what you crave in the innermost part of your soul?

**B. <u>POWERFUL</u> KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION**

It was divine power which raised Christ from the dead:

Rom. 1:4 - "And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:"

II Cor. 13:4 - "For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you."

Paul had experienced God's power when he arose after being stoned (Acts 14:19, 20), when he lifted up dead Eutychus (Acts 20:9-12), and in his personal body (thorn in the flesh) (II Cor. 12:7-10). Yet ***he longed for an even greater demonstration of that power in the future; In his future resurrection. Paul came to know that the only true hope of such a***

***resurrection was in Christ.***

## C. PAINFUL KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST'S SUFFERING

Question: Does this **"fellowship"** or **"sharing in"** of **"His sufferings"** refer to:

1) Paul's sharing in the benefits of what Christ accomplished for him on the Cross?

or

2) Paul's sharing in personal suffering just like Christ suffered on the Cross?

In favor of view # 1: "This phrase in its context of being found in Christ, clothed with his righteousness, is highly reminiscent of Romans 6:4-11. Thus, just as knowing Christ in the power of his resurrection is an inward experience that can be expressed in terms of being resurrected with Christ (cf.Rom.6:4), so knowing Christ in the fellowship of his sufferings is equally an inward experience that can be described in terms of having died with Christ (cf. Rom.6:8 and see Gal.2:19-20)...Therefore, for Paul to say that he wishes to know Christ and the fellowship of his sufferings is not to say that he seeks to know Christ and to experience physical sufferings of martyrdom, but to know Christ who suffered and died for him (cf. I Pet.3:18; 4:1) (Hawthorne, p.144).

In favor of view # 2: Verse 11 apparently implies physical death. Paul knew that it was a privilege to suffer for Christ (Phil. 1:29). Paul had been a persecutor at one time; now he had learned what it meant to be the one persecuted. But it was worth it.
Rom. 8:17 - "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."

Acts 9:16 - "For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake."

**"Being made conformable unto his death"** - Being made to take on the same form of His death; ie. Pressed into the same mold or essence of His death. Christ's death for sin becomes our death to sin (Rom.6).

**"conformable"** - A hapax legomenon - a word occurring only here in the NT.

**"If by any means"** - ie. by martyrdom, death by natural means, (or by rapture).

**"I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead"** - Paul did not know how his life would end, but he really didn't care. All that was on his mind was that future, glorious, bodily, perfect resurrection.

v.12a Paul makes clear He had "not received this (resurrection) yet."

He was not yet "perfect"; He was not yet physically complete; He had not yet reached the goal of sinless perfection, a condition which will only be experienced when believers are glorified. In the mean time, however Paul would press forward; with his eyes on that future, anticipated reality.

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**IV. BECAUSE THERE IS NO GREATER <u>PURPOSE IN LIFE</u> THAN PURSUING AFTER CHRIST** (V. 12-14)

Paul had <u>one purpose in the race of life</u>: to pursue that which Christ had for Him.

**A. PURSUING TO GRAB HOLD OF HIS WILL** (V. 12)

NOTE: Paul is <u>not</u> telling us how to be saved. If he was, it would be a picture of salvation by works and self-effort, and this would contradict the context (v. 1-11).

**"Follow after"** - to run after, pursue, to pursue something zealously; to press onward toward a goal, to follow after, to strive after.

ILLUS: of a boy's pursuit of a girlfriend (and vice-versa) - <u>preoccupied</u> with it.

Compare: Paul's preoccupation was with Christ (Phil. 1:21 - "For me to live is Christ").
And Compare: I Cor. 7 where Paul advises against marriage so that you could (Under certain circumstances) serve God without distraction.

**"Apprehend...Apprehended"** - Paul is saying: "I want to seize grasp) that purpose in life for which Christ seized me" "I want to lay hold of that which Christ has laid hold of me for" Christ grasped Paul for a purpose. Paul wanted to apprehend that purpose.

APPLI: Is your heart set on winning Christ's approval?

**B. PURSUING TO GRAB HOLD OF HIS PRIZE** (V. 13-14)

Paul's purpose (motivation, goal) in life was singular. "This one thing I do" If you have more primary goals in life than one, you have too many. Having too many priority goals in life produces a lack of direction.

"Our ministry is not our goal, but a means to that goal."

**"This one thing I do"** -- Actually those people who are talented in many areas are the least useful to Christ! They face the danger of allowing these things to pull their life away from having the single goal of pursuing Christ!

Concentration is the secret of power. EX: "If a river is allowed to overflow its banks, the area around it becomes a useless swamp. But if that river is dammed up and controlled, it becomes a source of power." (Wiersbe, p. 97)

Such a pursuit:

**1. Involves running without looking back.**

**"Forgetting"**: - does not mean to fail to remember (no person can forget the past--unless he acquires brain damage or senility). The word means to deliberately overlook or neglect.

You must determine that you will no longer be influenced or affected by the past.

Some of you may be shackled by regrets of the past. You are trying to run the race looking backwards! No wonder you stumble and fall!

ILLUS: of driving a car with your head turned back is hazardous.

"Forgetting" means that we should not allow the past (status and achievements, and even failures) to influence our present attitude or conduct.

For Paul to remember his past in Judaism might encourage

him to put confidence in the flesh.

Remembering his successes in his Christian career might lead to self-satisfaction. Remembering any failures (which he does not mention) would discourage him.

Past things are not motivations now!

NOTE: His motivation for service was not his salvation experience! And our motivation should not be any experience.

Such a pursuit:

**2. Involves running with your eyes fixed on the goal.**

**"Reaching forth"** - "The metaphor is from the foot race and the word pictures the body of the racer bent forward, his hand outstretched toward the goal, and his eye fastened upon it." (Vincent).

If you are saved, you are in the race.

Heb. 12:1-2a - "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witness, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doeth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith."

How are you running?
What are you running toward?

**"Those things which are before"** = everything tied in with the Resurrection!

**"I press"** - Greeks used the word to describe a hunter eagerly pursuing his prey

(Cp. Paul's running in the race in I Cor. 9:24-27)

A good runner only thinks of the goal and doesn't stop. Paul was challenged for the prize--He pursued it fanatically.

**"The mark"** - refers to the mark of a goal on which a runner

would fix his eye as he has just turned the curve or gone around the post and is now in the home stretch where he can see the goal.

Paul is living with a mind-set awaiting the "come up hither" (Rev. 4:1) of the Lord. He was one who "loved Christ's appearing."

CONCLU:

It will take a spiritual mind for you to think the way Paul did.

**"Perfect"** - cp. with "perfect" in v. 12. One the one hand Paul says he is not yet perfect and one the other hand he says he and believers are.

In v. 12, he is speaking of absolute perfection in Heaven, while in v. 15 he is speaking of progressive perfection while living on earth.

Paul is saying: Whatever spiritual maturity you have attained so far, be faithful to it! In other words, be guided by what you have learned so far; stay on the same path.

NOTE: Following context is of watching out for false teachers who will try to get you off of the path. (v. 18-19)

"As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God." (Ps. 42:1-2)

Rejoice in the Lord, not anywhere else.

Why?

I. Because there is no greater treasure than gaining Christ

II Because there is no greater security than being united to Christ

III. Because there is no greater experience than knowing Christ

IV. Because there is no greater purpose in life than pursuing after Christ