

# Contagious Joy

## **Part 13 – What Really Matters?**

Philippians 3:7-14

July 12, 2009

*This week many of us sat in rapt attention as the details of the deaths of two prominent people played out before our curious eyes. One, Steve McNair, apparently living a double life, was murdered; the other, Michael Jackson, was eulogized to the tune of \$3.8 million. What did these guys stand for? When it was all said and done, what meaning did their life really have? What will be remembered? What was really important?*

Proposition: When your life ends, what will really be most important? What really matters?

### **I. Finding Christ: a decision that will change your direction (v. 7-11)**

This is a pivotal shift in his thinking. When Paul sums up his life, Paul makes a big U-turn. “*But*” – Paul contrasts all of his former life with the simple statement ...

#### **A. Perspective: A revised outlook on what was truly important “I consider everything a loss” (v. 7)**

*<sup>7</sup>But whatever things were gain to me (was to my profit) those things I have counted loss for the sake of Christ.*

1. It is an accounting term, a debit/credit transaction. In business terms he is willing to write the whole thing off as a net loss! Gains are plural, loss is singular. Each of his former accomplishments are lumped together to make a huge bundle of nothing!
2. Not just his self-proclaimed righteousness, but every other priority in life is as well! **Don’t substitute rules for relationship!**

3. Application: What are you betting on in life? What are you counting on? What do you do to make yourself feel good at the end of the day?
4. Transition: Compared to what?

B. **Passion**: **Knowing Jesus as Lord** (v. 8)

*<sup>8</sup>More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the (compared to) the surpassing value (greatness) of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss all things and count (consider) them but rubbish, that I may gain Christ.*

1. *hyperchon* (**the surpassing value**) refers to something of incomparable worth
2. Knowing Christ – is there anything greater? Any pleasure, priority or passion?
  - Knowing Christ – Greek word literally means to know by experience or personal involvement, not just head knowledge. Word is actually from the noun Gnosis.
  - I can know about the benefits of running, talk about running, even buy all the clothes for running, but I am not a runner until I run personally. I experience the pain/joy personally!
  - A head knowledge of Christ isn't what he is excited about! James 2:19 "even the demons believe intellectually that there is a god." They just don't know him personally!
  - Blondin: Tight rope walker...
3. The New Testament frequently describes Christians as those who know Christ.
  - *John 10:14 "I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me."*

- *John 17:3 “This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”*
  - *2 Cor. 4:6 “For God, who said, ‘Light shall shine out of darkness,’ is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ”*
  - *Ephesians 1:17 “that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.”*
  - *1 John 5:20 “And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true;*
  - Salvation involves a personal, relational knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.
4. Christ Jesus my Lord...describes the 3 offices of Christ...
- Christ: Messiah, messenger and **prophet**
  - Jesus: Savior and great high **priest**
  - Lord: Sovereign **King**
5. *Rubbish* (skubalon): waste, excrement, manure, a dung heap, junk; a place of refuse; garbage dump where they would burn trash. *“All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; and all of us wither like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away” (Isa. 64:6).*
6. What was Paul’s passion? Knowing Christ intimately!
7. Application: It is a personal decision, one that can’t be made by anyone else. **What is your passion?**
- C. **His priority: A Christ-produced righteousness!** (v. 9)
- <sup>9</sup>and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that derived (comes) from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith.*
1. Not my good works but His gracious grace! Not my self-focused effort but His self-emptying sacrifice.

2. Self-effort, external morality, religious ritual, and moral works, all produced by the flesh – had been a crushing, unbearable burden (Matt. 23:4; Luke 11:46; Acts 15:10). Righteousness that comes from God is something we can't manufacture. It will ring hollow, insincere and plastic.
  3. Faith in what He has done, not what I have done! **Faith** is the confident, continuous confession of total dependence on and trust in Jesus Christ for the necessary requirements to enter God's kingdom.
  4. **Application:** What is your faith placed in?
- D. **His Pursuit:** A security in heaven/glory because he has identified himself as a Christ-follower in all aspects. (v. 10-11)

*<sup>10</sup>that I may know Him, and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of (sharing in) of His sufferings, being conformed to (becoming like him in) His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.*

1. Resurrection power: Jesus conquered death. Can He handle your problems?
2. What is the fellowship of his sufferings? It is allowing God to break our will! If you identify with Him, you will be persecuted. Just make sure you aren't just suffering because of your own stubbornness! Do we agonize over the fact that good people will go to hell?
3. **Dr. Alan Redpath (Moody Memorial Church in Chicago),** "When God wants to do an impossible task, He takes an impossible man and crushes him!"
4. What is the resurrection of the dead?
  - Resurrection from the corpses. Believers will be taken out from among the rest of the **dead** corpses, who will not be raised until the end of the millennial kingdom, and transformed into the image of Christ. I Cor. 15:51-53

- His ultimate place with God in heaven after he dies. This resurrection promise is another one of the “values/benefits” of knowing Christ!

**II. Finishing Well... a determination that will affect your destiny**  
(v. 12-14) **How do we finish well? (next week!)**

**III. Conclusion:**

1. Q – What tribute would you like given at your funeral?
2. 3 memorials...
  - Steve McNair: public persona looked good, but privately his life was a lie.
  - Michael Jackson: Wildly popular but died searching for love and meaning in his life. *I think all my success and fame, and I have wanted it, I have wanted it because I wanted to be loved. That's all. That's the real truth. I wanted people to love me, truly love me, because I never really felt loved. I said I know I have an ability. Maybe if I sharpened my craft, maybe people will love me more.*
  - Paul: Though incredibly successful, he traded in his religiosity for a genuine relationship with Jesus? How about you?

## **Table Talk:**

1. What are the things in your life that you are “counting on”?
2. What is the passion of your life?
3. What failures do you need to forget?
4. What is the legacy you are leaving for your kids?
5. What does the “fellowship of his sufferings” mean for your life?
6. What are you really pursuing? Is it worth it?