



## The Surpassing Value of Knowing Christ

We last left off with the apostle Paul noting that all the earthly achievements and religious prestige he had once possessed was of no value in saving his soul. Today let's continue looking at this and just how passionately he wanted to make the point that salvation is by faith alone.

***But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith*** ([Philippians 3:7-9](#) NASB).

We know Paul was an esteemed and influential Pharisee before meeting Christ on the road to Damascus and possessed great influence and power in Jewish religious circles (see [Acts 22](#)). But in his letter to the Philippians, he essentially disowned his former life – counting it as loss all for the sake of Christ and His gospel.

But that isn't all. He goes on to say, ***"I count ALL things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord"***. The Greek word for *loss* here ([zemia](#)) implies the loss of or damage to something valuable, so if we personalize this, we might think of it as though we lost our home, career, life savings, or maybe our health and safety. Paul is saying that none of these nor anything else has the slightest value in comparison to what Christ offers those who are willing to give it all up for Him.

He continues, ***"for whom [Christ] I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him"***. Again, the fact that Paul has **suffered** this loss indicates that these things were important to him, likely holding high personal value, so we should pause for a moment and consider the pain we might feel if God asked us to give up something we cared deeply about or had worked very hard for. Paul was human, just like you and me; this mustn't have been easy and required great surrender and humility. But to Paul it was well-worth the pain of loss so that he could **gain Christ and may be found in Him**. In the end, is there anything more valuable than our soul? After all, we take absolutely nothing from this earth when we leave, not even our skin!

Paul modeled the right attitude we should have when he says he considered these seemingly valuable things as nothing but **rubbish**. This word in the Greek ([skybalon](#)) is what we'd use for *excrement*. No kidding. It means dung or waste. This is the only time skybalon is used in the Bible, and it is quite fascinating that it would be used to describe, at least in part, Paul's life's work as a Pharisee and rigorous keeper of God's law. We should take serious note of this and



again see how important it is that we do not put our hope for salvation in works of the flesh or traditions of men.

Paul drives this point home when he says, ***“not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith.”*** Again, we see there is zero value in self-righteousness (i.e.: ***a righteousness of my own***) gained through works of the flesh, such as strictly following the Old Testament laws, adhering to specific traditions or creeds, or even accomplishing ‘great things’ for the Lord. The only way we obtain salvation is through ***the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith.***

Read that part of verse 9 again... where does our righteousness come from? **God**. And what is it based on? **Faith**. Good works and righteous living will always follow as evidence of our salvation, however they can never replace the imperative need for a saving *faith*, and that faith is a gift from God (see [Eph 2:8](#)).

If accepted with a humble heart, this truth is incredibly freeing. We simply cannot earn salvation – it is a gift bestowed on us by God the Father through His Son. No amount of human effort or willpower can get us to heaven. [Romans 9:16](#) says, ***“so then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.”***

So then, what do we do? In order to ***be found in Him*** we must repent and believe in Jesus the Christ as the one and only full payment for our sins (cf: [Mark 1:15](#)). The word rendered ***repent*** ([metanoō](#)) simply means to *change your mind for the better*; change our mind to hate our sin and believe in Christ as our Savior. Only after we have committed our hearts and minds to do these two things can we move on to the ***good works He has prepared for us beforehand*** ([Eph 2:10](#)), which is a far cry from the self-righteousness we may think we earn from the works we do apart from His sovereign plan.

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