

Introduction: All Scripture is equally inspired of God, but some passages are more powerful and precious than others. This is one of those golden passages. *** I chose this passage for my term paper in a seminary course where we discovered the meaning of *Philippians* verse-by-verse. One of the many reasons I chose this passage is because my sister gave me a Promise Keepers cassette in 1997 that ended with the song Graham Kendrick wrote based on this passage: *Knowing You*. It quickly became a favorite song and, as a result, I wore out the cassette tape. *** This passage is at the heart of Paul's personal testimony of what it meant for him to be IN The Messiah Savior. He was no longer trusting in his own efforts to follow the instructions Yahweh, The Creator, Redeemer and King, had given to Moses so His people could live in His blessings. *** Paul is giving his testimony so that people in the church he planted in Philippi, and who had shared in his ministry by fully supporting him, would be kept safe from the 'dogs' that were trying to lead them away from a whole-hearted commitment to Christ Jesus and His Gospel. He desired they be committed ONLY to Christ and His Gospel. *** The heart of this passage is to know Jesus, sharing in His sufferings and death for all so as to somehow finish life in resurrection. This union with The Lord comes after people consider their own efforts to be dung so they will become righteous through Christ's faithfulness. Then, from that point forward, they will continue their journey in life energetically pursuing God's high calling IN Christ. *** There is a lot here. So let's plunge into this pool of Living Water!

I. I consider my gains loss to know Christ my Lord, found IN Him having righteousness through His faithfulness.
(Verses 7-9)

- A. I consider all the gains I had in the past to be loss for Christ and the surpassing knowledge of Him, for whom I consider all as dung to win Him. (Verses 7-8)
1. But the things that were being gain to me, those I have considered loss for The Christ. (Verse 7)
Seven-fold Pharisee: Just before this sentence, Paul had completed a list of seven things in which he was trusting: concerning both his birthright and his accomplishments according to Mosaic law.
Consider: This is the first of three times Paul uses the word for human consideration or thinking.
 2. But, even more, I am considering all things to be loss. (Verse 8a)
Everything: By this he means everything associated with being a seven-fold Pharisee 'in the law'.
 3. For having the surpassing knowledge of Christ Jesus, The Lord of me. (Verse 8b)
To know God: Jesus prayed to His Father in Gethsemane, 'this is eternal life: to have knowledge of you, the only true God, and of him whom you have sent, even Jesus Christ' (*John 17:1-3*, BBE).
 4. For whom I am suffering loss of all things, and am considering (them) dung. (Verse 8c)
Loss of 'junk': What a difference knowing Jesus makes! Paul is declaring that all on which he had based his right standing with God, and has now been lost, he thinks to be dung ('junk')!
Application: This is not true only for Paul two thousand years ago. We must consider all our 'things' to be dung compared to the surpassing knowledge of Christ Jesus.
 5. That I might win (gain the advantage of) Messiah (Christ). (Verse 8d)
Purpose: So the purpose of letting go of our own efforts to please God in our own strength is to know Him and Jesus and as a result having eternal and abundant life with purpose (*John 3, 10, 15*).
- B. And I may be found IN Him, having the righteousness through the 'faith of Him': the righteousness from God upon 'the faith'. (Verse 9)
1. And I may be found IN Him, not having righteousness of my own, which is out of 'law'. (Verse 9a)
Torah: The 'law' is the Torah instruction Yahweh gave his people through Moses. Paul wrote to churches in Galatia, in present day Turkey just north of Cyprus, that the 'law' is good but it needed a mediator so people could do it. Jesus is that mediator making it possible for believers to be given righteousness IN Him. (*Galatians 3:19-25*)
 2. But (I am having) the righteousness through the faith of Christ. (Verse 9b)
Christ's faithfulness: This translation was the major conclusion of my paper. After much prayerful study, I concluded that twentieth century translations 'through faith in Christ' (NAS, RSV, NIV, NJB) are not right. It would take too long to explain the Greek grammar and how I compared Scripture with Scripture. I would love to discuss my conclusion with anyone, but it will take over fifteen minutes. One more thing: Some evangelicals come close to making 'faith' a work.
The 'work' of God: Supporting my conclusion is how to interpret Jesus' answer, 'This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent' (*John 6:28-29*, NAS). I believe Jesus is saying that our faith is a result of God working in our lives, NOT something that originates in us.
Application: May we all let go of our accomplishments in order to gain the righteousness not by our own efforts, but to have righteousness through the faithful Christ.

Righteousness comes through the faithful Christ

3. The righteousness from God (based) upon the faith. (Verse 9c)
On the basis of the faith: In this final clause, I believe God is talking about our response of faith in the work of His Son on The Cross and in The Empty Tomb. Think of what we learned a few weeks ago: we are to work out our salvation which God is working out in us. (*2:12-13*) Salvation is of both God and us, but God is the major player.

