

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

DATE

October 20, 2019

SPEAKER

Brian Frost

SERIES

I Found Joy

PART

9

TITLE

I Found Joy In Knowing Christ

SCRIPTURE

Philippians 3:1-11



© 2019 Providence Baptist Church (Raleigh, NC)

Sermon transcripts may be used for preaching and teaching purposes, but may not be published or sold. While generally accurate, parts of this transcript may contain errors.

Providence reserves the right to correct and/or remove a transcript at any time.

It's great to see all of you here on this wonderful rainy day. I don't know what you're laughing about. There was a time when this jacket was really important to me. It's actually been 30 years since I put this thing on, but the fact is, in high school, this thing carried a whole lot more than the things that I had accomplished. It really carried my identity. It carried my perceived worth and value, validation before other people. It was sort of like a resume before you needed one. It told people you were somebody. It told me that I was somebody. The reality, if I'm being honest with you, is that when I was in particular first three years of high school, I believed that the fuller the jacket, the fuller I would feel.

Years went by, two years went by in high school, and I played sports. I was a good student, but what was interesting is the more that it filled up, the hollower I felt. It was if it didn't fit me. It was this shell that told a story that the inside didn't tell. I had a wonderful childhood in terms of my family. I grew up in amazing family, godly parents. They taught me about Jesus, and yet I didn't see how consequential he was. I didn't see his importance or his value to everyday life, and so it was just another thing. My life, even though it was marked by blessing, I was empty. I was so hollow. This lasted until what I call the day. It wasn't just a day. It was my day. It was the day. It was the important day that I've ever had in my life, and I'm convinced that it will be the most important day that I will know on this side of heaven.

That is I was at home by myself. I was 16 years old. This was in March, and I was watching a basketball game on ESPN. There was a guy. His name is Hank Gathers. He was an All-American basketball player, and I was watching him play, and he died on the court. I looked in front of me as I'm watching and trying to process what I had already considered and been grappling with for months and even years of the emptiness that I felt within my heart even though there was marked by some measure of success, that I had a resume that should had given me confidence before other people and with God. I was in a godly family. I went to church. There was a lot of things, and yet I felt empty. I looked at this man who literally epitomized so much of what I thought. If I could achieve that, then I wouldn't feel so hollow anymore. I looked at him dead on the basketball court.

I went into my bedroom, and the lights were off. I began to do the only thing that I could think of at the time, and that's something I never did. I picked up my Bible, and I began to read my Bible and to be reconfounded with the truth that there was this man who lived. His name was Jesus. He lived, and he loved, and he led people in ways that no one else ever has. Then, he went to a cross to pay for my sin. He was buried in a grave, and he rose from the dead. Then, he extends everybody this invitation. That is that if we're weary and we're broken down and we feel hollow, we can come to him, and we can find life. We can find light. We can find nourishment. We can find satisfaction, all the promises that he gives us. In that moment, I got on my knees in my bedroom, and I prayed to receive Christ.

I acknowledged right then, “God, I know this, but now I know this.” I saw, for whatever reason, that night in the pages of scripture the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and he became the most consequential, the most real person in the world. That was the day that this jacket, it began to mean so very little. For that was the day that I learned later, in fact, we’re going to find in this text that was the day that God had literally given me a new jacket, but this one fit. For the first time, I didn’t feel hollow. I felt whole. I want you to know, and I want to urge you to think about this. Every single one of us, we walked in this room today, and you were wearing a jacket, a resume.

There’s something that gives you confidence before men, and there’s something that gives you confidence before God, something that you’re banking on, something that says, “This is who I am. This is why I’m significant. This is why I don’t feel insecure anymore.” There’s something you are wearing, metaphorically, a jacket. It’s a resume that every single one of us have on right now. Here’s my question for you. Does it fit? Do you feel hollow or do you feel whole this morning? I want to pray for us, and then we’re going to look at what God says about this. Father in heaven, we come to you in faith, looking to you to teach us this morning. Lord, the stage of public opinion, the stage of the ideas of men, it is so crowded.

