

## A Passion for Jesus

Philippians 3:7-12 But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. <sup>8</sup> Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ

❖ Prayer of Preparation: Oh Great God, How can I preach such things? I do not know you as Paul knew you. I do not seek you as Paul sought you. I am not sure I desire You as Paul hungered for you. Help me to not only teach and preach these marvelous words but to also be stirred by them. Would you create in me and all those who hear a hunger for your Son, Jesus, above and beyond all the enjoyments of this world. May your mercies be new toward us. - Amen

### ❖ Introduction

- A Prayer for the Fullness of God
- A Passion for Holiness - A Call to Repentance – Love for World Drives out Love for God
- A Passion for Jesus
- A Passion for the Works of God
- A Celebration of God's Goodness
- **Today: My Goal is to give you an example of a Person who had a passion for Jesus.**
  - We are getting an inside personal look into the heart of Paul the Christian.
  - And you are going to notice how he thought
  - What made him tick... which is why He was so effective for Christ

### ❖ Outline:

- 1) Paul was Unconcerned with Any Earthly Gain
- 2) Paul Saw the Surpassing Worth of Jesus
- 3) Paul Counted Earthly Things as Garbage so He Might Gain Christ
- **Application:**
  - Are you anywhere close to this type of thinking?
  - Ask yourself... am I anything like this?

### ❖ What are You Most Passionate About?

- Family, Social Media, tv shows, money, possessions, sports, movies, novels, news, politics, farming, hunting, homestead, family, job, vehicles, travel, retirement, Your Self,
  - What takes up more of your **energy**?
  - What are you **worried** about most? What is **exciting** to you?
  - What takes up your **thoughts** and **plans**?
  - What is shapes your **decisions**?
- **These are important questions to ask.**
- **From this text today... we see that Paul would answer these questions one way...ONLY!**
  - **Jesus. Jesus!**
- **Jesus had so impacted the life of this first century Christian...**
  - That he left everything behind so that he might gain Jesus
- **And... Just so we are all on the same page...**
  - This is the destination for every single person that truly knows Jesus....
- **Paul was further along...**
  - Obviously Paul has reached a higher place in his progressive sanctification...
  - But, this is where we should all be headed...
  - Let Paul's Words be an opportunity for examination this morning...
- **Do You Have an Overwhelming Passion for Jesus Christ?**

## ❖ 1) Paul was Unconcerned with Any Earthly Gain

- **But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.**
- **What Happened to Paul?** We will look into his conversion later... **Look at what he left now**
  - **Why was Paul saying, “Whatever gain I had, I counted as loss...”?**
    - Paul was an amazing person who had a lot going for him.
    - He was a Jewish Religious Leader and a Roman citizen as well.
    - **In those days... Christianity was very new, Jesus had just died**
      - ◆ It’s leaders were fisherman and nobodies...
      - ◆ They had no institutions of higher learning
      - ◆ They had no career opportunities to help you raise a family
    - **In the verses preceding these... Paul explains all that he was... before Jesus**
      - ◆ Not all of this is going to mean a lot to some of you...
      - ◆ Because you do not yet know that much about the Bible and Jewish Culture...
      - ◆ But... notice... Paul was a big deal
      - ◆ **Philippians 3:5-6<sup>5</sup> circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; <sup>6</sup>as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.**
        - Paul is saying... I was born of an important family...
        - So, as of birth... I was right on...
        - Then.. religiously... I was spot on... I was a Pharisee... the main leaders in Israel
        - And I followed the law perfectly... no one had anything on me.
        - I studied under the right people...
        - I was so zealous for my religion that I persecuted what was thought of as a false religion.
    - **Paul is saying... before Christ...**
      - ◆ My career path was going in the right direction... I was very popular...
      - ◆ I was great at what I did, I was commended by many for my effort
      - ◆ I had a very strong future ahead of me in this... **But...**
- **Whatever gain I had... I counted as loss for the sake of Christ...**
  - He threw it all away... for something else...
  - He calls all these things gain... he means advantage or profit
  - And He had a lot didn’t he? Yet...
- **Counted as loss**
  - When He looked at his profit... what his future could be... the gains he would have
  - The comfort of his future... the accolades... the applause of men...
  - He didn’t see it as a gain... rather... he says he, **“counted it as loss”**
  - **Counted as loss- means when he looked at all of it... His opinion... his thoughts were...**
    - **This is NOTHING! This is not worth my time...**
    - He says, I would rather forfeit these things... Why?
- **For the sake of Christ**
  - He says here... the reason I left it all behind is on account of Jesus...
  - Because of Christ...
- **Illustration: On a human level...**
  - **At the beginning of this year... A guy who used to play for the Atlanta braves... my favorite team**
    - Walked away from a guaranteed \$13 million contract and retired
    - Why? Because he wouldn’t be allowed to bring his son to the clubhouse as much as he had been allowed in the past...
    - He felt like \$13 million wasn’t worth the time he had to give up of having his son around

