

A FOUR-FOLD PRAYER

PHILIPPIANS 3:8-12 • TV167A

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Philippians 3:8-12

“Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.”

I would like for you to open your Bible with me today to the **Book of Philippians**. I will be speaking from the **3rd chapter of the Book of Philippians**.

I especially would like for you to turn to the Scriptures because I am going to be starting at **verse 1** and referring to all of the verses, the Lord willing, down to **verse 12**.

Here is our subject; I will be speaking on the subject: **“A FOUR-FOLD PRAYER.”**

Now, I think that this is a very important message. I believe it will be helpful to you if you will listen to the entire message and follow along in your Bible.

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If you will look at **verse 1**, we see that the apostle Paul is a man of one message. He said in **verse 1**: “*To keep writing (and preaching) to you the same things is not grievous to me; (I don’t mind at all preaching to you the same message). It is for your good that I preach the Gospel to you again, and again, and again.*”

Paul was a man of one message; he said, “*I am determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified.*” We preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Paul said, “*God sent me not to baptize but to preach the gospel.*”

So, that is the first thing we know in **Philippians 3:1**; Paul said, “I am a man of one message and I don’t remind repeating it over and over again; it is not grievous to me at all. It is good for you and it is glorifying to our God.”

Now, watch **verse 2**: I know today that we hear people say, “Well; don’t criticize other denominations. Don’t talk about other preachers. Don’t call people by name.” Paul did, he said in **verse 2**, now listen to him, it is strong language; it is language that I probably would not use on television or from my pulpit.

He is talking about the covetous, greedy, fame-seeking preachers of his day, “*false prophets*,” he calls them. He calls them a stronger word, he says in **verse 2**: “*Beware of dogs.*”

In other words, he is talking about these false preachers who glory in the flesh. He said, “These people put emphasis on ceremony, circumcision, law, human works, and baptism and not on Christ.”

Our Lord called them “*false prophets.*” The apostle called them in another place, “hucksters and merchandisers of souls.” Here he calls them, “*dogs; beware of these dogs.*”

Now, in **verse 3** Paul says, “*We are the true circumcision.*”

Here is what he is saying; these men are not men of faith. They are not men of the Gospel. They are not men of Christ. They are not even men of the true circumcision or the true Israel or the true faith. “*We are the true circumcision (or the true faith).*”

He gives three marks in **verse 3**. He says, “*We worship God in the spirit, (not in form, not in ceremony, not in processions, not in outward show. We worship God from the heart). We worship God in the spirit.*”

Our Lord said that; “*God is a Spirit and they who worship God worship him in spirit and truth.*” We worship God in the spirit, not with trinkets, not with signs and ceremony, but we worship God from the heart.

Secondly: “*We are the true circumcision who rejoice in Christ Jesus.*”

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We don't rejoice in our works. We don't rejoice in our baptism, we rejoice in Christ, who He is; He is the Son of God.

What did He do? He came to this earth to bear our sins in His body on the tree. Why did He do it? He did it in order, *"that God might be just and justifier."*

Where is he now? *"He is at the right hand of God."* We rejoice in Jesus Christ. He is our righteousness. He is our sanctification. He is our redemption. He is our wisdom. He is our acceptance with God, Jesus Christ the Lord.

Thirdly: He says, *"We have no confidence in the flesh."*

We don't put our confidence in human prophets or human preachers. We don't put our confidence in human organizations. We don't even put our confidence in ourselves. Our confidence is in Christ alone.

In **verse 4**, Paul says: *"Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more."*

"If any of you feel like you can find acceptance with God by your own righteousness and that acceptance with God is to be gained by heritage or tradition, or human works, I would be out ahead of you, I more than you."

"If you think that God Almighty will look upon a man and accept him and receive him because of who he is, what his background is, or the works that he does, then I more than you. If anything can be gained by human effort, Paul said, I would have complete security."