The last thing that we need is to know what I think about life, but we desperately want to know what you think about life and the life that you can give. I pray that you would help us to open your word and to sit under it and to love it and to cherish it and to care for every word that’s spoken. As we read it, God, would you help it to come alive? Would you give us the gift of belief and hope, faith? Would you give us courage to apply it to our life? For those in this room right now who are wearing a jacket that just doesn’t fit, I pray that by the time they leave this place, Lord, that they would have a new jacket that helps them to feel whole. We look to you in faith, and we pray this in Jesus’ name. Amen.

In your Bibles, I would love for you to look with me at the third chapter of Philippians. If you don’t have one, there’s lots of Bibles in the chairs near you. If you don’t have one at home, take that home as a gift. If you are new with us, first of all, it’s so good to see all of you. I’m so glad that you came in the rain this morning. It’s been wonderful to sing with you. We’re in a series through a book. It’s called Philippians. It’s written by a man named Paul who happens to be in prison in Rome. He’s writing a church in a city called Philippi. The church is actually at risk, and we’re going to read about it here. He starts this section, chapter three verse one, with the word finally. Now, that doesn’t mean that he’s wrapping things up. It means that he’s getting to his point. This is something that’s concerning to him. This is a text actually where he kind of throws several right hooks and one haymaker right at the end.

The reason is because he believes that he’s protecting a church from something that is going to be harmful to them, and so he’s protective. He’s defensive. Anytime somebody’s protective and defensive, they tend to be a little bit more passionate. This is where Paul is at. You see, Paul knew what both jackets felt like.

He knew what it was like for so much of his life to be banking on his own resume, his own moral religious resume before man and God, and he also knew for a long stretch of time now, by the time that he writes this, what it was like to take that jacket off and to wear the jacket that God gives him that bought him so much wholeness. Paul knew that to wear one jacket excluded wearing the other. To protect the joy of this church in Philippi, this is what he says.

He says, “Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is of no trouble to me and is safe for you. Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and who glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh, though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith, that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.” Now, we’ve been talking about this idea of joy because joy is sprinkled throughout every section of his letter.

What we’ve looked at is joy’s a little different than happiness even though they both feel similar. They both feel good, for one, but happiness comes from a word hap. It’s an old English word. It means circumstance. When our circumstances are good, it’s natural to be happy. When our circumstances are not good, well, it’s not natural to be happy, but joy is different. Psalm 16:11 says that joy is actually found, its source is God himself. In his presence, there is fullness of joy. Here he is, and he begins his section where we’re so protective. He says, “Finally, listen to me. I ask you to rejoice in the Lord.” What does joy then motivate us to do? I want to show you a few things here. First is it motivates us to guard against false teaching.

It’s amazing to me that if you’re a student of the New Testament of the Bible, what you’re going to find is that every letter you get to, you’re going to find them dealing with false teachers. They were in every city. They were in every place. Therefore, they’re in every book. There’s people who come in, and they say, “I have a great new gospel,” but it’s no gospel at all. It’s not good news. Paul, it’s obvious that he smells danger. He knows that they’re in danger. He knows that they’re not safe, and so he says to them in verse one, “Listen, I know that you know these things. We’ve talked about these things. I’ve written these things already. You know what? They’re the things that I love talking about the most, so it’s no trouble for me to tell you these things again, but here’s why I’m telling you. It’s because it’s safe for you.”

He knows they're not safe. He knows that there's a threat. There's a risk. He smells smoke all the way in Rome from Philippi, and so he's protective. He's defensive of them. It's so interesting that as you read through the New Testament, even the New Testament writers, they acknowledge that they're reminding their readers of things that their readers already know. Look at what it says in 2 Peter chapter one verse 15. This is what he says. He goes, "I will make every effort so that after my departure," now, he's already talked about that's his death. He knows he's on his deathbed. He says, "I'm going to make every effort so that after my departure you may at any time be able to recall these things." The New Testament writers, they're like a coach. It's like what you see on the screen right now.

