

THE CASE WHERE LOSS IS GAIN

PHIL.3:4-16

I. INTROCUCTION

1. Many privileges and advantages are not necessarily the advantage or the gain or of the value they appear to be.
2. For privileges and advantages of a secular nature, even of a spiritual or religious nature, are not necessarily true and everlasting gain.
3. In fact, the loss of them, or counting them as loss, or giving them up, or forfeiting them, can be and may very well be great gain, and even an eternal gain.
4. That is the case in our study of the advantages and gain Paul reviews in his Hebrew background in the law, which he gladly forfeited, or counted as loss, for Christ and the faith of Christ.
5. Thus our topic: The Case Where Loss Is Gain, because it meant the loss of one thing of value to gain another of greater value. In this case the gaining of the righteousness “which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.”
6. To appreciate the emphasis in this lesson, we shall consider Paul’s Hebrew background prior to his conversion to Christ and the things that were great gain to him, and how he came to see the advantage of for-feiting all of them so that he might gain Christ, or the surpassing great-ness or worth of the knowledge (personal acquaintance) of Christ Jesus the Lord.
7. He declares that he gladly suffered the **LOSS** of the former things that he might **GAIN** the latter.

II. DISCUSSION

A. WE BEGIN OUR STUDY WITH PHIL.3:4-6 WHICH REVEAL PAUL’S PRE-CONVERSION BASIS FOR CONFIDENCE IN THE FLESH.

1. In v.3 he urges his readers to “rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.” (This in view of the Judaizers’ doctrine)
2. In v.4 he says he had more right to have had confidence in the flesh than any man who might think he had some basis to trust in the flesh – i.e., if any man could trust in the flesh, I on my part would have more reason to think so than any other man.

3. In vv.5,6 he reveals the reason for his claim in v.4. It was based on his birth and religious training, his rigid profession and orthodoxy, his zeal and blameless conduct in the law of Moses. He says he was:
 - a. “Circumcised the eighth day” – or at eight days old; “an eighth day one”
 - (1) Perhaps circumcision is named first because this was the chief thing for which the Judaizers contended.
 - (2) He had it. Furthermore, it meant he was not a proselyte Jew, circumcised at his reception into the Jewish religion as an adult; rather, he was a Hebrew from infancy.
 - (3) Nor was he an Ishmaelite, circumcised, like Ishmael, at the age of thirteen (Gen.17:25).
 - b. “Of the stock of Israel.”
 - (1) Born of Rachel, a legitimate wife, not of a handmaid – thus of pure Israelite stock.
 - (2) Neither were his parents proselytes. He was of genuine Israelite stock.
 - (3) He was by descent an Israelite, or of Jacob.
 - (4) He was “not grafted into the covenant people, but descended from original stock.
 - (5) The Israelites alone could claim Jacob as their ancestor.
 - c. “Of the tribe of Benjamin” (cf. Rom.11:1)
 - (1) A tribe of great renown in the national history.
 - (2) His family had preserved their genealogy.
 - (3) He came from the tribe that gave the first king to Israel. Cf. Ac.13:21. Perhaps even named after that king.
 - (4) The tribe which never swerved in its allegiance to the house of David.
 - (5) The tribe which, after the Captivity, united with Judah and the Levites to go up and build the house of the Lord (Ezra 1:5).
 - (6) The tribe of Esther and Mordecai, who saved the Jewish people from total destruction because of the revenge sought by Haman under king Ahasuerus.

