

Counted Loss

Jeremy Richards

25 May 2025

If anyone remembers, a couple weeks ago, Paul had given a long list of things which he had given up for Christ. We're just going to read through that before we move on in chapter three. So chapter three, verse three of Philippians. Chapter three, verse three.

We'll start in verse four.

Philippians. I always remember it. Go eat popcorn. Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and then all the T's after that. First and second Thessalonians, first and second Timothy, Titus, and then or Thessalonians, Timothy and Titus.

Okay. All right. Chapter three, verse three. For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. And Paul's going to give a list of things that might give an individual confidence in their flesh.

Things that if you and I are proud of certain things or things that are valuable to us, we might indicate certain things. But really, when it comes down to it, these nature issues, these things of his religious experience, his nationality, his background, his family or his clan, his experiences are really more valuable to us than the things we possess, right? Sometimes we think that the most valuable things we have are physical things, cars or a house or things. But people over the centuries have routinely proven that those things are less important than their nationality. They would leave those things to go fight for their country or for their family or these kind of things.

And so Paul is giving a list of the very most important things that he has in his life and is also saying that these things he's willing to put aside. So we're going to look at the. The list in verse four. Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so here's his circumcised on the eighth day of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews concerning the law, a Pharisee concerning zeal, persecuting the church, concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

Blameless. So this is his list of those things which could have been a benefit to him, that he could have used to move himself forward in a society that could have given him assurance of his standing in the sight of God. Things that he cling to or that people cling to, of giving them worth. Right? Some of us have those things that we have in our life also.

And we feel value because of our experiences, because of our heritage, because of our nationality. But Paul in verse 7 changes. He says, but what things were gain to me These I have counted loss for Christ. You see, that relationship we have with Christ is biblically a one in which individuals have to give up things because Christ is traveling in a certain direction and he calls people to go along with him. Those things that we value as worthwhile things and important do not always lead us in the same direction Christ is going.

And so we have to come to a decision point in our life. If you remember Elijah and Elisha, there was going to be a transfer of authority from Elijah to Elisha. Elisha knew about this and had a feeling that I need to stay with Elijah. It's important to me. And so Elijah said, hey, we're going to Jericho.

You stay here. Elisha said, no way. As your soul lives, I'm going with you. When they got to Jericho, Elijah said to Elisha, hey, I'm going to cross over the Jordan. You stay here.

Elisha said, no, as your soul lives and as my soul lives, I. I will not leave you. You see, there is something that Elisha knew. He had to walk with Elijah in order to receive the

blessing that came from Elijah. In a similar way that Christ is calling us to walk with him.

That benefit that comes from walking with Christ means we have to leave those things, things that are taking us a different direction, taking us a different direction. We see this repeatedly. Jesus says, take up your cross and follow me, that we have to lay down things. He said that he who loves his mother or his father or his wife or children is not worthy of me. The man came to Jesus and said, I will follow you wherever I go.

Jesus said, foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man has no place to lay his head. Jesus says, and he called them. He says, take up your yoke and follow me. There is, if you are going to walk with Christ, a necessity of laying down those things which are important for you and picking up those things which are important to Christ. If anyone has ever been in a car, driving the car, and think that you are in the driver's seat and there's someone next to you that think they're in the driver's seat also, it can be a little bit frustrating, right?

And you and I are like, I'm the driver, but they just keep on on you and they keep on bringing insecurity. You're going the wrong way, you're going too fast. Stop that. And pretty soon your car starts heading in the direction that they want to go. Christ is a man in charge of the direction he's headed.

There is nothing you can bring that takes you in a direction that will veer him off the course. He knows what's right. If you will walk with Christ, he does not lay down anything, but you must lay down everything there is absolutely in this walk. If we call Jesus Lord, it is that we have to lay down those things which were important for us for the benefit of picking up and being found in the direction that Jesus is headed. It is one that is laying down of our things that feel worthwhile for the picking up for his.

We're going to go through the next verse. What things were gain to me these I have counted loss for Christ, verse 8. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord God. But even though Christ is calling us to lay down things, it is not the life of an ascetic that is his goal. His goal is

not to make us feel as much pain as possible in our relationship with Him.

Sometimes we may feel that that may be the goal of our Spouse sometimes, but it's really, really not true, right? Christ is offering something. It is an exchange of one thing for another. There is in Hebrews, it says, the sufferings of this life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed after this, right? So we have to ask ourselves, if Christ is asking us to lay down things, is he only asking us to lay them down for us to feel bad about ourselves?