Why? Well, listen to him: *"I've been circumcised the eighth day of the stock of Israel."* In other words, "this circumcision, when I was eight days of age it put me into the covenant of Abraham, made me, recognized me, as one of Abraham's seed, one of Abraham's people."

"Not only that but I am of the tribe of Benjamin." That tribe was called *"beloved of the Lord."* And that was the tribe that gave Israel their first king Saul. *"I was of the tribe of Benjamin."*

Not only that, he said, but *"I am a Hebrew of Hebrews."* "I am not a half-breed. My daddy was a Hebrew and my mother was a Hebrew." He said, "I am pure Hebrew."

Not only that, Paul said, *"but I was a Pharisee."* I was a leader in religion. I was an orthodox teacher in religion. I was doctrinally, morally, ceremonially, ritualistically and legally sound."

No man could find fault with me; *"concerning the law I was blameless"* before human courts. Not only that but "I was full of zeal and blameless before all men."

Now, *"if any of you think you have whereof to glory in the flesh"* if you want to brag about how many professions you have made and how many sermons you have preached, and who your

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daddy was, and who your granddaddy was, and you want to brag about what denomination you are from, Paul said; “I will top everything you present.”

“I was circumcised the eighth day of the tribe of Benjamin and I am a Hebrew of Hebrews.” He said, *“Concerning the law I was a Pharisee. I was zealous before the law; I was blameless.”*

Now watch the next verse, **verse 7**: *“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.”* “But all of these religious duties and all of these religious works which were so important to me,” (and there was a day in which they were important to the apostle Paul, before he met Christ, before he learned the Gospel). This ritualism and legalism, this ceremonialism, was so important that it was his hope for heaven. It was his hope for salvation. It was his hope for acceptance with God.

He said, “This was so important to me; these things were gain to me. But, what I once counted gain I now count as nothing, *I count but loss that I may win Christ and be found in him.*”

In other words, he says; “When the Holy Spirit opened my eyes,” (and that is what must be done, whether a man is in religion or in sin, whether a man is in church or in the world) the Holy Spirit has to open his eyes. Salvation comes by revelation; it doesn’t come by education, it doesn’t come by argument and debate, it comes by revelation.

He said, “When the Holy Spirit opened my eyes and I learned what sin really is, (sin is a nature, sin is a principle, and sin is an evil heart), I not only learned what sin is, but I learned that even my righteousness in God’s sight, not in men’s sight, *“that which is highly esteemed among is an abomination to God.”*

But, Saul of Tarsus said; “I learned that my righteousness’s were filthy rags in God’s sight and in my flesh dwelleth no good thing. In the flesh no man can please God. I learned that all have sinned, even the Pharisees.”

I learned that *“all have sinned and come short of the glory of God,”* even the Hebrews. I learned that all have sinned and the only righteousness that God would accept is Christ’s righteousness.

The only atonement that God Almighty will receive or look upon with favor is Christ’s blood, not the animal blood of the Old Testament, or the Tabernacle, or the temple.

The only way of salvation and redemption is by God’s grace. He said, “When I saw that I not only counted my works and my zeal to be loss, not only loss, those things that were gain to me, but I looked upon all of my fleshly, religious, enterprises, works, efforts, obedience, and morality, to be so much garbage and rubbish. I not only counted them but loss, but I counted them dung for Christ’s sake.”

God doesn’t save preachers, He saves sinners. God doesn’t save Pharisees, He saves sinners. God doesn’t save religious people, He saves sinners. God doesn’t save respectable people, He saves sinners.

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Paul later wrote: *“This is a faithful saying and it is worthy of acceptance (by all people) that Jesus Christ is come into this world to save sinners of whom I am chief.”*

Now, you remember something and you listen very carefully to what I am about to say; I know a little bit about this subject; the great problem of preaching is not getting lost people saved, that is no problem.

Find me a lost man and I will preach the Gospel to him and he will be saved. *“Christ came to seek and to save that which is lost. He died for the ungodly. He died for sinners.”* There is no problem in getting lost people saved.

