

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – September 17, 2020

The lord be with you.

I have a thought experiment for you today. Sometimes take a blank sheet of paper and on that paper, list your accomplishments, maybe jobs you've had, schools graduated, degrees earned, honors received, you just list the kinds of things that you put on a resume, things that you feel good about in your life, things for which people pat you on the back. I mean things you'd want your mom like about you... Okay, you've got your list.

Now what I want you to do is I want you to take your pen and draw a big X across that list, just cancel it all out. Okay, but that might seem like a pretty pointless exercise, what's it about... Well, I ask you to do that because I think that it can open up for us what the Apostle Paul is saying in the Book of Philippians, Chapter 3 versus 4 through 8, let me read them and then see if we can impact them., "If anyone else has a reason to be confident in the flesh... I have more circumcised on the Eighth Day. A member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, as to the law of Pharisee, as to zeal and persecute of the church, as to righteousness under the law, blameless. Yet, whatever gains I had, these I've come to regard as lost because of Christ. More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord. For Jesus sake, I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish in order that I may gain Christ."

So what Paul does here, as it were, he gives us his sheet of paper in his accomplishments, and it is a list that to the religious people of his day would have been very impressive. Now, look at what Paul does with his list, he does what I asked you to do. Paul, as it were, draws a big X through that list, Paul says, I regard them, I regard all of that as lost compared to the value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, you see, one day on a road to Damascus, a respectable, proud, religious Saul of Tarsus, met Jesus Christ... And Jesus changed everything.

And so Paul continues, he says, And whatever gains I had. Okay, that's his list. Whatever gains I had, these I've come to regard as a loss because of Christ, more than that I regard everything as lost. Because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. So, if we take a look at the balance sheet of our lives, we look at all of that we've done, we've looked at what we have accomplished, Paul says that it all adds up to a zero, a loss... Nothing compared to knowing Jesus Christ.

Paul goes on, for Jesus's sake, I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard those things as rubbish in order that I may gain Christ. Now, the word translated rubbish, the King James translates as dung, the Greek word is Scibula, that people would take their chamber pots and they would empty them into the streets, they would throw garbage into the street, all of that was called Scibula. Paul says that all of his accomplishments while they are Scibula, rubbish, dung compared to what it means to know Jesus.

When our older son, Red was a wee little guy, one day he came running naked, all excited into our room, proudly holding up to us his diaper, saying, Look what I made. I mean, he was so proud. But it was Scibula. Paul says, for Jesus's sake, I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as

Water from Rock

Scibula, rubbish, dung. In order that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on that. And so you see, being a Christian... Well, it's knowing Jesus, it's not being a church member, it's not trying to be a good person, it's knowing Jesus... Not just knowing about Jesus, but knowing Jesus to be in relationship with Jesus. And Paul says, that changes everything.

I love what Paul says here, he says, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. And when we know Jesus, when we're found in him, we don't have a righteousness of our own, but Paul says a righteousness that comes through faith in Christ, and so here's a new freedom in life, here's a joy, it takes away all the pressure, all the sweat, because it's not about us, it's about Jesus and knowing him. Some of you might remember George Beverly Shea, who for many years was the worship leader and soloist for Billy Graham.

Well, when Mr. Shea was a young man, his mother left some lyrics on the piano hoping that her son would see them, which he did, and a young Mr, Shea began singing those words to a tune that just seemed to fit the words that he was reading. Well, as a mother heard him singing the words and she asked him to sing his new song at church the next day, which he did, and it's a song that we have today. I won't sing it. But here is the first verse, and chorus, I think they speak to Paul's words for us today.

I'd rather have Jesus than silver or gold. I'd rather be his than have riches untold. I'd rather have Jesus than houses or lands at... Rather be led by His nail-pierced hand than to be the king of a vast domain or be held in sin's dread sway. I'd rather have Jesus than anything this world affords today.

I'm Tim Smith, a fellow traveler on the pilgrim way. Thanks for listening. Until next time.

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