

## Phil Ch 3 Vs 10-11

The fellowship of His sufferings

We went ahead and closed our last gathering just having read over vs 10-11 for the sake of a nice resolve at the end of our service but I didn't comment on them too much, and I want to take the time this morning to examine and consider these vs more fully (read vs 10-11). These are a powerful couple of vs and to bring it around to what's going on here, Paul has just spent his time illustrating and demonstrating how vain it is to try and seek some type of righteous standing before God by means of our own works. and He says that if anybody were ever able to be in that place of acceptance before God concerning what they did or didn't do it was him. Now, remember all scripture is God breathed, inspired by God Himself, and so when we read that if ever there was a man that could've attained a special standing in the sight of God by means of their own works it was Paul, then we have to believe if there were ever going to be someone who made it on their own it would've been him.

He had all the legal righteousness that he could possess by birth, by blood, or by means of the external works of the law. and When the Holy Spirit inspires the words concerning Paul to read, "*concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.*" Then you can believe that when it came to the external mandates of the law, no matter how meticulous they may have been, if it were relevant to the situation, Paul fulfilled it! Because of that he had great clout in his society, he would have been a very wealthy man during his Pharasytical days, a man of great influence and power, one who was looked up to and esteemed as righteous, and one who was greatly respected amongst his contemporaries. But in vs 7 we read concerning all the things that were working for him, and to his gain in this world he counted them all loss for Christ. Because there was one big problem that the Pharisees and people who look to the law to make them righteous had, one eternally critical element that they overlooked. and That's that the law was never meant to make anyone righteous, legal works don't make anyone righteous, because (with out getting into the balance of faith and works again right not) God isn't concerned with outward works of the flesh.

He's concerned with the inward condition of the heart, and the law was never meant to be interpreted and translated as an external regulator. It was meant to govern and expose the inward attitudes of the heart, that's what Jesus took the time to explain on the sermon on the Mt. You see legalizers think that works make them righteous, but the law was put in place to show you how you can't be righteous and expose to you your need for a Savior, the bible tells us that the Law was simply a tutor, leading us to Jesus. Because when you realize to be unjustly angry with someone in your heart is murder in God's eyes, and an impure thought concerning another individual constitutes fornication or adultery in God's eyes, then we've all got a problem. You see the law is spiritual not physical and there's not a person who has ever lived (with the exception of Christ) who has fulfilled the law according to the inward man of the heart.

So where does that leave us, in need of a Savior, someone who can bridge that gap between sinful man and a righteous God, making “a way” for us to have fellowship and communion with God being covered by His work someone who will serve as a “door” that opens up to us the opportunity to know God in truth. So we need a way, and we need a door, interesting, Jesus said that He was the “way” that led to the Father, and in John 10:9

We find where Jesus said, *“I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.”*

When Paul realized that all those years he spent learning how to be right with God was in fact the very things that was keeping him from God, and knowing Him personally. He didn't get all offended and say, that's too bad, I've done it this way all my life, I can't admit that my whole life has been for not. But rather he humbled himself, counted all those things as trash and lost them for Christ. and God would use those things in his past as a powerful tool of instruction for millions of people for thousands of years to come, so your life doesn't have to be in vain, God can utilize it for his purposes but you have to humble yourself and quit kicking against the goads and surrender your life to Him. Paul said, I surrendered it all that I might be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, because that's offense to God, we don't have righteousness in and of ourselves. To try and be righteous by what we do and don't do is to spit in the face of Christ, mocking the righteousness that He has provided for you saying that it's not good enough for you, you can do better. Paul said, I don't want my own righteousness, I realize now how ludicrous that is, I want the righteousness that comes from God, through faith in Christ, why (Vs10) that I may know Him.

