

The Most Profitable Transaction – Part 2. Gaining the Priceless Treasure

Introduction and Outline

- Scripture reading: Philippians 3:4–11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14.
- Let's continue to look at salvation from the viewpoint of a transaction. The key of this passage (vv 4-11) is one simple truth — No loss, no gain. For example, if you're married, would you forsake something in order to win the love of your spouse? Paul says: In order to gain Christ, to have an intimate relationship with Christ, I must count all things rubbish and forsake them all!
- Outline:
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How to Gain True Value — Forsaking All Things (v8)

- “More than that”: Five Greek particles in a row, literally, “but, indeed, therefore, at least, even,” indicating a strong logical progression! Vv 8-11 is so much more than vv 4-7. Why? First, the above was loss, and here is gain. Gain is surely better than loss. Second, there is a progression in the scope of things forsaken. All fleshly boastings were the things forsaken above, and here all things are forsaken. Third, there's a progression of time from justification to sanctification. The above was the transformation at salvation, past tense, and here is present tense forsaking all things continuously in the lifelong process of sanctification!
- “Forsaking all things”: In the process of sanctification, new temptations continue to arise, tempting you into all kinds of fleshly boasting. You must continuously regard all things as loss, forsaking all boastful thoughts as rubbish.

Application: Everything includes those amazing experiences in the process of your sanctification—how you're filled with the Holy Spirit, or the hymns moved you into tears, or you made great sacrifices to serve the Lord, or you had amazing victory over alcoholism or sexual immorality... Paul had the best experiences to boast in his sanctification process! Just the experience of being caught up to the third heaven alone would be enough for some people to boast for their whole life. But Paul almost never mentions this experience at all (2 Corinthians 12:1-7).

Galatians 6: 14 “But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,”

- “rubbish”: The Greek word refers to all kinds of filthy, stinky waste, especially human waste, which is so disgusting that it is of no use except being flushed down the toilet. Paul not only made a rational analysis of values, but it also affected his emotions, so that any boasting except in the Lord Jesus would only make him sick.

“the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of His glory and grace.” —— 《Turn your eyes upon Jesus》

Application: 1. Examine your heart! Is this how you know Christ? Do you really know the value of Christ? Has God shone the light of Christ into your heart? (2 Corinthians 4:6) 2. For the bad things that keep you away from the Lord, forsaking means forsaking them completely! 3. For the good things that help you to know the Lord better, forsaking means not giving your heart to the things themselves (which is idolatry), but through them to think about Christ, to experience Christ, to praise and give thanks to Christ! It means to forsake them from the heart.

- “Knowing Christ Jesus my Lord”: Increasing knowledge on the basis of existing knowledge. Take marriage relationship for example. Because you already know your spouse as the most precious person in the world and your heart is already fascinated with him, so you want to give up everything to pursue him, pursue a closer relationship with him, and get to know him more!

“Knowing” is not referring to head knowledge, but relationship. The focus is relationship! Salvation is not by knowledge, but by an intimate relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. The gospel we proclaim is not a set of ideas, but a Savoir, a true and living Lord who intimately relates to His believers !

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. “

Matthews 7: 22-23 “‘Lord, Lord....’ ‘I never knew you!’”

Summary of True Value — Union with Christ (v9a)

- "Be found in him": basically, equivalent to "gain Christ" in verse 8, both are synonymous with salvation. In terms of knowing Christ, the phrase "in him" highlights the intimacy of Christians with Christ as they grow in sanctification.

Theological Supplement: United with Christ. "In Christ" is Paul's favorite phrase to describe the Christian identity, used no less than 75 times in his letters. We are chosen "in Christ" (Eph 1: 4); made into the new man "in Christ" (Eph 2:10, 2 Cor 5:17); wives submit to their

husbands as it is fitting "in the Lord" (Col 3:18); we preach Christ to present every man complete "in Christ" (Col 1:28); dead Christians will be raised up "in Christ" (1 Cor 15:22)... From initial election, to regeneration by the Holy Spirit, to Christian living, to the final state of perfected sanctification, all of these are elements of our union with the Lord! So, Philippians 3:1 tells us to rejoice "in the Lord," for union with the Lord is the source of joy!

