

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

TO BE FOUND

IN CHRIST

IN THE

RIGHTEOUSNESS

OF GOD

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Living Stream Ministry

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Philippians 3:9 says, “And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God based on faith.” According to this verse, Paul’s own righteousness was intimately related to the law. If we are to be found in Christ, we must fulfill the condition of not having our own righteousness which is of the law, but a righteousness which is not our own—that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God based on faith. In the righteousness of God we may be found in Christ, and this righteousness is through the faith of Christ.

THE EXCELLENCY OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST

In Philippians 3:8 Paul speaks of “the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus.” The

excellency of the knowledge of Christ does not refer to Christ's knowledge; it refers to our knowledge of Christ. It is the knowledge by which we know what kind of Christ He is. This knowledge has its excellency.

Paul obtained the excellency of the knowledge of Christ through revelation. When he was in Judaism, he was under the law. His vision and his thought were occupied with the law. Paul earnestly sought the knowledge of the law and pursued it. To him, the knowledge of the law was so excellent that he was even willing to sacrifice for it. But one day on the road to Damascus, the Lord opened Paul's eyes to see God's economy concerning Christ. From that time onward Paul turned from the excellency of the knowledge of the law to the excellency of the knowledge of Christ.

In the four books of Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians Christ is revealed not only as the all-inclusive One, but also as the all-extensive One. Christ Himself is the breadth, length, height, and depth. As such, His dimensions are immeasurable. Who can measure this height or depth? Peter received the revelation concerning Christ as the Son of the living God for the building up of the church. However, Peter

did not see as much concerning Christ as Paul did. The revelation given to Paul issued in an excellent knowledge of the extensiveness of Christ.

On account of the excellency of this knowledge, Paul was willing to suffer the loss of all things and count them to be refuse. In other words, after seeing the revelation concerning Christ, all other things became refuse, trash, dung. Spontaneously he realized that not only religion was refuse, dog food, but culture was refuse as well. Why did Paul count all things loss? It was because of the excellency of the knowledge of the extensive, all-inclusive Christ. Furthermore, he was willing to count all things loss in order to gain Christ.

TO GAIN CHRIST AND BE FOUND IN HIM

To have the revelation concerning Christ does not mean we have already gained Christ. After seeing the revelation, there was the need for Paul to pursue in order to gain Christ. Likewise, we may have the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, but Christ may not yet be ours in our experience. Therefore, like Paul, we need to pursue Christ that we may gain Him.

At the end of [Philippians 3:8](#) Paul speaks of gaining Christ, and in [verse 9](#) he speaks of being found in Him. These are two aspects of one thing. Paul desired to gain Christ and be found in Him. To have the excellency of the knowledge of Christ is one thing. However, it is another thing to gain Him and be found in Him. Although I may have seen the revelation concerning the extensiveness and all-inclusiveness of Christ, I may be found in ethics, culture, or good behavior and not in Christ. If someone visits you at home, will you be found in Christ? You may declare, “Hallelujah, I am in Christ! I have been transferred out of Adam and into Christ.” However, this may be merely a declaration, not a fact of actual experience.

In [Philippians 2:14](#) Paul says, “Do all things without murmurings and reasonings.” Instead of being found in Christ, we may be found in our murmurings and reasonings. For example, a wife may murmur to her husband, and he may react by reasoning. In such a case, neither the wife nor the husband is found in Christ.

Most of the time we are found in our culture, self-imposed religion, and self-made philosophy. We may make up a certain policy for ourselves to follow in our married life or in the

church life. Hence, others may find us not in Christ, but in our self-made policy concerning married life and the church life. This policy may be the source of much of our murmuring, reasoning, and criticizing. We may also use this policy as a yardstick for measuring others. Oh, it is crucial that, having the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, we gain Him and be found in Him!

A NECESSARY CONDITION

We have pointed out that there is a certain requirement or condition for being found in Christ. This condition is that we do not have our own righteousness which is of the law, but that we have the righteousness which is of God based on faith. It may seem to us at times that we are found in Christ. However, there will be no reality in these times unless we fulfill the condition of having the righteousness of God through the faith of Christ. To repeat, we need to be found in Christ in the righteousness of God through the faith of Christ. The phrase “in the righteousness of God” points to the fact that this is the condition of being found in Christ in reality. Thus, the crucial aspect of the condition is the righteousness of God.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD AND OUR OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS

At this point I would like to present a new definition, or interpretation, of righteousness as found in [Philippians 3:9](#). In this verse righteousness signifies a daily living which is right with God and man. Speaking of his past, Paul says in [3:6](#) that “as to the righteousness which is in the law,” he had become blameless. Before he was transferred into Christ, he was a Pharisee blameless in the law. Paul thought that in his daily living he was right with man and God. Actually, he was not right with God at all. The righteousness which signifies a living that is truly right with God and man must be a righteousness which is of God. The expression “righteousness of God” does not simply mean that righteousness belongs to God; it also means that this righteousness is God Himself. For example, the terms life of God, light of God, and love of God do not mean merely that life, light, and love belong to God. The life of God is God Himself. The same is true of the light of God and the love of God. God Himself is light and love. In principle, this is also true of the righteousness of God. Just as the life of God and the light of God

are God Himself, so the righteousness of God is God Himself. Therefore, the living which is right with both God and man must be God as our expression in our daily living, God Himself lived out through us.

