

Paul opens **Philippians 3** with an admonition often forgotten but we should never forget, no matter what our circumstance(s):

Philippians 3:1: Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord.

- Grammatical Usage: “**rejoice**” or in the Greek, “chairó” meaning, “delight in; be consciously glad.”
- Literal Interpretation: In conclusion, my brothers, consciously delight yourselves in the Lord!
- Contextual/Comparison: God keeps His Word: God continually uses His Word. In this letter the apostle Paul tells us of seven great aspirations which he had, all of which centered in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. These earnest longings, which should characterize every Christian are, progressively:

(1) To KNOW Him - **3:10**; (2) to GAIN Him - **3:8**; (3) to EXALT Him - **1:20**; (4) to BE FOUND in Him - **3:9**; (5) to ATTAIN to the first resurrection - **3:11**; (6) to BE WITH Him - **1:23**; and (7) to BOAST in His Day - **2:16**.

Of these seven great aspirations, the first is the most important: to know Him – for the other six all build up on the foundation of a personal knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. See how the apostle speaks of this personal knowledge of Christ in v. 8, and notice the importance of each emphasized word: (1) “**knowing CHRIST**”; (2) “**knowing Christ JESUS**”; (3) “**knowing Christ Jesus my LORD**”; and (4) “**the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus MY Lord.**”

Paul reckoned that to know the Lord was such an excellent thing that it was well worthwhile losing everything else to gain this knowledge (**vv. 7, 8**). This raises the question: What did Paul lose in order that he might gain this excellent knowledge? What did he count as refuse? When Paul became a Christian he lost his former friends, social prestige, worldly advancement, financial gain and, of course, he lost physical comfort.

This knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ is a four-fold knowledge, as indicated in **v. 10**, and to know Him in this four-fold way is to know Him fully:

1. KNOWING HIS PERSON

“**I want to know Christ...**” All vital Christian experience begins when we come to know not only *about* the Lord, but when we come to *know Him personally*.

Multitudes of people who know about Him are in the same position that Samuel was in: “**Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him**” (1 Samuel 3:7); that Nicodemus was in (John 3:2-12). To know God and the Lord Jesus Christ is salvation (John 17:3), and we only begin to know Him when we trust Him as our own personal Savior and accept His gift of pardon through His Finished Work. There are, of course, degrees of knowing Him. Paul first came to know Him on the Damascus Road (Acts 9:3-6), but thirty years later he wrote **Philippians 3:10**; Philip first came to know the Lord at the commencement of His public ministry, but see what He said to Philip over two years later (John 14:9). See what **Hosea 6:3** says and look up **2 Peter 3:18**.

2. KNOWING HIS POWER

“**I want to know...the power of his resurrection...**” What does this mean? The Lord Jesus was crucified and He actually died (John 19:33-35). After His death His body was placed in Joseph’s tomb (19:38-42) and then what happened? HE ROSE AGAIN! The same mighty power which raised Him from the dead, “**the power of His resurrection,**” is available for and may be experienced by every Christian through union with the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 6:3-4). We are saved from wrath by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, i.e. by His death (Romans 5:9), and we are saved from the power of sin by His life (Romans 5:10), i.e. His risen life, His resurrection life (Hebrews 7:25; Jude 24).

3. KNOWING HIS PASSION

I want to know “**...the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings...**” This means to share the reproach, the ignominy, the scorn; in short, the sufferings which He endured on our behalf when He was arrested, falsely accused and crucified (Colossians 1:24; Philippians 1:29). If we are determined to be faithful to Him we must in some measure enter into “**the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings.**”

4. KNOWING HIS PURPOSE

“**Becoming like him in his death...**” God’s purpose for every believer is set out in **Romans 8:28-29**. God’s intention is to make us like the Lord Jesus, and in order that this purpose may be accomplished, all that there is about us which is unlike Him must “die”. When our Savior died, in the purpose and intention of God we died also (**Romans 6:2-6**), and notice that in **v. 11** we are exhorted, “**...count yourselves dead.**” Do you know anything of the outworking of God’s purpose in you? Do you daily “**count yourselves dead to sin**” and to all that is contrary to His will? Are you experiencing the truth of **Galatians 2:20**?

- Conclusion: Am I rejoicing in knowing the Lord?