[POSTED ON FACEBOOK WEEK OF 10/26/26]

KNOWING JESUS: WHAT REALLY MATTERS?
PHILIPPIANS 3 – PART ONE

Philippians 3:8. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ

Philippians 3:9. And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith.

Philippians 3:10. That I may know Him and the power of his resurrection, and participation in his sufferings, being made like him in his death…

Verse 10 catches my attention. I want to know him—what his resurrection power is like and what it means to share in his sufferings, thus becoming like him in his death. Two phrases especially catch my attention: "sharing in his sufferings" and "being made like him in his death." What does Paul mean when he writes about sharing in Jesus' sufferings? How is a Christian made like Jesus in his death?

Remember the foundation of the Christian faith. Hebrews 2:18 provides a good summary. Jesus' death made possible our forgiveness and assured us of mercy. Jesus, faithful Son of God and merciful Son of Man, provided expiation and mercy. At the mercy seat of the Old Testament, God's presence and human sinfulness met, demonstrating God's merciful forgiveness. Jesus forgives and Jesus understands. Earlier in Hebrews 2, Jesus is described as a trailblazer, giving us an example that we can follow. When we imitate him, we can expect to share in his sufferings. We become more and more like him. Paul connects these with knowing Jesus—sharing suffering, crucifying the old person so the new person thrives.

Paul continues. "If, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection of the dead. Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, if that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, 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, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Therefore, let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you."

Returning to v. 10, Paul desires to know Jesus personally. Not know about him, but personally know him. How do you come to know somebody intimately and personally? By living alongside that person. Paul anticipated that the results of personally knowing Jesus would be "that I might experience His resurrection power in sharing His sufferings, and thus be like him in his death."

Return to v. 9. Paul desires the righteousness of God. Having the righteousness of God makes possible a personal day-to-day experience with Jesus Christ; a relationship with Him. The righteousness of God that Paul refers to is something that God gives. He grants it to us upon our repentance, acceptance of the blood of Jesus Christ, and the receiving of the Holy Spirit. This righteousness imputed to us makes possible personal, intimate relationship with Jesus. And we come before the Father with the righteousness of Christ; otherwise, we could never enter his presence.

The knowledge of Jesus guides us as we experience daily problems. Our needs are met by the same power that raised Jesus from the dead. That power includes God's Holy Spirit working in our lives. Paul wanted all this so he might obtain the resurrection of the dead. You see that he is putting things in order.

Priorities. Values. Commitment. That's another lesson from Philippians 3.