

Loss for Christ - cont.

Unto His Death

Paul previously had caused others to die (Acts 8:3; 9:1-2), but now he was willing to die himself for Jesus. One is “conformed unto his death” when he dies like Christ died – a death to self and a death for others (Galatians 6:14). Sacrificing for others is a motivation (2 Timothy 4:6-8).

I May Attain Unto the Resurrection of the Dead

Paul previously believed in a resurrection, but he would not have been raised with the righteous because he persecuted Christians. The “resurrection from the dead” refers to the specific resurrection of the righteous dead (unto life) apart from the wicked dead (Acts 24:15). Being raised with the righteous to go to heaven is a motivation (Luke 14:14; 20:35; 1 Corinthians 15:23).

Today, people need to think about changing like Paul did. Why convert to Christ? Why leave denominationalism? Why remain faithful as a Christian? The motivations for Paul are the same for us. Friend, there is good reason to change. Do it today! - *Chris Reeves*

Sentence Sermons

- It is safe to trust in a known God for an unknown future.
- If you are faithful in little, you will be faithful in much.
- The world is moved by men and women who cannot be moved by the world.
- Your influence, either for good or bad, cannot be hidden; it will be seen one way or the other.

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For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 -

Why did a man named Saul of Tarsus (the Apostle Paul) give up so many things in his Jewish life to become a Christian and gain Christ? Was he mad or crazy? He had a good Jewish life. Why did he do it? What motivation was present to make him change from Judaism to Christianity? Why did the bright stars of Paul's life fade at the presence of the Son of God (Acts 26:13)?

These are all good questions and they are answered by Paul himself. In Philippians 3:4-14, Paul writes about his change and in 3:8-11 he writes in particular about eight motivations for his change. He had a noble religious status, and well-known illustrious ancestry, a prestigious religious party, and highly devoted zeal. But, he gave all that up for Christ.

Consider the eight statements that Paul makes in 3:8-11 that are motivations for his change: 1.) the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, 2.) that I may gain Christ, 3.) be found in him, 4.) that I may know him, 5.) the power of his resurrection, 6.) the fellowship of his sufferings, 7.) becoming conformed unto his death, and, 8.) I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead.

The Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ

Paul previously had great human knowledge (Acts 22:3), but he changed to have the knowledge of Christ. The knowledge of Christ is excellent" (surpassing greatness) because it is divine, not human; because it leads to salvation (Galatians 1:12; Colossians 2:2-3). Divine knowledge is a motivation (Jeremiah 9:23-24).

That I May Gain Christ

Paul previously had gained a great standing and earthly recognition among his peers (Galatians 1:13-14), but he changed to have Christ. To "gain Christ" is to make him one's own; to appropriate him in one's life so as to become full or complete (Colossians 2:6-7,10). Gaining Christ is a motivation.

Be Found In Him

Paul previously had been found in Jewish social circles and in the Old Law (Philippians 3:5-6), but he changed to being found in Christ. Today, one is "found in him" when one is baptized into Christ and has put on Christ (John 15:1-5; Galatians 3:27). Putting on Christ in baptism is a motivation.

That I May Know Him

Paul previously had known many great Jews and even had known *about* Jesus (Acts 26:9), but he wanted to know Jesus personally and intimately. To "know" Christ is not mere intellectual knowledge, but close communion, fellowship, and experience. Knowing Christ is a motivation (Galatians 2:20; 2 Timothy 1:12).

The Power of His Resurrection

Paul previously had lived in the death of sin (Ephesians 2:5), but he wanted to be raised from that spiritual death. The "power of his resurrection" is the resurrection from sin and newness of life that comes after baptism (Romans 6:3-12; 2 Timothy 2:11-12). Raised from sin is a motivation.

The Fellowship of His Sufferings

Paul previously had caused others to suffer (Acts 8:3; 9:1-2; 26:10), but he wanted to now suffer himself for Jesus. The "fellowship of his sufferings" was suffering with Christ, like Christ, and for Christ (1 Timothy 3:12). Suffering that leads to glory in heaven is a motivation (Romans 8:17).

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Becoming Conformed