

THURSDAY February 5 Just One Thing—Knowing Christ

- Ever asked yourself = **What really matters most in life?**
- One pursuit = mattered most to Paul = summed up in 7 words:
 - **Knowing Jesus Christ = being found “IN HIM” (VS 9)**
 - Righteousness by faith in Christ

Philippians 3:10-11 That I may **know Him** / power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, ¹¹if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

- Paul wrote those words = wasn't new believer /but seasoned apostle
 - Had preached gospel for decades / planted churches
 - Endured prison/persecution
- Yet his heart still burned w/one desire: **“That I may know Him.”**
 - Not knowing **ABOUT** Christ = Paul already had head knowledge
 - Not knowing Christ **HISTORICALLY** = had heard all stories
- **KNOWING Him personally / intimately / deeply** = Paul's life passion
- Mark of true spiritual maturity = more you know Jesus
 - More you realize = how much more / there is to know
 - Knowing Him / guarantee He will acknowledge us before Father

How do we come to know Christ?

- **Thru His written Word / guiding presence of Holy Spirit**
- **John 16:13** Jesus promised, “When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth”
- When we open Bible w/prayerful hearts = not just reading words
 - we're entering into communion w/ living Christ
- To know Him thru Scripture = encounter His character
 - His mercy / justice / humility / power
- As we read / Spirit whispers = “This is who Christ is = and =
 - who God calls you to be”
- Knowing Christ thru His Word = transforms information
 - into relationship

- **Knowing Christ Thru His Power**
- Paul says, “That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection.”
- Not only power that raised Jesus from dead 2,000 yrs ago
 - It’s same power that = raises us / from spiritual death today
- **Romans 6:4** Just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.
- Resurrection power of Christ = breaks chains of sin = renews mind
 - gives us victory / where there once was defeat
- Have you experienced that moment
 - when Holy Spirit breathes life into / weary heart?
 - When guilt gives way to grace?
- That’s resurrection power = God’s power at work in / human soul
 - Christian life is **NOT** about self-improvement
 - It’s about divine empowerment
- **Paul didn’t stop there = said know Christ thru “ the fellowship of His sufferings.”**
- Hard phrase = we love power of His resurrection
 - We shrink from knowing Christ thru fellowship of His suffering
- Yet = Paul knew suffering for Christ
 - draws us closer to Him than anything else
- Every trial faced / every tear shed / every moment we choose faith over fear = helps us understand more of what Jesus endured for us
- Fellowship of His sufferings = not about pain / it’s about purification
- **Philippians 3:12-14** Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. ¹³Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but **one thing I do**, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, ¹⁴I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.
- One thing I do = not dozen things / not divided focus = just one thing
 - knowing Christ / becoming like Him

- **Know Christ by pressing forward toward the goal**
“I press toward the goal / for the prize / of the upward call of God / in Christ Jesus.”
- Word “Goal” (Gk *skopos*) = finish line of race
 - point every runner strains toward / every muscle stretched forward / every breath focused on prize ahead
- Paul pictures Christian life = like race = Prize is not wealth / fame
- It’s upward call of God = eternal life w/ Christ
- perfect likeness to His character / everlasting joy in His presence
- Paul adds, **“Forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead.”**
- Why does he say **forgetting**?
 - Can’t run forward / while looking backward
 - You’ll stumble / slow down / lose focus
- So many Christians live shackled to their past
 - past sins / failures / regrets
- But in Christ = past is forgiven / record is cleared
 - race is still ahead of you
- devil reminds you of your past / remind him of his future (Rev 20:10)
- Can’t rely on past virtuous deeds / mountaintop experiences either
 - Focusing on past = distracts our efforts in future
- Fix your eyes on Jesus = run = press on / even when it’s difficult
- Paul was realistic / knew he hadn’t “arrived” = said, **“Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on.”**
- Spiritual growth / sanctification = not instant = it’s a daily journey
- God isn’t finished w/you yet = He’s molding you thru His Word /
 - empowering you thru His Spirit / refining you thru trials
- Don’t give up / when progress feels slow
 - Even when you stumble / get back up
- Same grace that forgave you yesterday = gives you strength today
- Knowing Christ = not destination / it’s lifelong pursuit

CLOSING THOUGHT:

- Life's highest calling = to know Christ
- In end – one thing matters **knowing Christ = being found in Him**
- Forget failures behind = fix your eyes on finish line ahead
- Run toward Jesus = looking ahead to promises that are yours in Christ = forgiveness / strength / everlasting life
- He who began a good work in you = will finish it
- The One who started your race will help you cross finish line
 - Prize is eternal