

Estimating The Values In Our Lives..

Text: Phil 3:7-11

Suggested Hymns:
163, 179, 331, 97

- 1) There is ballast which must be cast overboard.
- 2) Only in Christ do we have genuine indispensable, values.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Philippians 3:7-11, ⁷ *But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.* 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 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; ¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, ¹¹ if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.* (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

Because St. Paul had exercised his privilege as a Roman citizen by appealing to Caesar, he was to be transported to Rome. That voyage proved to be perilous and disastrous.

A violent, tempestuous wind, arose and wrought such havoc and destruction that the crew cast much ballast overboard to lighten the ship. On the next day the tackling of the ship was sacrificed. Some days later they cast out the wheat into the sea.

This momentous voyage is typical of life. We have all set out to sea. Ever so many people are carrying far too much worthless ballast and will come to wreck and ruin unless they cast it overboard.

This necessitates that we evaluate our cargoes correctly. We must retain only that which is genuine and indispensable. From the great wealth of his experience the apostle furnishes an absolutely fearless estimate of these values.

Since every one of us on his voyage through life must positively determine the correct value of things, let us under God's gracious guidance devote this morning's meditation to *Estimating the Values in Our Lives*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. Estimating The Values In Our Lives There Is Ballast Which Must Be Cast Overboard.

St. Paul did not always estimate values correctly. There was a time in his life when the worthless ballast attracted him and engrossed his attention. The shocking reality of this statement strikes us with even more compelling force when we consider earnestly what precious and attractive values the apostle lists among those things which have become worthless ballast to him.

Every ordinary person would be ready to evaluate St. Paul's life as extraordinarily successful. His heritage, his education, his accomplishments, were such that he could truthfully challenge any of his opponents to a most thorough investigation and comparison.

St. Paul uttered such a challenge repeatedly, and to this day no one has ever accepted the challenge. Yet, when God opened his eyes and led him to a keener understanding of genuine values, he was ready to throw all of these things overboard.

None of his opponents had a better record than he; in fact, none even as good. He could trace his ancestry back to Benjamin. This means, then, that he was a descendant even of Jacob's favourite wife, Rachel. His parents had fulfilled every requirement of the law in his childhood, for he was circumcised on the eighth day.

His training was such as to make him a sincere Pharisee "as touching the Law," and this meant that he was scrupulously conscientious in the observance of all its demands. No one could question his zeal and enthusiasm.

So deep were his convictions and so intense his earnestness that he persecuted the Church, fully persuaded that he was rendering God a service. Let

us furthermore remember that he was a man of profound learning. There loomed before him prospects of wonderful accomplishments in whatever field of endeavour he might choose to exercise his natural talents and abilities, so wonderfully developed at the feet of Gamaliel.

His associations left nothing to be desired. He was in intimate contact with the choicest and noblest men of his day.

But let us not pause here. Just make a brief survey of the remarkable accomplishments which characterise his successful ministry after his conversion; for there is no indication that he wants these omitted in this fearless estimate.

Think of the miraculous credentials with which God equipped him, the extraordinary service which he rendered, the staggering sufferings which he endured for the sake of the cause, the exemplary holiness which he manifested, the marvellous consecration which he practised, and the startling successes which he achieved.

According to all human standards of evaluation we would be inclined to say that these were the genuine realities in his life. However, the apostle, according to the divinely revealed standards of evaluation, was now ready to cast all of this overboard as most unnecessary ballast. He counts it for loss, rubbish, refuse, dung. It meant absolutely nothing to him and could profit him nothing in his relationship to God. In fact, he was compelled to do away with it altogether, because it would work havoc and destruction. Were he to retain it, he would never reach the harbour of eternal life.

What a lesson for us today! How many people evaluate their membership in the Church or their relationship to God by their heritage! Pastors often hear from the lips of such people who are utterly indifferent about going to the house of God the meaningless boast about having a godly mother or a godly father! As though their ancestry could save them!

Again, thousands boast that they have been baptised, merely looking upon Baptism as an external thing; or they base their entire hope upon their reception into the Church by the rite of confirmation, looking upon their certificates as diplomas which assure entry into eternal life.

Furthermore, we find thousands of people who trust entirely in their religious knowledge and the training which they have received.

Then what about the uncouthed thousands who boast of their excellent accomplishments, their sterling character, and their wonderful deeds. They actually seek to persuade themselves to believe the satanic deception that these are the worth-while values which will eventually merit the indescribable riches of eternal life.

Friends, all of this is ballast of which you must rid yourself. It will mean ruin and destruction for you if you try to retain it or have trust and confidence in it.

Look at the matter with divinely opened eyes, and you will regard it as mere ballast, rubbish, refuse, dung, which must be cast overboard.

2. Estimating The Values In Our Lives

Only In Christ Do We Have Genuine, Indispensable Values.