This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> time Paul has underscored his longing to know Christ personally, we seen it in vs 8 and now here it is again. Paul didn't want to know about Christ, a lot of hell bound people know an awful lot about Christ. You may know a lot about George Washington or Ab Lincoln, but it's a head knowledge, you can never know them personally by way of experience having interacted with them because they're dead. But that's not the case with Jesus, He's alive, and Jesus said if any man thirsts let him come to Me and drink. You can drink in all of Christ that you can handle and there's plenty more, He wants to fill you plum to the point where you can't contain it anymore and you just begin to spill over in torrents of living water so that those around you can begin to drink Him in as well, being revived and refreshed in their souls.

Paul said, I want to know Him, not in my head, but in my heart, I want there to be an intimacy between Christ and myself that's complete. I don't want to know just certain parts of Christ; I want to know Him fully. and I'm willing to get rid of anything in my life that stands in the way of that end, the end of me knowing Him. All of Him, the power of His resurrection; and of course that word “power” is the word “dunamis” in the Greek. It's that explosive, dynamic, miracle working power of the Holy Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead, it's that power that according to Paul in Eph 3:20 is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all we ask or think. It's the power that will enable you to lead a life free from compromise and full of integrity in the midst of a godless generation that's always seeking to entice your flesh.

Paul says here, I want to know that side of Christ, and the reality of His working that same power in and through my life. and We think, “right on, I wanna know that power to” none of us have a problem receiving the impartation of power in our lives. Not too many people buck against the boss when he says, “you know, I want to invest some authority in your life, I wanna place you over these people.” In essence saying, “I want to give you power.” We’re all cool with that, because generally speaking it comes with a raise as well, well God wants to invest power into your life, He wants to impart authority into you, and I would venture to say that no one here (or at least the vast majority) would have no problem accepting all the power that God would give them. But there’s another side to Christ, or another depth to Him that if we truly want to know Him completely there’s no avoiding. and That’s the fellowship of His sufferings, now this is where we go, “Urrt, hit the brakes Paul, let me off at the last stop. I’m all about the power, but this suffering business, I’m afraid that’s not for me.

After all don’t you know that Christians don’t have to suffer?” One thing that fires me up is when I hear these televangelists, and health and wealth prosperity teachers twist the scriptures while claim the position that as believers you never need to suffer and in fact only those who are weak in the faith are the ones who do suffer.

They’re all about the things of this world, the comforts and carnal pleasures that this world has to offer, when in reality we’re not to be of this world. When we get to vs 19 we’ll see that Paul rebukes the mentality of those who set their minds on earthly things, because our citizenship is in heaven. In Col 3:1-2 we read, *“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.”*

I’m not trying to insinuate that having things is sinful, but where is your priority, we want the power of His resurrection, but we rebel against the fellowship of His sufferings, you know why? Because the flesh always rebels against suffering, but in reality, the brutal truth is, is that part of you heritage on this earth as a Kings kid, is suffering. But the flesh rebels against it; you recall that the disciples found it hard to palate when Jesus began to speak to them of the suffering that He would have to endure. In fact they didn’t palate it at all, it never sank in until after the resurrection, but you remember in Matt ch 16 when Peter had that incredible revelation of Jesus as the Christ, and we read directly after that that, *“From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!" But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.”*

The things of men, things that don't involve suffering, people are much like water, we seek the pathway of least resistance, evading suffering at all costs. That's the natural cry of man, "spare yourself from suffering" but as a believer there's no avoiding it, if you want to know Christ. Jesus said, in this world you will have tribulation. 2 Tim 3:12 "*Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.*" Funny that's one promise that I never hear claimed, Peter tells us very clearly that it can be God's will for us to suffer, and he sights Christ as his primary example as One who suffered according to the will of God. and if God's will for His own Son involved suffering, how dare I have the audacity to think that I'm above the treatment that His own Son was subjected to endure.