II. To know Him in everything, sharing His sufferings, and being made to die like Him, so somehow I finish in the resurrection. (Verses 10-11)

- A. My purpose is to know the power of Christ's resurrection and share in His sufferings. (Verses 10abc)
1. In order to know Him. (Verse 10a)
Purpose: The purpose of responding to the faithful Messiah in faith is to know Him. We have already seen this leads to three-fold life.

2. And the power of His resurrection. (*Verse 10b*)
3. And the fellowship of His sufferings. (*Verse 10c*)

Share sufferings: We cannot have the power of Jesus without also sharing in His sufferings (plural). Some people want only blessings from Jesus, but they do not understand the role of suffering in life.

B. Being made in the same likeness in His death to somehow finish into the resurrection. (*Verses 10d-11*)

1. Being made conformable to His death. (*Verse 10d*)

Conformable: This means that our death must be of the same form and likeness as His. He died for our sins so we can die to our sins IN Him. (*Romans 6:10-12*)

2. If somehow I might finish into the rising up from the dead. (*Verse 11*)

Finish: The word is translated 'attain' by the King James Version, but means to finish a (life)-journey.

'If somehow': This was why I chose to study this passage. 'If' to Paul (and the Holy Spirit) is not about IF people rise up from the dead IN Christ, but when and how God will bring about the rising up.

The resurrection of the dead: This is the only time in Scripture this particular word is used. It literally means 'to rise up out of'. Here, the rising up is out of the grave of death.

Death must come before life

III. Not that I am already made perfect, but I follow to be taken hold of Christ; forgetting what is past, but stretching to the prize ahead, God's calling IN Christ. (*Verses 12-14*)

A. I am following after Christ that I may take what I have been taken up of Him. (*Verse 12*)

1. Not that I have already taken or already been made perfect. (*Verse 12a*)

Not to have taken: Paul wants his brothers in Philippi to know that even he, one used in a special way by God to plant churches around the Roman Empire, is still not attained to full righteousness IN Christ.

2. But I am following after. (*Verse 12b*)

Follow after: This word is used for pursuing a person. It often means persecution. Writing to the churches in Corinth, Paul says has been often in danger of death. (*2 Corinthians 11:23-28*) The life Christ gives comes after people die to themselves and to sin. Many then face death in persecution. But they always have the life of Christ.

Death must come before life.

3. If also I may myself take hold of that which I also have been taken hold of Christ Jesus. (*Verse 12c*)

Taken hold by Christ: All coming to Christ Jesus, in humble obedient faith in God's faithful Messiah, will be forgiven, and taken hold (seized) by Him, to receive His righteousness. (*2 Corinthians 5:16-21*)

Righteousness comes through the faithful Christ

B. Brothers, one thing: forgetting what is behind, I am reaching to the high calling of God IN Christ. (*Verses 13-14*)

1. Brethren, I myself am not reasoning to have taken hold. (*Verse 13a*)

Not taken hold (seized): Paul makes the same point as before but using different words.

2. But one (I am doing). (*Verse 13b*)

But one: Since he met Jesus on the road to Damascus, Paul has had a single-minded devotion to Him and His work. His one goal is serving Christ who is the one focus of his life.

3. The things that are indeed behind, I am forgetting. (*Verse 13c*)

Behind: It is counter-productive to dwell on past failures that have been forgiven IN Jesus.

4. But stretching towards the things before my face, I follow after (pursue) toward the mark, to the prize of the high calling of The God IN Christ Jesus. (*Verse 13c*)

Pursue prize: Paul uses athletic imagery to explain why he is compelled to make such an effort for The Gospel of Jesus. He will gain more than a crown of laurel leaves. He will gain the crown given by God and eternal access to God as a citizen of His Kingdom and an adopted brother of Jesus Himself!

Summary: Putting it together, we must reach out to Jesus The Savior to know by experience a life that is BOTH crucified with Him AND certain of finishing resurrected in His power. The truth is life comes only after we die to ourselves with Christ.

Death must come before life

Calling: God is calling all people to receive forgiveness in His Son who was faithful to do the work of reconciliation and salvation to all who receive Him in faith. Paul is called to proclaim this Good News.

IN Christ: May we all energetically stretch forth so as to zealously pursue our high calling of righteousness of God IN The Savior. We are IN Christ when we submit to Him in the humble obedient faith of a child. Then we will be righteous in God's eyes because of His faithfulness.

Righteousness comes through the faithful Christ

Conclusion: Paul uses his testimony in order that all would know The Messiah and the power of His resurrection AND share His sufferings, receiving the form of His death for their sins, to somehow finish life's journey rising up from death. They suffer loss of everything they have to have the righteousness He gives in His faithfulness, based upon the faith. All this results in life dedicated to attaining with energy the prize of God's high calling IN Christ Jesus.

Righteousness comes through the faithful Christ