

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

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BY EXPERIENCING

THE POWER

OF HIS

RESURRECTION

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TO OBTAIN CHRIST BY EXPERIENCING THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION

In Philippians 3:7 through 16 Paul uses at least three different Greek words to express the thought of gaining. In [verse 8](#) he says that he suffered the loss of all things and counted them refuse that he “may gain Christ.” The Greek word means to secure, to obtain, to lay hold of. In [verse 12](#) Paul uses two other words which mean obtain and lay hold of. Thus, he speaks of gaining, obtaining, and laying hold of Christ. To lay hold means to grasp or to take possession. Paul’s desire was not only to gain Christ, but also to obtain Him and even lay hold of Him.

According to [verse 12](#), Paul’s desire was to lay hold of that for which he had been laid hold of by Christ Jesus. On the way to Damascus, Paul inquired of the One who had appeared to him, “Who are You, Lord?” ([Acts 9:5](#)). When the Lord answered, “I am Jesus,” He laid hold of Paul. Now in Philippians Paul can say that he was seeking

to lay hold of that for which Christ had laid hold of him.

When we were saved, Christ laid hold of us. Perhaps we did not realize this at first. But as all those who have tried to escape His grasp realize, it is impossible to run away from Him. Christ has indeed laid hold of us so that we may now gain Him, obtain Him, and lay hold of Him.

THREE STAGES OF SECURING CHRIST

Paul's use of three different Greek words to express the idea of gaining indicates the Lord's desire that we gain Him, obtain Him, and lay hold of Him. Some readers may think that these expressions are mere repetitions. However, instead of being repetitious, they point to three stages of the securing of Christ. In [Philippians 3:8](#) Paul says, "I have suffered the loss of all things and count them refuse that I may gain Christ." This marks the beginning of securing the Lord. In [verse 10](#) Paul goes on to say, "To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death." Here we have the second stage, the process of obtaining Christ. What we have in this verse is actually the way to obtain Him. Eventually, in the third stage, we lay hold of Christ

(v. 12). This is the completion of the securing of Christ.

We all have experienced the first stage, for we all have gained Christ. When we believed in the Lord and received Him, we gained Him. This was the beginning of our gaining of Christ. Now we need to gain Him continually. To gain Christ continually is to obtain Him. Eventually the completion of this process is that we lay hold of Christ.

We know from [Philippians 3:12](#) that Paul did not regard himself as one who had already obtained. Here Paul seems to be saying, “I have not yet obtained, but I am on the way. I am in the process of obtaining Christ that I may lay hold of Him.”

In [verses 8, 10, and 12 of Philippians 3](#) we see the initial gaining of Christ, the continual gaining of Him, which is the obtaining, and the completion of the obtaining, which is the laying hold of Christ. In this booklet I am not burdened to cover either the initial gaining of Christ or the final laying hold of Him. My burden is related to the process of the continual obtaining of Christ, the process which takes place between the initial gaining of Christ and the final laying hold of Him.

SUFFERING FOR THE BODY

This process of obtaining Christ, as revealed in [Philippians 3:10](#), is to know Him by knowing the power of His resurrection. However, if we would know the power of Christ's resurrection, we must share in His sufferings and know the fellowship of His sufferings.

In a very real sense, Christ's sufferings have not yet been completed. When some hear this, they may say, "Christ died, was buried, and was resurrected once for all. Now He is on the throne. How can you say that His sufferings have not been completed?" Consider Paul's word in [Colossians 1:24](#): "Now I rejoice in my sufferings on your behalf, and fill up that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His Body, which is the church." To be sure, Christ is on the throne, but there is still a lack with respect to His sufferings. As the Head, Christ's sufferings are complete. But the sufferings of Christ for the Body are not yet finished. Such sufferings are also called "His sufferings." Furthermore, in [Colossians 1:24](#) Paul regarded his own sufferings as the filling up of what is lacking of Christ's sufferings for His Body. For this reason, Paul indicates in [Philippians 3:10](#) that we need to share in Christ's

sufferings. The sufferings of Christ for His Body are still going on, and we need to share in them. When Christ was on earth, He suffered. As those who follow Him, we must share in His sufferings for His Body. If we would know Christ by experiencing the power of His resurrection, we must share His sufferings. The process of obtaining Christ is related to His resurrection, His sufferings, and His death. To know Him we must share His sufferings and be conformed to His death that we may experience the power of His resurrection.

FREE FROM EARTHLY ENTANGLEMENTS

[Philippians 3:10](#) opens with the infinitive “to know Him.” This infinitive is related to a compound predicate found in [verses 8](#) and [9](#): “that I may gain Christ, and be found in Him.” First we need to suffer the loss of all things and count them as refuse that we may gain Christ. To gain Christ in this way is not simply to believe in Him or receive Him. It is to count all things as loss, to suffer the loss of all things, and then to count them as refuse. Paul was one who suffered the loss of all things and counted them refuse. He was free from all earthly entanglements. To gain

Christ he had given up everything, including religion and culture, and counted it all as refuse, trash, dog food. Therefore, the way was clear for Paul to gain Christ and to be found in Him in order to know Him.