There's somebody that says, "This is what we're going to do. I need you in my presence. I'm the coach. You're the player. We're going to do this right, and so go ahead and swing. No, that's not right." He corrects the swing over and over and over again. There, that coach is just training muscle memory. The reason is this. One day, the coach won't be there. Will the player be able to swing right? This is what the New Testament does. This is what Paul is doing right here. He says, "I know you know this. I know we sat down. We went out to the range, and we swung and swung and swung. I taught you. I know you know this, but I may not make it out of this prison. I may be martyred for my faith in Jesus Christ right here in this prison cell. If that's the case and if you lose your coach, I want to make sure that you can speak these things on your own, that you can play the game on your own."

What is the risk? The risk that we're told here is that false teachers had come into Philippi. They had talked, and the church in Philippi was largely, predominantly Gentile, meaning they weren't Jewish people. They weren't familiar with all the Jewish customs and ceremonies. They weren't practitioners of all of those things. This is what he does. He comes to them, and he says, "Look, I know these false teachers are there." What they were saying is that you need to not only trust Jesus Christ as your Savior, but you as Gentiles also need to obey the Jewish rules, the law. The one part of the law that was pretty contentious at this point in time was do you have to be circumcised to still be a part of God's people. Now, it's interesting then what he does. You see, these false teachers, what they're basically saying is you have to build your moral resume. You have to do certain things. There is Jesus, but it's Jesus plus something.

I just want you to know any time somebody comes to you and says it's Jesus plus something else, it's really Jesus minus. It's just a great, big minus sign. He comes, and he says, "I want to warn you about some things here," and it's three of them. He tells us who these people are. The first thing he says is look out for the dogs. Now, I don't believe this is supposed to be spoken in cruelty. It's supposed to be spoken in irony. You see, as a Jewish man, he was taught as a boy. Then, he became a Pharisee. It would be one of the natural things that he did. Any time that he was speaking about those dirty Gentiles who aren't like us, well, they called them dogs. Here, Paul, who's a Jewish man, who's familiar all this time with calling Gentiles dogs, he basically, in a form of irony, he turns it around. He says, "You know what, these Jews who are saying that Jesus is not enough and you need to trust in becoming like a Jewish person," he says, "these people, you need to watch out for these dogs."

It's also supposed to be a metaphor. It's a metaphor that we have a hard time with in America. You see, we have Charlie the retriever, and we have Sprinkles the lapdog. We have sweater vests for their stress. We have sweaters for them and booties and all kinds of things for our pets and our dogs. That's not what he was meaning here. Dogs in the ancient world, in Philippi, they were feral. They were scavengers like you see here. You go right now to a Third World country, and you find packs of wild dogs, and they're scavengers. They growl at people, and they chase people, and they spread disease just like false teachers. He says you need to watch out for them. He says, "You need watch out, look out for evildoers." Then, a superlative of circumcision, he says, "Watch out for those who mutilate the flesh."

Then, what he does, it's a fascinating thing. First of all, if you're sitting here, and you're like, "I'm new to this whole thing, and this guy, he keeps talking about dogs and circumcision. This is my last time here." Circumcision was simply a mark on the body that distinguished that they were part of God's people, but even the placement of that mark was pretty obvious. It was a private matter. You see, one of the things that he does then is he says, "And this is why you need to watch out for these things." He says, "For we are the circumcision." That's an interesting thing to say, but this is what he means. This is what he means for all of us. He says when we trusted in Jesus Christ and he forgave us of all our sin and he gave us his righteousness, what we became what these Jewish people are trying to become, and that is righteous before God.