The writer of Heb tells us that Jesus learned obedience through the things He suffered; many times for us I find that suffering works in our lives like a refiners fire. Purging us of impurities that we don't need, purifying us in Christ, we like to hang on to our impurities, but often times suffering causes us to thrust those unhealthy aspects of our lives aside so that we might draw nearer to Christ. Because often times we know that this thing, or this person, or this place, or this hobby isn't healthy for us, but we flirt with it, we keep it around so as to make provision for our flesh. and So God will at times turn up the heat a little bit so as to burn away the chaff in our lives, maturing and perfecting us, bringing us back into submission to His will for our lives. Peter said, "*But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.*"

The fellowship of His sufferings, it's part of your heritage in Christ, Rom 8:16-17 "*The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.*" In Matt 5 we read where Jesus said, "*Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*" Now notice the blessing was in you being persecuted "for His sake" not for acting weird, or being obnoxious. So many people act like nuts in the name of Christ and then when they get beat up or made fun of, or ridiculed they get all excited like they've been persecuted for Christ's sake.

If you're acting stupid you're not being persecuted for Christ's sake, you're being persecuted because you're acting stupid. But if in fact it is for Christ's sake then great is your reward, you recall in Acts ch 5, the apostles on trial because they were openly preaching Jesus as the Christ. and The Pharisees and Sadducees had them arrested saying that they were making them guilty of the blood of Christ, (because they were the one's who had Him crucified.) and Peter during they're examination said, that's because you are guilty of His blood you murdered Him, but God raised Him from the dead and exalted Him to His right hand to give the forgiveness of sins. Well that made the council really mad and so knowing that they hadn't broken any law they beat them and let them go and we read that, "*they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.*"

That's what Jesus was talking about, when you suffer for His sake, great will be your reward. I can't for the life of me see how people can teach that suffering is a lack of faith, when in reality it *may* be one of the biggest signets or symbols of your faith. The world don't persecute their own, Jesus said that if you were of the world they would love you as their own, but because you're not of the world the world hates you. and Because you are hated you will be persecuted; the life of the follower of Christ will with out exception involve to some greater or lesser degree suffering. Jesus said if anyone wants to come after Me let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me. What does the cross speak of? Suffering, the crucified life, the bible says that those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh along with it's passions and desires. The cross speaks of the denial of self and the self willed life, being willing to lay down your will and receive God's will for your life. and Even as the cross the God's will for Jesus to suffer, so to with everyone who desires to follow Jesus, you will have to suffer the death of the cross.

You will have to die to self, Paul was willing to follow Jesus to the cross, so that he might know Him completely, not only the power of the resurrection, but also the fellowship of His sufferings. Why, because you can never know that power of the resurrection until you've 1<sup>st</sup> experienced the death of the cross. A fact that applied even to Jesus Himself, Jesus wasn't resurrected until He 1<sup>st</sup> suffered the death of the cross. You see; the resurrected life always follows the crucified life. The power of His resurrection follows the fellowship of His sufferings and the death of the cross.

So you bet I want to know the power of His resurrection, but before I can experience that I have to experience the death of the cross, the fellowship of His sufferings, suffering the death of my self, my old nature, the flesh life. Being conformed or brought into union to His death Rom 6:5-6 tells us that, "*if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.*" and He goes in vs 11 to say therefore, "*reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*" Speaking of living in that resurrection power of the Holy Spirit having 1<sup>st</sup> of all been conformed to His death, Paul understood the necessity of being conformed to His death.