- A safety for the Arizona Cardinals, Pat Tillman refused a contract extension worth \$3.6 million
  - in order to enlist in the army following the September 11 attacks at the age of 25 in 2002.
  - He played for only four seasons. He served in Iraq and Afghanistan as an Army Ranger.
  - Tillman was killed by friendly fire in Afghanistan.
- **Paul was not like the rich young ruler was he?**
  - Who came to Jesus seeking eternal life...
  - **Mark 10:21-22** <sup>21</sup> And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, “You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” <sup>22</sup> Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.
    - Notice... Jesus wasn’t telling him that selling his goods would get him into heaven
    - He said... Come follow me... Just like He said to the disciples...
    - The man’s possessions were in the way of his following Jesus...
    - He did not... not at that point... see Jesus as worth it
  - **Jesus had said to another crowd a few chapters earlier**
    - **Mark 8:35-37** <sup>35</sup> For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s will save it. <sup>36</sup> For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? <sup>37</sup> For what can a man give in return for his soul?

## ❖ 2) Paul Saw the Surpassing Worth of Jesus

- <sup>8</sup> **Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.**
- **Indeed** – One Word did not do enough for Paul...
  - **Paul is overly excited when he writes this...**
    - **Literally in the greek... this word we translate as “Indeed” or “yea doubtless”**
      - ◆ Which is a fine translation... but... Paul used a lot more words...
      - ◆ **He used five greek particles here...**
        - **Wuest’s Word Studies in the greek New Testament writes:**
          - “The words “yea, doubtless” are the translation of five particles, which latter are literally translated, “yea, indeed, therefore, at least, even,” and show the force and passion of Paul’s conviction.”
          - “yea, indeed, therefore, at least, even,”
          - It’s like saying Indeed Indeed Indeed!!!!
          - and I am pretty sure the greek teachers
          - Would have put some red marks on his manuscript...
          - I do not think this was proper greek
            - **if he was texting... He would be using lots of emojis**
              - ◆ Thumbs up, ok, 100 hundred percent, prayer hands, flexed bicep
  - **Paul couldn’t contain his excitement, and he did not want to, either...**
    - He wanted the reader to understand the intensity in which He saw Jesus as Worthy!
- **Indeed! I count everything as loss...**
  - Not just what he had gained... but also what he could have gained...
  - Also... everything that anyone could ever gain...
  - Everything... Why?
- **Surpassing Worth of Knowing Christ Jesus MY Lord**
  - **Paul saw the Surpassing Worth of Jesus or His Exceptional Value**
  - **This can be illustrated by two parables Jesus shared...**
    - Jesus said this... Jesus used parables to explain Spiritual Truths
    - **Matthew 13:44** “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

- **Matthew 13:45** “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls,<sup>46</sup> who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.”
- **Interestingly: Jesus is sharing things that had been hidden until He showed up**
  - **Matthew 13:35** “I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter what has been hidden since the foundation of the world.”
  - Hidden since the foundation of the world... (You get to hear the mystery!!!)
  - There is something/someone greater than every earthly treasure...
- **Paul had an experience with Jesus...**
  - In the height of Paul’s earthly glory... Paul was seeking out people of the “Way”- Christians
  - Jesus confronted him... blinded him... yet helped him to see
  - Paul went from persecutor to preacher in a matter of a few verses in the book of Acts...
  - **Amazingly... Jesus did not promise Paul earthly gains... He did not promise him:**
    - ◆ Wealth or health... it was the opposite...
    - ◆ **Acts 9:16** “<sup>16</sup>For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.”
      - Those that teach such things are truly teaching a doctrine of demons!!!
- **Amazingly... Paul left it all behind... so he could suffer for Jesus...**
  - He saw something so amazing and worthy in Jesus... that he was willing to:
    - ◆ Literally **forfeit** his earthly life for chance to know **Jesus!**
    - ◆ Regardless of the **suffering** that was to come
- **Why? Because Jesus is Worthy!!!**
- **How Does Heaven See Jesus? There is a scene in Revelation 4 and 5 that gives us some insight...**
  - **Revelation 4:8-11** “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!”<sup>9</sup> And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, <sup>10</sup> the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying, <sup>11</sup> “Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.”
    - ◆ Worthy because He **created** all things...
    - ◆ Worthy because by His **will** they **exist** and were created...
    - ◆ All of heaven **bows** because God is worthy... Chapter 5 goes further...
  - **Revelation 5:6-14** And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. <sup>7</sup> And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne. <sup>8</sup> And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. <sup>9</sup> And they sang a new song, saying,
    - ◆ **Here... heaven sees a lamb... and this is Jesus... and He takes a scroll...**
      - And this scroll is a scroll that opens up judgment on the world...
      - And no one had been found worthy to open it... But He was...
      - And heaven bursts out in a new song...
  - *“Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, <sup>10</sup> and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.” <sup>11</sup> Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, <sup>12</sup> saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!” <sup>13</sup> And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under*

the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!"<sup>14</sup> And the four living creatures said, "Amen!" and the elders fell down and worshiped.