You see, just like every other Old Testament symbol, circumcision was like all the rest in that it pointed to a day when the Messiah, the coming Christ, would do something in our heart. This is what the law of Moses said. He says, "The Lord will circumcise your heart so that you will love the Lord your God with all of your heart." You see, the point of the New Testament is simply this. It is not about a mark on the body. It's about a mark on your heart. You know you have a mark on your heart, he says, if three things are evident. He says, "For we are the circumcision," and then he says why. He says, "For we're the people who worship by the Spirit of God. We're the people who love to honor the Lord with our life and who love to sing to the Lord and worship him with the strength that the Spirit of God stirs within our heart." That's an evidence of a changed heart.

The second evidence is that we glory in Jesus. We revel in him. We honor him. We speak about him. We love to sing and talk about Jesus. He says we're the people who place no confidence in the flesh. We're the people who have taken off our works-based resume and laid it down, and we are carrying around a righteousness in Christ that says that we're placing no confidence in our righteousness or our purity or our theology or our family line or whatever it is that we're trusting in Christ. Let me encourage you to examine your teachers and the resume they celebrate. You see, every single sermon you've ever heard in your life, every book you've ever read, every seminar you've ever attended is led, written, or taught by somebody, a human being, who is trusting in something. They want you to trust in the same thing. They're going to celebrate somebody's resume, their resume or someone else's resume that's been credited to them.

Every single one of us needs to be so careful. It should tell us something that every book in the New Testament talks about false teachers. We should be on guard today of those who are teaching us, those who are influencing us. One of the best ways that you can do that is simply to look and listen to who they are celebrating. Who's the resume that they're honoring? You see, 2 Corinthians 10:5, he says, "We demolish every pretension that sets itself against the knowledge of God." Do you know what a pretension is? It's a plausible lie. It has enough truth to get into the door and yet enough error to condemn you if you believe it. Let me tell you something. Jesus plus theology is a pretension. It gets in the door because it talks about Jesus dying on a cross and rising from the dead, and so we think, "This is one of ours," but if they turn around and they say, "You know, it's Jesus plus sincerity," or Jesus plus works or Jesus plus church attendance or Jesus plus anything, it is negative.

Listen to your teachers. Listen to who they celebrate. If they're celebrating themselves, then find another teacher. The second thing that joy motivates us to do is to exchange our resume for Jesus' resume. We all have a resume. I know you have a resume. For some of you, it's not athletics, and it's not academics. For some of you, it's your job. It's how much money you have. It's your net worth. It's your influence in the city. It's how many people who know you. It's your power, or prestige. It's something. All of us have a resume. Let me tell you another way to think about your resume. I want you to think about it like it's a bush. This is what I mean. When you turn to the pages of the Bible from the beginning, it begins with that. It says, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." He created a garden. He created two people in his image with the capacity to know him, and he gave them a simple instruction.

After saying, "This is what I want you to do, and everything is here for you," he says, "You see this over here? This is what you can't eat. I'm showing you the bounty of everything else, and I'm withholding this to protect you." They looked at what they saw, and they said, "We have to have that." They sinned against God. You know what the Bible says? It says that once they sinned against God, their heart was literally reconstituted. Their nature changed, and now they had a sin nature. As a result of that, they didn't feel innocent any longer. They felt insecure. You know the very first thing they did? They hid behind bushes. Now, there's not hedges around the church that we're all hiding behind. No, our bushes look like this. We hide behind something that says, "You see I'm somebody. I've done something. I'm important. I'm validated. This is my identity. It's my job. You see my house. You see my car. You see the people that I get to hang out with."

We all have a jacket, all of us. If it's not the jacket that Christ gives us, it never fits. We just keep trying to add to it, just add another patch. There's a better way. You see, if resume building is the game, then Paul says, "I want you to know I'm going to win, and this is why." He knows that he's not stacking himself up against every different category. He's stacking himself up against the false teachers because the false teacher says that if you could be a good Jew, if you can be circumcised like a Jewish person, have the devotion like a Jewish person, if you could have the theology and the practice and the devotion of the purest of the Jews, then God will accept you.