Vs11

But you see how can one attain to the resurrection of the dead with out 1<sup>st</sup> of all dying? Again even Jesus couldn't experience resurrection power until after He suffered the death of the cross, the cross was essential and necessary for Him to experience resurrection power. and You know what? The same is true for you and me, Paul said, "*I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*"

Once you and I have been crucified with Christ we can now experience, and live in the power of the resurrection. But too often people cringe and shy away at the fellowship of His sufferings and the crucified with Christ life. They want to hang on to the flesh, and things of the flesh, they don't want to see it nailed to the cross, and then they want to wander around in confusion not knowing why they struggle so much. Why they seem to be so weak and anemic spiritually speaking, they're not walking in victory experiencing the "resurrection power" that they hear so much about. and They can't figure out why they're having such difficulty staying on that pathway of discipleship that Jesus spoke about, but it's impossible to follow Him accurately and effectively if you're trying to bypass the 1<sup>st</sup> two prerequisites, deny yourself, and take up your cross. There are no short cuts to resurrection power, death always, always, always, comes 1<sup>st</sup>. Now I'm not going to deny that the flesh dies hard, if you're finding it simple to deny yourself, it's because you're not denying yourself. If you're finding it easy to take up the cross, it's because you haven't taken up the cross, Jesus never said He was the easy way. That's why He gave illustration of building a tower and fighting a war and considering before hand if you had the means to follow through. Let's look at Luke ch 14 Vs 25-33

#### Vs25-30

Now keep the context He's speaking here of discipleship and what it takes to follow Him, and He's saying you need to consider your decision about Him before entering into a life that seeks to follow Him. He's saying that we need to count the cost, He has to be our priority over our parents or brothers or sisters, over our husbands or wives or kids or anything else. He's being quite frank here and He's telling us that He's not the easy way, there are a lot of difficulties that come with following Jesus, it'll cost you possibly your reputation, maybe your job when you're not willing to make those deceitful business deals that you used to.

It may cost you certain liberties that you're used to indulging, the people that seemed to love you suddenly hate you because now you're some type of religious nut. and He's basically saying we need to weigh out whether or not we're willing to lose our lives for His sake before we enter into the deal, because He's not the easy way. If anyone tells you that if you accept Christ all your problems will be over, they're lying to you. Or if you tell someone that all their problems will be over if they just accept Christ, you're lying to them. To the contrary you just entered the war and now the enemy is going to come against you, notice.

#### Vs31-33

You see, the warfare is real, and Jesus is saying that you're only going to do yourself more harm by seeking to follow Him and not following through then if you'd have just never made that decision in the 1<sup>st</sup> place. Because if you're not willing to suffer the death of the cross, forsaking all that you have, then you won't make it as a disciple, because you can't be a disciple unless you're willing to lose your life for His sake. But all that having been said, you also need to know that there's no better life then life in Christ Jesus.

Wait a minute, you say. “I thought you just said that the life of Christ wasn’t easy, had the propensity to be riddled with problems.” I did, “then how is there no better life?” Because it rains on the just and unjust, and if you’re not in Christ you have much more to worry about than I ever will in Christ. and Because my hope isn’t in this world or the things of this world, all of my trials are simply a temporary passing phase working in me an eternal weight of glory.

The present sufferings of this age aren’t worthy to be compared to the glory that will be revealed in us on that day when we see Jesus face to face. No, Jesus isn’t the easy way (death’s not always painless), He’s the only way, and no one comes to the Father but by Him. So let me encourage this morning to quit shying away from the fellowship of His sufferings, but rather embrace them. Not because they’re pleasant, but because the end thereof is the power of His resurrection, a life of victory over the flesh and power to lead a sanctified life, *“present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.* (When we consider Jesus and His sacrifice on the cross and what it means to you and me, to embrace the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, is our reasonable service, or our reasonable worship (that could be translated) giving your body to the Lord is your reasonable aspect of worship) *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”* God wants to use your life, but you’ve got to give it over to Him.

Maybe this morning you’re here and you’ve never given your life to Christ. and As we’ve considered the power of the resurrection and fellowship of His sufferings you’ve had an opportunity to count the cost. This morning you’re here for 3 reasons; Jesus wanted to convict you, to challenge you, and to change you. Jesus died on the cross for you, He suffered death so that you might live, and if you want to die to yourself this morning and be made alive in Christ. Come to the cross, come to the fountain of living waters and refresh your soul this morning.