This becomes more clear when we consider what it means to speak of our own righteousness. Our own righteousness is the expression of ourselves, the expression of “I.” My righteousness is just the living out of me. But the righteousness of God is God lived out from us. It is God becoming our daily living and expression. When we love others, our love is God expressed. Furthermore, our humility is not mere ethical humility; it is a divine humility, God Himself living out of us. If we are to be found in Christ, we must be in such a condition that God is expressed through us and becomes our daily living.

When I was young, I thought that the righteousness in [verse 9](#) referred to the righteousness God gives us through justification. However, for many years I sensed deep within that this was not the accurate meaning of righteousness here. One day I realized that the righteousness of God in [3:9](#) is actually God Himself becoming our daily living. If we would have this righteousness, we

must have a living which is the expression of God. We must fulfill this condition in order to be found in Christ in reality.

THE FAITH OF CHRIST

How can the righteousness of God become our daily living? This can take place only through the faith of Christ. Just as the righteousness of God is God Himself, so the faith of Christ is Christ Himself. The faith of Christ is not simply something which belongs to Christ; it is actually Christ Himself. Only through the hearing of the Word can the faith of Christ become ours. Through the Word we are infused with the element of Christ. At the same time, we experience the function of the Spirit. The issue of this infusion and function is the faith which brings about an organic union between us and the Triune God. This faith, which is really Christ Himself, causes us to be organically united with God. In such an organic union we and God are one spirit. We live, and God lives in us. God lives, and we live in Him.

We should not think that we are in God but God is not in us, or that God is in us but we are not in God. On the contrary, there is a mutual relationship between us and God: we are in God,

and God is in us. For this reason the Lord Jesus could say, “Abide in Me and I in you” ([John 15:4](#)).

By means of the organic union which joins us to the Triune God and makes us one spirit with Him, we have the righteousness of God. This righteousness of God definitely is not of the law. It is altogether of faith. In the organic union produced by faith we live out God, and God lives out from within us and becomes righteousness to us. When we are in this righteousness, we are in the proper condition to be found in Christ. The thought here is very deep. But if we see it, we would experience the highest aspect of God’s salvation and be rescued from all other things. May we all aspire to gain Christ and to be found in Him in such a condition.

THE SPIRIT AND THE WORD

To have a proper understanding of [Philippians 3:9](#), we should consider it according to the context of the whole book of Philippians. In [1:19](#) Paul speaks of the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. This bountiful supply does not merely belong to the Spirit; it is actually the Spirit Himself. In the same principle the expression “the Spirit of Jesus Christ” does not mean that the Spirit simply belongs to Christ; it means

that the Spirit is Christ. Just as the Son of God is God Himself, so the Spirit of Christ is Christ Himself. Christ is the Spirit, and the Spirit is the bountiful supply.

In [Philippians 2:16](#) Paul goes on to speak of the word of life. Once again we see that the word here does not simply belong to life, but actually is life. In New Testament usage, the word of life is life itself. [First John 1:1](#) mentions the Word of life, and in [John 6:63](#) the Lord Jesus says that the words He speaks are life. In the book of Philippians, on the one hand we have the Spirit of Jesus Christ as the supply and, on the other hand, the word of life as the means.

We need to consider [Philippians 1 through 3](#) as a whole and put together the supply of the Spirit, the word of life, and the righteousness which is of God based on faith. When in our experience we have the Spirit, the word, and faith, we are infused with God Himself. Then the very God who has been infused into us becomes our daily living, the living which Paul describes as the righteousness of God.

INFUSED WITH GOD

When we have the supply of the Spirit, the word of life, and the righteousness of God

through faith, we are infused with God. This infused God will then be lived out of us as our daily life. This kind of daily life can be called the righteousness of God. This is not merely the gaining of Christ; it is the experience and enjoyment of Christ in a very practical way. This is to be found in Christ under the condition of enjoying God's infusion that we may live Him out through the supply of the Spirit, the word of life, and the righteousness of God through faith. I am fully persuaded and assured that this was Paul's concept when he composed the book of Philippians.

Paul was very experienced in this matter. From the word of life and through the supply of the Spirit he obtained faith. This faith brought him God's infusion. Spontaneously Paul lived God out as his daily living and could be found in Christ, having the righteousness of God. It was Paul's expectation and also his aspiration that he would always be found in Christ in such a condition. Paul desired not only to gain Christ, but also to be found in Him in such a marvelous condition that people could recognize that he was a man living out God. As such a person, Paul was not a man in culture, religion, philosophy,

ethics, or morality; he was absolutely a man in Christ who lived out God as his daily life.

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