Paul comes in, and he says, “Let me show you that’s a dead end because I’ve already won that game.” He says, “I was circumcised on the eighth day of the people of Israel.” In other words, “I’m Jewish, and I had the ceremony on the right day to prove it.” He says, “I’m of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews.” The tribe of Benjamin was the favored line. The first king of Israel came from the tribe of Benjamin. Hebrew of Hebrews, what does that mean? It means there was a lot of Jewish people that grew up in Greek cultures because their parents took them away. They were immersed in other cultures, other languages, other foods, other things. They were still Jewish, and yet they were not the pure Jews.

What he’s saying here is this, “I am a Hebrew of Hebrew parents, went to Hebrew schools, ate Hebrew food, Hebrew synagogues, catechism, everything. I’m the real deal.” Then, he goes on, and he says, “Not only that, but as to the law of God, a Pharisee.” He says, “I gave myself over to theological precision and practice. As to zeal,” this is an amazing one. He says, “As to zeal, a persecutor of the church.” The church he’s talking about now is the church that he’s now a part of. Notice what he says. He says, “I measured my zeal by my hatred for those I felt who offended God.” This is a stunning thing, to measure your love for God by how much you hate people. He says, “As to righteousness under the law, I was blameless. I lived above reproach. Nobody could accuse me with an open Bible. I did it all, all the ceremonies, all the laws, all the right timing.”

Then he says, “But I want you to know something. Whatever gain I had, I count it as loss for the sake of Christ.” You notice in our text there’s multiple times from verses seven, eight, and nine where he talks about the words gain, loss, and count. He’s talking as if this is a ledger. Gain and loss, they represent profit and loss columns in a ledger. This was his ledger. On one side is loss. There was sin, and he recognized that, but he had so many different good, weighty, heavy things on the profit column that, surely, when he got to God and stood before him that he would look at his little, bitty sin, and he’d look at all of the weight on the other side of the scale, and God would go, “Wow. I’m so impressed. Welcome home.” Let’s translate this for language that’s a little bit more attuned to where we’re at.

He said at first, “I was circumcised on the eighth day.” This means that he had the right ceremony in order to enter the right community. You know, some of you, you’re still banking right now on a right ceremony. You were confirmed or you were catechized or you were baptized. All of a sudden, you became a member of the right community, and you’re banking on a ceremony and being in a right community as your resume before God. That’s what Paul says he was, and that’s what he did. Second one was he was of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews. Let’s translate that. I was a part of the right family. Some of us today, we bank on the right family. I had godly grandparents and godly parents, and I grew up in church. I mean, look at my parents. There’s no way that he would keep me out because look at how godly my dad is. He goes on, and he says, “Not only that, but I was a Pharisee.”

Let's just translate the Pharisee. I had the right theology, and I had the right devotion. I knew the right things, and I practiced the right things. Some of us are banking on what we know about God and how we live our life. He goes on, and he says, "You know, as to zeal, a persecutor of the church." What does that mean? I had a right level of passion. I had intensity for God. I was there every week. He goes on, and he says, "I was blameless." Let's translate that. What does that mean? It means I had the right morality, and I had the right purity. This was his resume. This was the jacket he was wearing. Then, he says, "When God opened my eyes, and I saw Jesus Christ, all of a sudden, he taught me how to count. I saw that I was putting things in the wrong column. This is what he says was my actual resume. Oh, sure, my sin was horrible, and it kept me from God, but now I see that everything that I once trusted that kept me from trusting Christ was also a liability."

This doesn't mean that to be involved in a church and to have passion and devotion and to have a godly family is a bad thing. What it means is this. If we bank on those things our entire life and we end up going to hell because we don't know him personally, it will prove to be a liability and not an asset. Every one of us have to look at what are we banking on. By the way, if you're in here, and you're religious, like you go to church a lot, this passage is for you. It's for me. The people today in the world that are least at risk are those who know they're a sinner and are in wild, reckless abandonment from God. You know why? Because they know they're far from God.