Only One person offers genuine, indispensable values, namely, Jesus Christ.

Of this the apostle has recorded this absolutely correct estimate, 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.*

All other things in life, all other accomplishments, all other knowledge may be ever so precious and give some advantages, but this was the one thing, the knowledge par excellence. This was not human, but divine; not by reason, but by revelation; not the product of the limited mind of man, but the product of the unlimited, omniscient mind of God.

This is absolutely correct. Nowhere else will you find anything which will even approach the sparkling, flashing excellency of the knowledge which God's Word imparts about Jesus Christ. In God's revelation, and in God's revelation only, can you find such a person as Jesus Christ.

That I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in Him is the next important feature of this indispensable value; and in order that there may not be the slightest opportunity for misunderstanding, St. Paul adds, *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.*

Right here he touches the very heart of the entire matter. All of his own accomplishments did not produce, nor secure for him, the righteousness which is so essential for assurance of the proper relationship with God. When the inescapable justice of God must be satisfied, only perfection avails; and man's spotted, stained, and fragmentary fulfilment of the Law does not meet that requirement.

As far as man is concerned, the case is utterly hopeless. God realised this from eternity. That accounts for Christ's life and work here upon earth. St. Paul firmly believed, and conscientiously taught, that Christ's perfect fulfilment of the Law, His innocent suffering, His shameful death on the cross, are altogether vicarious.

The only conclusion to which he wants to lead his hearers and readers is that the God-Man atoned for our guilt and procured for us the very righteousness by which we may be acceptable before the justice of God.

When St. Paul— or for that matter any other writer of the Scriptures — speaks of "*Jesus Christ, and Him crucified,*" when he focuses the attention of mankind upon Calvary's tragedy, he lifts up that Christ to the gaze of sinners as their Substitute.

We read in 2 Corinthians 5:21, ²¹ *For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.* St. Paul says in our text, *the righteousness which is from God by faith,* and thereby declares positively that you and I have but one way to become partakers and possessors of that perfectly prepared righteousness, namely, by faith, by merely receiving it as a gift of God's grace, by trusting implicitly in Christ as our personal Saviour.

But there is more than this. Our text continues, *that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection.* Today is the first Sunday after Easter. The crucified Christ is now the risen Christ, and there is tremendous power in that resurrection. "*He is declared to be the Son of God with power ... by the resurrection from the dead*" we read in Romans 1:4.

Thus the apostle declares that the resurrection establishes beyond the shadow of doubt the deity of our Redeemer and the unquestionable completion of His work of redemption. On the cross that marvellous God-Man declared that His

great task was finished. By His resurrection He provides irrefutable evidence that His verdict was absolutely correct.

Again, the resurrection of Christ shows its power by deepening the conviction and strengthening the faith of the believer. Now I know, now I am persuaded, that Jesus Christ has redeemed me. The undeniable fact of His resurrection authenticates every claim which Jesus ever made and establishes the confidence which I have in Him *“that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.”*¹

Again, the resurrection becomes the powerful influence which motivates my Christian life. Because my Substitute triumphed over the hellish fiend and “destroyed his work,” I can now successfully withstand the terrible temptations which confront me.

Because Jesus rose to newness of life I can direct my energies into the paths of godliness and serve Him who rendered the greatest service for me.

Again, the resurrection proves its power when I am called upon to face the dangerous tempests of suffering and tribulation. And who among us must not at some time pass through these trying ordeals? Yes, how often, especially when we conscientiously apply Christ’s principles in our life and conduct, must we not experience suffering for His name’s sake!

What a mighty power the resurrected Christ becomes then! How that supports and strengthens us to know that our Redeemer lives and that we are safe and secure in His mighty hands!

Our text concludes with the words, *if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.* That is the goal which he wanted to reach. His entire life was now centred on that one objective. He realised that this day was coming, and at its coming he desired to be raised to eternal life.

Friends, in Christ you also have the only genuine and indispensable values. They are the only indispensable and abiding thing in life. Everything else will fail, but the crucified and resurrected Christ and His marvellous righteousness will abide forever. It is the very thing your soul needs.

God has shown us very positively that temporal possessions may vanish and disappear. Many people have lost immense sums. These last days in which we

live, viewed in the light of the fulfilment of many other prophecies of the time before the end, should remind us most earnestly to retain that which is genuine and indispensable.

All other things will fail us. We are sailing toward the great day of the Lord. Let us cling to that which God offers us in Christ Jesus. We need this in time and in eternity. These values will enrich us in the indescribable bliss of eternal life.

Let us close with the words of the hymnist,²

When I shall launch to worlds unseen,
O may I then be found in Him,
Clothed in His righteousness alone,
Faultless to stand before the throne:
*On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand. Amen*

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ 2 Timothy 1:12

² Hymn 331