The ascetics from a big part of Christian history felt that the more pain the flesh felt, the more spiritually inclined a person would be. And so they would do horrendous things to themselves. Block themselves in, starve themselves, do all these things to themselves. Paul says these things have an appearance of wisdom, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh. The reason we lay things down is not to experience pain, but to pick up the blessing that Christ has.

Elisha knew that by giving up his personal freedom to follow Elijah would result in a double blessing. Therefore, he was more than worthy, more than willing, excuse me, more than willing to follow Elijah. Because when the end of the road came, he knew that what he would receive was far more valuable than what he gave up. The truth is that you and I, when we value things, we have a broken indicator, right? We would think that a person would be ridiculous taking perfume and a pile of dog poo and trying to figure out which one smelled better, right?

Or taking weeks old french fries into an expensive French restaurant and trying to figure out which tastes better. Sometimes we try to figure out crazy things, feathers or lead, which one weighs more. But the truth is that sometimes our spiritual understanding of value things is broken. So we have to look at the nature of those things which individuals gave up in a real light of Paul. He gave up, it says that he was of the circumcision, circumcised on the eighth day.

That circumcision was supposedly a physical act which did something to those to whom it was performed on. But Jesus says that their circumcision had be. Or excuse

me, Paul said that their circumcision had become uncircumcision, that thing which was a cutting off of their flesh, but did not cut off the sinful effects of their life. They still acted as if they were uncircumcised and only trusted in a physical act.

They said of themselves, we are the sons of Abraham. They were trusting in their physical descendancy. They were holding on to the worth of being a descendant. Jesus said to them, if you were a descendant of Abraham, you would walk like he did, but you do not walk like his. You have your own father, the devil.

Jesus showed them that that way that they were trusting in was not worthy to be compared. And so through this list of line, if we can take a spiritual look at the things we trust in, we see that they are lacking. They are lacking. So this trade that I believe that Christ is asking us to make, it says, yet Indeed in verse 8, I count all things loss. There is a weighing in the balance, a considering, a weighing them out.

Which is worth more? These physical things I trust in, or that which Christ is offering me? Which is more valuable, which should I lay down, which should I pick up, which road should I travel on? Not only are those physical things that we trust in not valuable, that which Christ offers us is valuable. It says, yet indeed I count all things loss, those previous things for the excellence of the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Not only are physical things not valuable or not worthwhile for spiritual purposes, that name and that work of Jesus is an excellent one. First of all, it's excellent because he has an excellent name. There is no other name given among men by which men might be saved. There is no other name. It says that he is King of Kings and Lord of Lords in Hebrews.

We have a little bit of a a section on this.

It says in chapter one and verse four of Hebrews having become so much better than the angels, as he has by an inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they for which of the angels did he ever say, you are my son today I have begotten you. I will be unto him a father, and he shall be to me a son. But when again he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, let all the angels of God worship him. And of the

angels, he says, who makes his angels, spirits and his ministers aflame of fire. But to the Son he says, you, throne, O God, is forever and ever.

A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness. Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness more than your companions. Jesus has an excellent offering, an inheritance for us, because he has an excellent name. If you were to boast about someone you know, you would not boast about the most unobscure, the most obscure person you know.

You would boast of that individual who had the most excellent name. Here we're called to Follow Christ because He has an excellent name. There's no one who has a name like him. But he also has an excellent ministry. He is called as a priest according to the order of Melchizedek, that every priest had something to offer.

But he offered his own blood for those, for the multitude, for many. That there in heaven were rumblings and shakings and violence at the throne of God, similar to that which we see before the Noah's flood. That the wickedness of man was great. And Jesus came with his own blood as a surety and placed it upon the altar of God. And God's anger ceased.

He had a ministry by which he would present his own blood for the sins of many. It was accepted in God's sight. His ministry is an excellent one. That he takes guilty and condemned sinners and leaves them righteous and holy in God's sight. He has an excellent ministry.

He also gives excellent gifts. You and I are given gifts, but I hope you know I don't like gifts very much. I really don't. Those gifts, in my opinion, don't last very long. They are a bit chintzy and just fall apart, you know, it's the thought that matters.