The problem of preaching is getting religious people lost. A man will never be saved until he is lost. He will never be found until he is lost. He will never receive grace until he is guilty. He will never be found until he is lost.

He will never be saved until he is a sinner and he will never be robed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ until he is naked, until he has been stripped of every fig-leaf-apron of his own works, merit, and righteousness.

Paul, having turned loose of all of this confidence in himself, having given up all claims on God through the works of the law, having looked upon the mercy and grace of God in Jesus Christ, the apostle lays down a **four-fold prayer**.

This is what I want to talk about today. I hope I have gotten your attention. I hope I have interested you in what I am about to say.

Here is a man who had been where some of you are, robed in self-righteousness, building upon a false foundation, hiding in a religious refuge, trusting in your works and your merit to find acceptance with God.

And, you have never found any lasting peace. You have never found any real joy. You have never found any real communion with God. You just feel like a white-washed tombstone or a white-washed Pharisee, cleansed on the outside but *“full of extortion and excess on the inside.”*

Well, here is an example: He said, *“If you think you have whereof to trust in the flesh, I the more.”* He said, *“What was gain to me I counted but loss, I counted but rubbish (garbage that I may come to a real, saving knowledge, of God Almighty in Jesus Christ, that I may win Christ).”*

Here, my friend is a self-righteous, moral, religious teacher, who has been broken by the power of God to realize his guilt, to be put in the dust of guilt and repentance; that sees himself in need of mercy and offers to God a **four-fold prayer**; now, here is his prayer:

First of all: He says, *“O that I may win Christ and be found in him.”*

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Now, the word “*win*” ought to be translated gain, “*O that I may gain Christ.*” The old Puritans use to say, “that I may lay hold upon Christ,” not just read about him or hear about him, but that I may actually lay hold on Christ, that I may gain an interest in his redemptive grace.”

I think that the hymn writer has put it so well:

**“No more my God; I boast no more
Of all the duties that I have done,
I quit the hopes I held before
In order to trust the merits of thy Son.”**

Can you say that? Have you ever been there? Saul of Tarsus was brought there. Only God can bring a man down:

**“No more my God; I boast no more
Of all the duties that I have done
I quit the hopes I held before
To trust the merits of thy Son.**

**Yes I must; I will esteem
Everything but loss for Christ’s sake**

**Oh may my soul be found in Him
And may I of His grace partake.”**

I can’t claim my righteousness and His; He will not share His glory. I cannot stand on my works and His too. I cannot be clothed in my fig-leaf-apron and in His royal robes; I have got to make a choice. I have to lay one aside.

So then, I turn loose of all religious claims. I turn loose of all boasting and all pride, and all resting in human merit and I flee to Christ. That is what Paul is saying; “*O that I may win Christ, (that I may gain Christ, that I may gain a saving interest, that I may lay hold upon him), be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law but the righteousness of God which is in Jesus Christ our Lord.*”

You better be found in Him. To be found in Him as the eternal Surety, that is my prayer, the eternal Surety. There is a Surety of the everlasting covenant and that Surety is Christ, and that I may be found in Him as the incarnate representative.

Christ walked on this earth for somebody. He represented, (when He was on this earth in human flesh, in the likeness of sinful flesh, obeying the law, pleasing the Father) He represented somebody, “*that I may be found in him.*”

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When He went to the cross and suffered there the shame and the humiliation of that awful death, He was dying for somebody. He was paying somebody's debt. The heavenly Father was receiving from Christ satisfaction for somebody's sins.

This is what Paul knew; *"that I may be found in him"* as my perfect sin-offering, *"that I may be found in him,"* as my risen Priest and Mediator. He is interceding for somebody.