- ◆ Worthy because he was **slain**
- ◆ Worthy because his blood **ransomed** or **bought** people for God
- ◆ Worthy because he ransomed people from **every** tribe and language on earth
- ◆ Creatures, and elders and people and angels by the **millions** sing out to Him
- ◆ Worthy is He who was **slain**...
- ◆ And not just creatures in heaven but **also** on earth and in the sea
- ◆ And they **worshipped** Jesus!!!

➤ **Jesus is Worthy because of who He is and what He is done...**

- He is the God of all creation...
- He is also the lamb of God that was slain on our behalf...

➤ **Paul Saw Jesus as Worthy, in Part, Because He finally saw Himself Clearly...**

- Although He seemed to be on the right track...
- Paul was **clearly** a **terrible** sinner...
- **He was the bad guy in the story Jesus shared about self-righteousness:**
  - Luke 18:9-14<sup>9</sup> He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt:<sup>10</sup> "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.<sup>11</sup> The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.<sup>12</sup> I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.'<sup>13</sup> But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!'<sup>14</sup> I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."
  - ◆ Paul was that Pharisee... And Jesus showed him his sin!
  - ◆ Paul saw His need for repentance... for forgiveness... for mercy...
- **Jesus was worthy because He was the lamb that was slain for Paul's**
  - Contempt and pride and murders

❖ **3) Paul Counted Earthly Things as Garbage so He Might Gain Christ**

- For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ

➤ **Notice: Paul saw it as two roads to take. A Choice to make.**

- He either enjoys the things of this world, or He gains Christ...
- That is how this verse works itself out...
- If I suffer the loss of all things and count them as rubbish...
  - I may gain Christ.... I have to leave them behind to gain Christ...

➤ **Paul not only counted them as a loss... as something to leave behind...**

- He saw them as garbage... the literal word is dung... or manure...
- How many of us save our bowel movements?
- We flush it away immediately don't we... there is no value there for us
- Paul looked at the things of this world and He saw them as rubbish... **Not Even a Hard Choice!!!**

➤ **Hasn't Jesus put this choice to us? It is either gain Jesus or the gains of this World**

- Matthew 16:24-25<sup>24</sup> Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.<sup>25</sup> For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

➤ **Can You see the Choice that stands before you today?**

- Is Jesus worth it to you? To Me?
- Is knowing mercy and grace and joy and hope and love at the deepest levels worth it?
- Is knowing the fullness of God worth it?
- **Is it worth giving up your:**
  - Tv and Movies and books that distract you from knowing Jesus
  - Sports that distract you from knowing Jesus
  - Social media that distracts you from knowing Jesus
  - Friends that distract you from knowing Jesus
  - Future plans that do not line up with His calling
  - Jobs that keep you from knowing Jesus
  - Attitudes.... Food.... drink... various passions and pleasures...
- **Oh the Myriad of things that keep us from having this outlook like Paul...**
  - You see... Paul saw things clearly... we **seldom** do...

❖ **Paul was a Death Row Inmate awaiting his execution**

➤ **He had committed grievous crimes before the Lord of all Creation**

- God had handed down the death penalty... Eternal Physical and Spiritual Death
- Paul was awaiting His execution from the day he knew good and evil...
- He frolicked through his life mostly unaware of his guilty status...
- He meets Jesus and the Holy Spirit brings conviction and clarity to Paul
- He sees himself as the criminal deserving execution that He is...

➤ **But Jesus went to execution on Paul's behalf... and ours as well...**

- Paul saw that as surpassingly worthy... beyond value...
- Oh how he wanted to know Jesus...

➤ **Paul would continue His thoughts in Philippians...**

- And I think you see more of why Jesus was worth it to Paul
- **Philippians 3:9-12 <sup>9</sup> and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— <sup>10</sup> that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, <sup>11</sup> that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. <sup>12</sup> Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.**
  - Notice... He knew He could be RIGHTEOUS... not on his own... but from God through Faith
    - ◆ Through Faith in Jesus
  - He wanted to know the power of Jesus Resurrection... Eternal life
  - He even looked forward to sufferings... to share in Christ's sufferings...
  - He wanted to know Jesus like that...
  - Finally... He says... Jesus has **made me his own!**
    - ◆ What a beautiful and amazing thing to say... **Christ has made us His own...**
    - ◆ Paul found solace in the closeness of His union with Christ.

❖ **Invitation**

- Is Jesus worth it to You?
- Paul continues by saying that **those who are mature** should think like this
- Thinking like this shows maturity in your walk with Christ