The most dangerous are the people who are so far from God, and yet they sit right here. They bank on all their resume being in the one column when actually it's in another. Do you see what he says? He says, "I take everything I have ever done, ever accomplished, all the bushes that I hide behind, everything, and I put it all on one side compared to the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord." The reason he says that, he says, "I count it all a loss, that I gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith." You see, if you go to the airport, and you get into an airplane, and if you have a window seat, someone may look at you. You may be there and say, "Hey." You're waving at them, and they wave back at you as they put your bag under.

All of a sudden, you start taking off. Now, we can't see through those mirrors. You're still in there, but we can't see you. Now, all of a sudden, you're way up in the air. We see a plane way up there, and you're in there, but all we see is the plane. This is what it means to be found in a plane. You get to fly because you're in a plane. He says, "I count all this a loss. You know why? Because I may be found in Christ." What does that mean, found in Christ? Well, when we trust him, we're found in him. We receive a brand new jacket that's decorated with his accomplishments that have been credited to us. You see, when we put our faith in Jesus Christ, God takes his perfect record, and he credits it to our imperfect life. That's what he meant when he says, "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

Do you know what this means for those of us who know Christ as their Savior? It means that God no longer see our sin resume. He sees Jesus' perfect resume. This is the exchange of the gospel. This is the only jacket that fits. It's the only jacket that will leave you feeling whole instead of hollow. I urge you today to repent of trying to save yourself and trust Christ. Today, move everything that is actually a loss into the loss column and recognize that your whole hope is Jesus Christ. What you're going to find is now you have hope. Now you have life. You're going to find that in Jesus that your resume is his resume. It changes the rest of your life. A lot of us, we think that repentance is about getting rid of the nasty sin in our life, but don't you understand that the nastiest sin in our life to Jesus Christ would be looking at his death on the cross and saying, "That's not enough, and so I need to add to it"? This is why we must repent and we must believe in Jesus Christ.

Let me ask you this morning: Are you trusting that at some point in your life you had a right ceremony that brought you into a right community? Are you trusting in a right family, a right devotion, a right theology, a right passion, a right purity? I urge you today to repent of thinking you can save yourself, and I urge you to trust Jesus Christ. Today, exchange your resume for his. Trust him. Admit right now... Right now, admit that you are a sinner and can not save yourself. Place your belief, your faith in Jesus Christ alone and confess him as Lord of your life, and the Bible says that he will give you what he calls a robe of righteousness that will cover you and will make you whole.

The third thing I want you to see is that joy motivates us to pursue knowing Jesus above all. Perhaps one of the greatest things that when I look back and I think about some of the deeper regrets of my life, one of them is that for 16 years I was emersed in a gospel-centered loving family, and I didn't care about Jesus. There were times that I would tell you, if I was honest with you, that I believe this is a trade down and not a trade up. I remember when I was a kid, my dad planted a church in Southern California. The church was about an hour away. Every Sunday morning, really early, my dad and my family, we would load up our van with all the stuff we would need for church, all kinds of materials and things. We would go early to a high school, and we'd set up chairs so when the church got there, there was a place for everybody to be.

At the same time that we were always loading up our van, our neighbors, they were loading up their four wheelers and motorcycles to go out to the sand dunes. Every week, I looked at that. I thought, "We chose poorly. They're going to have more fun, and we're going to go to the same place and see the same people and sing the same tired songs." Then, it happened. I saw the worth of Christ, and everything changed. I found myself saying what Paul said, "I gladly suffer the loss of things." You see, to count everything as loss for Christ does not mean that we abandon all things or disparage all things. It means that following Christ meant we had to abandon something as we wouldn't consider it a loss because we gained Christ.