The Scripture says; *"He ever liveth, to intercede,* (to make intercession for somebody, that I may be found in Him as my reigning King, seated at God's right hand), *expecting until his enemies be made his footstool."*

That is the first of this four-fold prayer. Oh, Paul said; I have got a background, a heritage, a tradition, and all of these things that exceeds anything that any of you have to offer; *"I count these things but loss."*

"They were at one time gain to me, so important to me; I count them but dung that I may gain Christ, that I may gain a saving interest in Christ, that I may lay hold upon Christ, and be found in Him, found by God's law in Christ with no condemnation."

I'm found by God's justice in Christ, with no charge. I'm found by God Almighty's righteousness in Christ, with no judgment. *"There is now, therefore, no condemnation to them who are in Christ."*

That's the reason Paul wanted to be found in Christ. That's where the mercy is, that's where the grace is, that's where the love is, it is in Christ. It is not in a building, it is not in an organization. It is not in a denomination, it is not in a decision, it is not in a profession, and it is not in a system of morality, it is in a person and that person is the Son of God.

Here is the 2nd prayer in **verse 10**; do you see it there? Here is his second plea: *"O that I may know him and the power that flows from his resurrected life."* What is he saying here?

First of all: He is saying this; "I may know him myself."

The Scripture says, *"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus to be Lord and believe in thine heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."*

I can't know Christ through another man's mind. Now, let me warn you here; let me warn you! As far as redemption is concerned, you stand alone, now alone with Christ; that is what I mean. I mean that this matter must be settled in your own heart between you and God.

It is not a family situation. It is not a denominational situation. It is not a Christian Nation situation, it is you. *"Every man shall give an account of himself to God."*

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I want Christ to give an account for me. I can't know Him through another man's mind. I can't love Him with another man's heart. I can't hear Him with another man's ears. I can't see Him with another man's eyes.

I can't believe on Him with another man's faith. I can't praise Him with another man's mouth; don't try it; don't try it. It's "*that I may know him.*" I think that Paul is saying this, "*that I may know him.*"

You know; the Master used that word, He said; "*this is eternal life that they might know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent, that they might know thee.*"

It's not talking about just knowing something about His historical life, a man called "Jesus Christ" who lived on this earth. Well, the devil knows that and he doesn't know God; he doesn't know Christ.

It's not just to know His doctrines. People can know doctrine and not know God. People can know theology, they can teach it. The Scribes and Pharisee's did; it's not enough just to know about His example. There have been some clean, cut, unsaved people in this world.

Then, it is not enough just to know about His death and His resurrection. Here is what Paul said; "*that I may know him, (that I may know Christ, that He might reveal Himself to me, that He might come and dwell in me, that He might walk and talk with me, that He might live in me), I in them and thou in me.*"

What did he say in **Galatians 2:20**? "*I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless, I live: Yet, not I but the life which I now live in the flesh; I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.*"

We sing a hymn in our church called "Christ Liveth in Me." A few days ago I was reading the words of this song and for the first time I really saw them. It fits right in with what I am talking about here.

Paul said: "*that I may know him, (know Him, not just know about Him, not just know of Him, and know Him, Christ in me, a living, vital, intimate, personal union, with Jesus Christ), Christ in you the hope of glory.*"

Listen:

**"Once far from God and dead in sin
No light my heart could see
But in God's Son the light I found
Now, Christ liveth in me.**

**As lives the flower within the seed
As in the cone, the tree**

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So praise the God of truth and grace His Spirit lives in me.”

Is that so, is that so, that I may know him, *“that I may know him and the power of his resurrection?”*

What is meant by the power of His resurrected life or the power that flows from His resurrected life? What does His resurrection say? What does it say?

Well, it says that God is Almighty. It says more than that, it says; God is able to raise the dead. It says more than that. Well, it says; God will raise everybody someday. Well, it says more than that. What does His resurrection say?

Do you know what it says to me? It says the full penalty is paid or God would have never raised Him from the dead.” It says, *“There is therefore now, no condemnation to them who are in Christ.”*

Christ was raised without sin. When He died on that cross He died under condemnation of my sin and guilt. When He came out of that tomb He came out, without my sins.

