

Philippians 3 – Being Found in Him

11/8/17

For the past several weeks, I've tried to coordinate my NEWSLETTER articles with my Sunday morning Bible class lessons and sermons from the pulpit. For a while, it worked. However, for the last several weeks, there have been circumstances that have messed up my "plan." Still, I understand that God has a hand in all of this. Maybe, just maybe, He's telling me to slow down and look more carefully at His word. There are many lessons to be learned from Paul's letter to the Philippians, and today is one I may have skipped over if things had gone "according to plan."

This is what Paul tells the **Philippians** in **Chapter 3, verses 8 and 9**:

"I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my LORD, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith."

Just how valuable to Paul was "knowing Christ?" Worth losing all his earthly accolades and goods. Just what was his most prized possession on earth? Having Christ, and being , as Paul says, "**found IN HIM.**" What does he mean when he says he wants to be found to be IN Jesus Christ?

He does not elaborate here. Most certainly, the Philippians knew what he meant and had heard it from him while he was with them. However, he did elaborate in the Ephesian letter, and it is from Ephesians that we find the information to better understand what Paul is saying here. In Ephesians 2:11-13, he tells them:

"Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (which is done in the body by human hands)—remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ."

Gentiles had been included in the family of God by means of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. All nations had the great opportunity to be citizens in the Kingdom of God. IN Christ, they received the privileges of that citizenship. Outside of Christ, they were "**without hope and without God.**" In Christ, they had been "**brought near**" to God and counted as one of His children. In **Ephesians chapter 1**, Paul uses the phrase "**in Christ**" or something similar at least 10 times, detailing what God has done for us. All these things were accomplished according to God's plan for redemption, completed with the life, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ.

In Christ, we have been blessed with every spiritual blessing, we have been chosen to be His adopted children and receive grace. We have been redeemed from the captivity of

sin and been given the hope of glory. God's Holy Spirit marks us for glory if we are found "in Him." (Ephesians 3:1-13)

And just how do we get "*in Christ?*" Galatians 3:26-28:

"So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

The change from being "*separate from Christ*" and being "*in Christ*" is acceptance of Christ and His ability to make that change. Our faith, made complete in baptism, places us "*in Christ.*" It is evident from his writings that Paul wanted that for himself and for all of us as well. Know Him, be found in Him, obtain His righteousness, live for Him, and be raised to live with Him.

---Johnny Stephens