- (7) The tribe within whose boundary stood the holy city, Jerusalem.
- (8) Being from the tribe of Benjamin, therefore, was an illustrious heritage.
- d. “An Hebrew of the Hebrews”, rather, “an Hebrews of Hebrews;” omit the article.
 - (1) “An Hebrew of (ek, out of) Hebrews”
 - (2) A pure-blooded Hebrew, no ancestor on either side being of other blood, as was the case with Timothy (Ac.16:1).
 - (3) His Hebraic extraction was the genuinely purest and best in Jewish eyes.
 - (4) The 1st person called a Hebrew was Abraham (Gen. 14:13). The Hebrews were thus descendents of Abraham (through Isaac, Jacob, and sons). (Rom.11:1)
 - (5) He even spoke the Hebrew language, Ac.21:40; 22:2
- e. “As touching the law, a Pharisee”
 - (1) He was by birth “of the stock of Israel,” “of the tribe of the stock of Israel,” “of the tribe of Benjamin,” all of which depended on others.
 - (a) Such things marked him a privileged member of the chosen people of God.
 - (b) But his list is cumulative. He continues by declaring what he was by his personal choice.
 - (c) No Judaizer could outclass him. He leaves all behind as far as being able to trust in the flesh.
 - (2) By choice he was “a Pharisee,” (“the son of a Pharisee”), which he himself explained at Ac.22:3 and 26:5-8.
 - (a) Moreover, unlike many a Pharisee, Paul was an honest, consistent, sincere Pharisee, Ac.23:1; 24:16; 1Tim.1:13.
 - (3) The Pharisee sect was the strictest sect of the Jewish religion that stood for most complete observance of the law and was revered as such by the Jews.

blameless

- f. “Concerning zeal, persecuting the church”
 - (1) He was not only a Pharisee by choice, but an energetic, zealous Pharisee, who carried out the principles of his sect, thinking he did God service by persecuting those whom he counted as heretics. Cf. Ac.7:58; 8:1-3; 9:1,2; 26:9-11; Gal.1:13,23; 1Tim.1:12-15.
- g. “Touching the righteousness which is in the law,
 - (1) Without blame; faultless; not sinless, but faultless in the sight of men.
 - (2) This zealous Jew had been the envy of his peers. Cf. Gal.1:13,14; Ac.22:1-5; 9:1,2.
 - (3) None could justly fault him for his lack of zealous service in the Jews religion. Just the reverse would have been true.

B. HAVING COUNTED THESE THINGS OF HIS JEWISH BACK-GROUND GAIN AND HAVING TRUSTED IN THESE AD-VANTAGES IN TME PAST, HE NOW DECLARES HOW HE COUNTED THEM LOSS FOR CHRIST, 3:7-11.

- 1. What they were to him in time past is declared in v.7a: “gain to me”.
- 2. What they are now:
 - a. Now they are “counted loss” (“damage, detriment,” and with no regrets), v.7b.
 - b. “I counted all things (everything, i.e., everything previous-ly referred to) but loss” (i.e., the position, reputation, wealth, etc.), v.8a.
 - c. “I have suffered (forfeited the loss of all things” (everything; literally, the all things; those things formerly counted gain), v.8b.
 - d. “And do count them but dung” (refuse, dregs, rubbish, worthless, food thrown away), v.8c.
- 3. Why did he so count them or forfeit them?
 - a. “For Christ,” v.7b.
 - (1) That is, “For the sake of Christ”
 - (2) On account of his surrender to Christ.
 - b. “Yea doubtless (yea verily, or “but more than that”) I count (esteem) all things (to be) but **loss** for the

excellency (“the surpassing greatness” or worth) of the knowledge (personal acquaintance) of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom (for his sake) I suffered (forfeited) the **loss** of all things,” v.8a.

(1) Cf. Heb.11:26; Jno.17:3; Eph.4:13; 2Pet.3:18; 1:2.

c. “That I may **win (gain)** Christ” (make him my own),v.8b.

d. “And be found in him” (the object for which the loss was incurred, or the reason for which he forfeited the loss of all things), having, not his own righteousness, which is of the law, but “the righteousness which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith,” v.9.

(1) Having the righteousness “which is through the faith of Christ” (“through,” dia, suggesting the medium).

(2) “The righteousness which is of God by faith” (“of”, from, ek, -- the source, God; resting upon the condition of faith –his obedient submission to the Lord).

(3) See Rom.1:16,17; Gal.2:16; Rom.3:19-28; (Rom.10:1-17; 9:30-33).

C. HAVING OBTAINED HIS INITIAL GOAL OF BEING IN CHRIST, AND HAVING THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN CHRIST, THEN FOLLOWS HIS DISCUSSION OF HIS ULTIMATE GOAL TOWARD WHICH ALL OF THIS HAS LED AND CONTINUES TO LEAD HIM, AND HOPEFULLY OTHERS, 3:10-16.

1. His ultimate goal specified, vv.10,11.

a. “That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, v.10a.

(1) “Know him” (i.e., Christ)

(2) The term “know” suggests the idea of getting more personal knowledge of him by experience. To know, recognize, understand completely.