His resurrection says something else; it says the righteousness of God is mine; *“he was made sin for us who knew no sin that I might be made the righteousness of God in him.”*

His resurrection says more than that. It says that I have full acceptance with God; *“we are accepted in the beloved.”* When God raised Him, *“he raised us up together with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenlies.”* That’s right!

Then, His resurrection says that He dies no more and I die no more; *“I am the resurrection and the life. He that liveth and believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.”* His resurrection says *“my peace I give unto you.”*

The more I know Him and the more I enjoy Him, and the more I am blessed by the blessings of His resurrected life.

Fourthly: *“That I may win Christ, gain Christ, and be found in him,”* that I may know Him

Fifthly: If possible *“I may obtain to the resurrection of the dead”*

There is a two-fold resurrection: There is a spiritual resurrection of the dead and there is a physical resurrection. Yes sir; that is true; there is a spiritual resurrection. In **Ephesians 2:1** it says this; *“You hath he quickened (made alive) who were dead in trespasses and sin.”*

All men spiritually in Adam died. It says in the Scripture *“by one man sin entered this world and death by sin. So death passed upon all men for all have sinned.”*

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We are born into this world and this is so; *“born in sin, conceived in iniquity, shapen in iniquity, brought forth speaking lies, estranged from the womb; without God, without hope, without Christ, without help,”* that’s right; that is what the Scripture says.

So, the same power that raised Christ, the same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead must give me life; raise me from a spiritual grave. *“It is the Spirit that maketh alive, the flesh profiteth nothing.”*

That’s right; there is a spiritual resurrection. When Paul says, *“that I may obtain a part in this resurrection,”* he is talking first about a spiritual resurrection.

But, there is also a physical resurrection. Now here are both resurrections in the same chapter in **John 5:25**. Our Lord said, *“The hour cometh and now is when the dead, shall hear the voice of the Son of God and they that hear shall live.”*

“He that heareth my word and believeth on me hath everlasting life.” We hear Him speak through His Word. We are quickened by the Word. We are regenerated by the Word. We are born of the Word; *“Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth.”*

But now, here in the same chapter in **John 5:28**, you have a physical resurrection. Christ said, *“Don’t marvel at this; the hour cometh in which all that are in the graves, shall hear the voice of the Son of God and come forth; some to the resurrection of life and some to the resurrection of damnation.”* Paul said, *“My desire is to be among those in the first resurrection, to be raised in his likeness.”*

Here is the last request in **verse 12**: He said, *“I’m not already perfect.”* He says what a lot of religionists won’t admit. Even the great apostle, even the least of the apostles, even the preacher called of God, sent to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles who founded churches, and wrote 13 Books in the New Testament.

He died for the glory of Christ. Even he said, *“I’m not perfect. I haven’t arrived. My desire, though, is to lay hold in truth and faith on that for which Christ laid hold of me.”* He said, *“I know I am redeemed, I’m redeemed. I know that I am a son of God.”*

“We know that we are sons of God; we have passed from death unto life.” We know that we are *“new creatures in Christ.”* But, we are not yet conformed to His image. We are not yet made just like our Lord and this is our desire, to be made like Christ.

That is what David said; *“This is my desire; I will be satisfied when I awake with his likeness.”* Are we afraid to sing songs like this?

**“Here I raise mine Ebenezer
Hither by thine help I’ve come
And I hope by thy good pleasure
Safely to arrive at home.**

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**Oh to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be
Let thy goodness like a fetter
Bind my wondering heart to thee."**

Let's not fall into the pit of religious presumption. Let's not lay claim to acceptance with God by our deeds or works. Let's count all of this heritage and tradition, custom, and paraphernalia of religious organizations to be dung, to be rubbish *"that we may win Christ and be found in him."*

"Seek ye the Lord while he may be found!"