Ingredients of True Value (vv 9b-11)

Having Christ's Righteousness (v9b)

- "a righteousness of my own derived from the Law": The emphasis is on "my own." This is Paul's own righteousness, earned by obeying the law. But James 2:10 says if you keep God's law and break one point, you've broken the whole law. Isaiah 64:6 says that all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment.
- "Through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith": The emphasis is on "from God." This is God's righteousness. The key difference between the two kinds of righteousness is the source, not just the means. It's not just righteousness by deeds vs. by faith, either way it's still *my* righteousness. No! What Paul wants is the righteousness that comes from God; it's God's righteousness! This is the heart of the gospel! On Judgment Day, whose righteousness do you want to present before God? Yours or God's? Christ has accomplished perfect righteousness by a whole life of perfect obedience to the Father—this is God's righteousness, which was manifested in Christ and is imputed to sinners through faith in Christ! Hallelujah!

Suppose you come to the gate of heaven and God asks you, "Why should I let you into my holy kingdom?" What do you say? I go to church every week? I read the Bible and pray? I believe in Jesus? These are all important, but if your answer ends here, you're probably still trying to earn your own righteousness! Correct answer: Because Jesus fulfilled God's requirements in my place; Jesus took on God's wrath for sin in my place; and I am in Jesus, so when God judges me, all he sees is the righteousness of Jesus!

Living Christ's Life (vv 10-11)

- "that I may know him": The three levels of knowledge - intellectual, relational, and experiential. Here is the experiential knowledge, not just the personal relationship with Christ, but to experience Christ's life first hand, through which you come to have an even deeper knowledge of Christ!

- “Know the power of his resurrection”: The experience of this power begins with the believer’s regeneration at conversion (1 Peter 1:3; Ephesians 2:5), and it also includes the power of sanctification throughout life (Romans 6:4).
- “the fellowship of His sufferings”: The sufferings for Christ bring believers a deeper sense of their union with Christ. It is God’s will to use Christians’ sufferings to fill up “what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions” (Colossians 1:24). In 1:29 above, Paul has said that "suffering for him" is granted by grace; here is not only suffering *for* him, but suffering *with* him, that is, to experience Christ, into a deeper knowledge of Christ!

"The deepest moments of spiritual fellowship with the living Christ are at times of intense suffering; suffering drives believers to Him. They find in Him a merciful High Priest, a faithful friend who feels their pain, and a sympathetic companion who faced all the trials and temptations that they face." - A pastor

- “being conformed to His death”: Not just the final death. On the one hand, Paul's ministry was so dangerous that he considered himself "dying daily" (1 Corinthians 15: 31); on the other hand, the conformity to Christ’s death also entails "to be dead to sin, but alive to God" (Romans 6: 10-11).
- “resurrection from the dead”: the Greek text is literally "the out-resurrection from among the corpses"! Before the seven years of great tribulation, Christ will descend from heaven, and "the dead in Christ will rise first" (1 Thess. 4:16), and be raptured together with the believers alive at that time. Unbelievers will not be resurrected at that time, so this is literally a resurrection from among the corpses! Unbelievers will have to wait until after the great tribulation and the millennium before they will be resurrected in front of the Great White Throne. This is the resurrection to judgment, to be condemned by God and thrown into hell for eternal punishment.

On that day, will you be one of the many resurrected from among the corpses? Or will you remain among the dead, waiting for the final resurrection to be judged? You may call Jesus “Lord, Lord” today, but on that day, will the Lord say He knows you? Have you forsaken all things as rubbish for His sake? Have you confessed and repented of all boastings in the flesh? Is knowing Christ of all-surpassing value in your heart? Do you really want to know him? Do you have His perfect righteousness? Have you experienced the power of His resurrection so that your life demonstrates progressive sanctification? Are you willing to suffer for Him? Are you willing to be conformed to his death daily? Have you nailed your sinful desires to the cross daily? Do you really know Jesus? Does He really know you?