(3) It underscores the influences of the one to be known upon the knower, or the one seeking knowledge.

- (4) Referring to knowing “the power of his resurrection”, i.e., that he might know in his own ex-permental knowledge of the power or force in Christ’s resurrection in its influence on his own life and work and future hope in Christ.
 - (5) The power of Christ’s resurrection was an ever-present reality and life-force in Paul’s life!
- b. “And the fellowship of his suffering, being made conform-able unto his death,” v.10b.
- (1) Paul wanted to know the fellowship of Christ’s suffering.
 - (2) “Fellowship” is the sharing, active participation, in the sufferings of Christ.
 - (3) Paul longed to share with Christ in this regard, seeing that such fellowship may lead to his becoming “conformed unto his death.” I.e., fulfilling his share of the Lord’s suffering, or his share of suffering with the Lord. Cf. 2Cor.1:5; 4:8-12; Col.1:24.
 - (4) Paul sought to crucify his own man with Christ, Rom.6:6;
 - (5) to count himself dead to sin but alive to God, Rom.6:11;
 - (6) to kill himself all day long, Rom.8:36;
 - (7) to die daily, 1Cor.15:31;
 - (8) to be always delivered to death for Jesus’ sake, 2Cor.4:11;
 - (9) to be crucified with Christ, Gal.2:20;
 - (10) to be dead with Christ, Col.2:20; 2Tim.2:11.
- c. “If by any means (possible) I might attain unto the resur-rection of (from, ASV) the dead,” v.11.
- (1) “If by any means” is not an expression of doubt, but of humility, of humble, abiding, sincere, desire.
 - (2) “I may attain” – i.e. “to reach, to arrive at”
 - (3) This is his ultimate aim or purpose.
 - (4) All will be raised, Ac.24:15; 1cor.15:21,22.
 - (5) But all will not be raised unto “life,” Jno.5:28,29.

- (6) Therefore, Paul's ultimate aim, purpose or goal is to attain, reach, arrive at the resurrection "unto life."
2. His ultimate goal has not as yet been realized but is being zealously and faithfully sought after or pressed toward, vv.12-14.
 - a. Note where he maintains his focus; what he is "forgetting"; what he is "reaching" for, v.13.
 - b. Take note of the determination, the seriousness, the zeal, the intensity with which he is pressing toward his calling of God in Christ, vv.12-14.
 - c. He worked at both forgetting the things behind and looking to the ultimate goal of eternal life.
 - d. He kept his mind on growing and maturing in Christ.
3. He then concludes by urging all other believers to follow, to do likewise, vv.15,16. Cf. 2Tim.4:6-8; 1Cor.11:1.
 - a. This is not always easy to do because we live in a world where there are enemies to interfere and would lead us astray of which he warns, vv.17-21.
 - b. Also because we live in a world that is gravely influenced by the lust for:
 - (1) Comfort and ease.
 - (2) Pleasure and plenty.
 - (3) Possessions and worldly recognition.
 - (4) Indulgence and extravagance.
 - (5) More and more of less and less service to the Lord.
 - (6) In a world of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, 1Jno.2:16.
 - b. But it can be done, 1Cor.10:13; Jas.1:12; Jas.4:7b; Phil.4:6-9; 1Cor.15:34; 1Jno.2:1.
 - c. Paul maintained the growth he had already achieved, guarded against falling (1Cor.9:27), and urged all other be-lievers to follow suit.
 - (1) However, too many rather than consistently maintaining growth achieved, live up and down lves.
 - (2) They gain some discipline and some growth, then before long, slip back or backslide. It may involve: lying; stealing or cheating; failure to

control thoughts, words and deeds of various kinds; a failure to disciple the mind, body and habits.

III. CONCLUSION

1. The conversion of such a person to Christ is surely powerful testimony to the truth of and the superiority over the old Jewish system which was by design temporary and provisional.
2. Be encouraged by this outstanding example that whatever you lose, give up or forfeit in order to win Christ is gain. Cf. Mt.26:24-26; 10:32-39; 6:33.
3. Truly, there are some circumstances where and when **LOSS** is **GAIN**. As another example consider Moses, Heb.11:24-26.
4. Now listen to Christ, Mt. 11:28-30.