Jesus said, “The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all he had, and he bought it.” You see what he’s saying? In comparison to Jesus, there’s simply no comparison. Who else is like him? A great pastor, his name is S. M. Lockridge, you can go online. You can see just an amazing sermon by him, but part of what he said was this. You just think about the greatness of Jesus Christ. He says that, “He is enduringly strong. Jesus is entirely sincere. He’s eternally steadfast. He’s immortally graceful. He’s empirically powerful. He’s impartially merciful. Jesus is the greatest phenomenon that has ever crossed the horizon of this world, for he is God’s Son. He is the sinner Savior. He is the centerpiece of civilization. He’s the loftiest idea in literature, the highest personality in philosophy, the fundamental doctrine of true theology, the cardinal necessity of spiritual religion.

He is the superlative of every good thing that you can choose to call him. He is the key to knowledge, the wellspring to wisdom, the pathway of peace. He is the roadway of righteousness and the gateway of glory. His promise is sure. His light is matchless. His goodness is limitless. His mercy is everlasting. His love never changes. His word is enough. His grace is sufficient, and his reign is righteous.” One day, you are going to see Jesus with your eyes, and you will then know that everything in life was supposed to be pointed and directed towards him. Everything that wasn’t you will know was wasted. He is the point, and Paul knew Jesus, which meant, for Paul, he had to know more of Jesus. Sometimes you hear people say, “You know, I’ve just had my fill of Jesus.” It means they’ve never known him. To know him is to taste something so sweet that you have to return to the kitchen often. He says, “I want to know him and the power of his resurrection.” This is speaking of high, amazing moments.

In Ephesians chapter one, he says that God has given us the same amount of power that it took to raise Jesus from the dead for us to say no to sin. What Paul’s saying is this, “God, I want to know you. I must know Jesus Christ more than I do right now because I want to experience the victory over temptation and sin.” He says, “Not only do I want to have these majestic moments,” he says, “God, I want to know you in my suffering as well. I want to share in your sufferings.” Why? I want to know more of God’s presence, Christ’s presence that seems most tangible when I’m afflicted because when I hurt so much, it drives me to long for heaven at the final resurrection of the dead.

Providence, this morning, let me encourage you to pursue knowing Christ with all of your heart. Just like Moses said after seeing all kinds of glorious things, “God, show me your glory,” I beg of you this morning to ask God to help you to know Jesus more. I urge you this week to carve out time to read the Bible. As you read the Bible, don’t look for what you need to do. Be on lookout for the glory of Jesus. Connect with other believers who love to talk and learn about Jesus and his glory. Talk to those who are far from God about Jesus. Get on an airplane. You want to grow in your knowledge of Jesus, get on an airplane with one of our mission teams and go overseas and tell people who have never heard the gospel about Jesus Christ. We must know him more. Before we celebrate a baptism, I want to give you an opportunity to pray.

Our team is going to come out. They're going to sing a song over us. As they're singing over us, I just want to urge you to pray. If you're going through cancer, ask God to use that cancer to help you to know Jesus more. If you're going through loneliness or loss or whatever it is you're going through, ask God to use it to help you to know Jesus more. If you simply feel aimless, use this time to ask God to help you to leverage your week, your days, and your minutes to help you to know Jesus more. Let me pray. Father in heaven, we thank you for your grace. We need your help. We want to know Jesus more. I pray now, Lord, that as we consider our life, would you unveil the parts that we can not see? Would you show us all that is available in Jesus? God, we want to know you more. We must. We must know you more. We ask that you would knock down whatever is necessary, remove whatever is necessary in order for that to happen. We pray all of this in Christ's name. Amen.



© 2019 Providence Baptist Church (Raleigh, NC)
Sermon transcripts may be used for preaching and teaching purposes, but may not be published or sold. While generally accurate, parts of this transcript may contain errors.
Providence reserves the right to correct and/or remove a transcript at any time.