It really is. It's the caring of a person's heart. But the gift itself is not really worth much, right? Someone Tirzi got a bike, right? Tandem bike.

And then Jason and David thought they would take the bike for a ride, right? And it's just physical things, right? Two big guys on a little girl's bike, right? Things don't last very long. We all are aware of that.

But Christ's gift is not a physical thing. I love you Jason, it's a sharing of his authority with other people. He gives of his own resources. His gift is to participate with you in his ministry. He calls you into that excellent ministry which he has, and he shares it with you.

He has an excellent inheritance that he offers those who follow him to a place where there will be no more tears, no more crying, no more sin or shame from sin, and that we will be there with him forever, knowing him as he is. It's an excellent inheritance that he has. And he offers this to you and I by adoption. Not that we are worthy in any way to receive it, but him choosing us, bringing us into his family. He shares these things with us.

So when we weigh out these physical things which under the sharpest spiritual light prove to be defective, and someone would might choose to value them against those great wonders of the promises of Jesus Christ, in my mind, in my spirit, they are not worthy to be compared with each other. The one road shouldn't be confused with the other. That one which Christ offers is a more excellent path than the other. And so Paul says, hey, look, it's not just because I'm getting rid of stuff. It's because that what I gain from following Christ is of such superior nature, of such greater quality, of such more wonderful fulfillment that I choose to lay down the one so I can pick up the other.

Because you can't go both ways, it says, and go back to Philippians, we're going to finish that verse. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus. My Lord. Friends, Christ has much to offer in a similar way that Noah had much to offer as those floods, that rain began to fill the earth. The benefit that Noah could offer after having built an ark was only to those who would be on the ark.

That benefit, that blessing of being in a safe, provided place was only available to those who would be on the ark with Noah. In a similar way, all the blessing and the riches that Christ offers is only available to those who walk with Him. Such tremendous worth and yet rejected by so many. When Jesus cries out, come and follow me. But you can't follow Jesus unless you call him Lord.

It says, for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus. My Lord, it says, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things. We have to absolutely be clear that though the riches that he offered us are great, it says, with many tribulations you must enter the kingdom of God, that this life of walking with God is one in which we will experience difficulty. It says that those who live righteously in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. But Paul, knowing that, says in Hebrews the scripture that I said earlier, Romans, it says, for I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us.

Jesus says in Matthew, it says, 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 before you.

It says in First Peter, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ. That simple stain that I believe was repeated by him is no fool who loses what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose. We are called to give everything in following Christ, but not for the sake of losing, but for the sake of gaining something we cannot lose. I'm going to finish in Philippians chapter three, just to finish that verse for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish.

Count them as rubbish. When he weighed that value that came from following Christ with the value that came from his physical accomplishments or his inheritance from his fathers or his nationality or his deeds or his zeal, and he says, the latter is as trash compared to that which Christ has for me. We have a dumpster behind the food bank full of trash. And if you came with your car full of your more precious possessions, and we're saying we're going to make a trade, right? We're going to give you our trash and we'll take your treasures.

And we're going to need to sell tickets because the line is going to be so long, people wanting to come, right, and make that exchange trash for treasures. But sometimes that's exactly what we're doing. Christ has offered us incomparable and great riches, exceedingly great and precious promises. And he says, come with me, I'm going to give them to you. You're going to inherit them, you're going to share with me in my nature through adoption.

And you say no, I got some trash and we're left sometimes like that young man who because of his good works was sorrowful because he would not follow Christ. He valued his own physical deeds more than walking with Jesus. And he went away sorrowful. He valued his trash, things that aren't really long lasting, over the things of Christ. And so my encouragement to you today as Christ is working in in you that exceedingly great ministry of his, bringing on a little heat and suffering, a little pain and trials, it's time to lift up your head.

Lift up your head, O you gates. And the King of glory shall come in a little pain for a little while, a little suffering just for a short season, but in eternal weight of glory. He is no fool who loses what he cannot keep in order to gain what he cannot lose forever. And so I believe that that's what Paul is teaching us. So rejoice, Rejoice when you fall into various temptations.

But don't get off the road Christ is calling you on. Let's pray.

Oh Father, Lord, we do come to you. O Father, so weak, Lord, so tempted, Lord, so weak under trials. Lord, give us a perspective that is correct and that views your sacrifice and you'd calling as the most valuable in our lives. I ask in Jesus name, Amen.