The rendering “to know Him” is a literal translation of the Greek. Many versions, however, do not use the infinitive. Instead, they say “that I may know Him,” or “in order that I may know Him.” Nevertheless, according to the Greek, Paul was saying that he wanted to gain Christ and be found in Him to know Him. Like Paul, we need to be free from all earthly entanglements and also count everything as refuse. Then we shall be able to say, “Lord Jesus, I care only for You. I want to gain You, be found in You, and know You.”

We have pointed out that the obtaining in [Philippians 3:12](#) is a continuation of the gaining of Christ in [verse 8](#). Paul’s desire was to gain Christ in order to know Him and obtain Him. Paul was seeking to gain Christ that he might obtain Him by knowing Him, the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings.

CHRIST’S RESURRECTION AND SUFFERINGS

“To know Him” refers to knowing Christ in a

general way. But knowing the power of Christ's resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings and being conformed to His death are details related to knowing Christ. Actually to know Christ here means to know the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings. When Paul speaks of the power of Christ's resurrection, he has in mind something different from the power manifested in the resurrection of Lazarus. The resurrection of Lazarus is very different from the power of Christ's resurrection. Eventually, Lazarus died and was again buried in the tomb, but Christ's resurrection was a resurrection that brought Him to the throne. Paul is speaking of a resurrection that can be called *Christ's* resurrection. He wanted to know the power of *His* resurrection.

In [Philippians 3:10](#) Paul mentions the fellowship of Christ's sufferings. It is possible to suffer without participating in Christ's sufferings. For example, someone may lose his job because he fails to work properly, and this may cause him to suffer. But this suffering has nothing to do with Christ's sufferings.

There is also a difference between those sufferings which are for our transformation and those which are for the Body. Paul's word in

[Philippians 3:10](#) does not refer to suffering for transformation. If we compare [Philippians 3:10](#) with [Colossians 1:24](#), we shall see that the sufferings about which he is speaking here are those which make up the lack of Christ's afflictions for the Body. It is when we suffer for the Body that we shall experience the power of Christ's resurrection. No doubt, sufferings are needed for us to be transformed. But we should not identify such sufferings with the sufferings of Christ, for He did not suffer in this way.

In the book of Romans Paul does not speak of suffering as a discipline. However, he refers to transformation and conformation. [Romans 8:28](#) says that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God. Certain Bible teachers place great emphasis on this verse without connecting it to the following verse, which indicates that God's intention is to have us conformed to the image of His Son. This conformation is the result of transformation. All things work together for our good that we may be transformed and conformed to the image of the Son of God. No doubt, this process involves suffering, suffering which helps us become mature sons. As we undergo this kind of suffering, we also can

experience the power of Christ's resurrection, but not as much as when we suffer for the Body.

Just as there is more than one kind of suffering, there is more than one kind of resurrection. All the dead will be resurrected, some to the "resurrection of life" and others to the "resurrection of judgment" ([John 5:29](#)). The kind of resurrection with which we are concerned in this message is Christ's resurrection and its power. Not many Christians know the power of this unique resurrection.

Knowing the power of Christ's resurrection is related to knowing the fellowship of His sufferings. Paul experienced the power of Christ's resurrection in this way. When we suffer for the sake of the Body in the name of Christ, we also shall experience the power of His resurrection. I can testify that when I am bold to stand for the Lord, I experience anointing and empowering.

CONFORMED TO HIS DEATH

As we partake of Christ's sufferings for the Body, we are conformed to His death. When the Lord Jesus was on earth, He was dead to everything other than God, including His family and relatives. The Lord lived a crucified life; He continually put His natural life to death. By living

such a crucified life, He was alive to God and lived Him.

When we are willing to suffer for Christ and His Body, we also shall be dead to everything other than Him, and we shall live only to Him. Then we shall truly be conformed to His death, for we shall share in His death. Day by day we shall experience the power of His resurrection. This is the way to know Christ in an experiential way. By knowing Christ in this way, experiencing Him in the power of His resurrection, we obtain Him.

THE REALITY OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

The reality of the power of Christ's resurrection is the Spirit. [Romans 1:4](#) proves this by saying that Christ was "designated the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness out of the resurrection of the dead." Furthermore, [Romans 8:11](#) says, "If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from among the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from among the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you." Both verses indicate that the Spirit is the reality of the power of Christ's resurrection. Actually, Christ Himself is

the power of His resurrection, and the Spirit is Christ in resurrection. We need to experience this power that we may obtain Christ.

THE INTRINSIC POWER OF THE DIVINE LIFE

What we need to experience for the Body is not God's creating power, but the power of Christ's resurrection. Resurrection power is not an outward, physical power; it is an inward, intrinsic power. As such, it is a life power. If we would obtain Christ, we must experience this intrinsic life power. The more we experience the power of Christ's resurrection, the more we obtain Him. Thus, we obtain Him by experiencing the power of His resurrection.

To exhibit the intrinsic power of His resurrection, Christ first became a man. Then He died and visited Hades, the realm of the dead. Through His resurrection the intrinsic power of life within Him was manifested. Angels cannot experience this power. But we, human beings of blood and flesh, can experience it, if we share in Christ's sufferings and are conformed to His death.

As the One who has passed through death, never to die again, Christ has manifested in His

resurrection the intrinsic power of the divine life. This is the power of His resurrection. By experiencing the power of Christ's resurrection we obtain Christ in reality.

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