

Rejoicing: Glad Glorifying in Christ Jesus (Part 3)

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Preacher: Bill Story

[0 : 00] Please be seated. So, how do you view the Christian life?

If you were to describe it to someone else, how would you, in a nutshell, describe it? What does it mean to be a Christian? What is it you believe?

What is the difference between you and other religions? What is it about your faith? Would you describe it as, well, I'm saved?

What are you saved from? I'm saved from hell. I'm safe. I'm free. Now God has given me freedom to live as I want.

Do you say that? Would you say, well, no, I'm not saved from hell. Well, yeah, but I would describe it more as I'm saved from sin. I'm forgiven.

[1 : 03] God has done this great work of delivering me. And I'm now free and forgiven. But he's put upon me an obligation to live for him.

It's up to me to be faithful. Walk with him. Would you say that? It's Christian life. See, what Paul says in the book of Philippians is, for me, to live is Christ.

To die is gain. To live is Christ. Everything is, my whole life is Christ. I follow him.

I forfeit all to gain him. In fact, I seek to gain even more. And to know him more intimately. More deeply. More richly.

Richly. To know him more in my experience. I don't just follow him. I want him to walk with me. As I abide in him.

[2 : 13] Would you be able to say that, Paul? I mean, we'd certainly say, I want that kind of life.

Today we focus on knowing Christ. So he's mentioned that twice here. He's mentioned it in verse 8, saying, because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ, I regard everything as loss.

That coming to know him has changed my view of everything. What I value. What I see. What I treasure. How I look at life.

And then, now he says it again in verse 10. That I may know him. So he's talking about knowing him. What does it mean to know him? How do I know him?

How do I walk with him in personal relationship? And certainly, we think of, you know, we often say the difference between us and other religions is, is Christianity is not a religion.

[3 : 18] It's a relationship. We walk with God and talk with God. And so our prayers are about intimate communication with him. And we read his word to listen to him.

And we even pray, hopefully, as we learn to listen even in our prayers, not just talk at God, but to take time to be silent and hear from him, be led by him.

That, of course, is knowing and walking with him. But Paul, Paul means something more. Certainly that. But Paul is talking about something more. And that's what he gives us here, especially in verse 10.

So how do we deepen our walk with Jesus? How do we deepen our relationship with him? That's what we're getting into. So Paul emphasizes this transformation in his life.

That because he's come to know him, now everything's changed. He was going one way in his Judaism, rising to the top of Judaism, being a Pharisee, and then a Hebrew of Hebrews, and studying under the great scholar Gamaliel, he was a leading man, advancing it in his own words and acts, advancing in Judaism.

[4 : 33] He's the hit man when it came to this Christian cult that came up. And so he had all of that. He had accomplished all these things as he lists seven of those things in verses four and five.

But then he says, but all that's rubbish now. Although that means nothing. All those accomplishments, all those achievements, all that status, checking all the boxes mean nothing.

In fact, he says, I consider it rubbish now that I know Christ. So there's been a total transformation, a flip-flop of his life. And it all began on that Damascus road where he's on the road to go and arrest more Christians and put them away.

And a light shines and everything turns upside down for him. He was not seeking Jesus. Jesus was seeking him. And everything changed. He was not...

And then his questions began. Wait a minute, who are you? I'm Jesus. Oh. Oh. How wrong I was. How did I get it wrong?

[5 : 46] A scholar of the Old Testament, how did I miss it? Same way his disciples missed it until he opened for them in the upper room the scriptures and how they spoke of him and we had it wrong.

So that's Paul's transformation. Radically transformed. But I'm intrigued by his language of rejoicing in the Lord, he calls it, glorying in Christ Jesus and now this knowing him and gaining him and being found in him.

What is he talking about? So we have seen, first of all, some progress here in chapter 3. We see the glory of gaining Jesus where Paul is talking about the heart of joy, rejoicing in the Lord.

How does that look? Well, gladness is seen in verse 2 of being aware, guarding against the joy stealers, those that put confidence in the flesh, those that focus on externals.

So don't be caught up in that old kind of religion stuff, that man-centered, self-centered kind of achievement. What did I do? What do I need to do?

[7 : 00] That's a joy stealer. And instead, in verse 3, he says, we worship by the Spirit of God, we glory in Christ Jesus and we put no confidence in the flesh.

So the center of that is glorying in Christ. What does that mean? It relates to the other two. It relates to worshiping by the Spirit.

So it's something done by the Spirit, not by flesh. And then secondly, it's putting no confidence in the flesh. It's putting confidence in Christ. So my glorying in Christ is humbly putting all my confidence in Him.

But this word glory also means boast. I boast in Him. I boast in Him. I boast in Him. I boast in Him. Because He's everything. And so we get a little more unflinching of what Paul means by to live as Christ. To live as everything. It's everything. He's my everything.

[8 : 07] And He really means that. So what is this glorying in Christ, this boasting in Christ? I think He further fleshes that out in verses 4 through 11.

And we looked last time at verses 4 through 9 where Paul makes two determinations. That because he knows Christ, he's given up all the past.

Verse 7, He regards all His earthly gains as loss. All those seven advantages that I had. Being a Pharisee, being a Hebrew of Hebrews, being born into the right family, being born into the right race.

All of those check marks mean nothing now. And then verse 8, he takes it another step.

He says, not only do I have that determination that I regard how I think about those things, I no longer value them, but he takes another step and says, now I forfeit all.

[9 : 06] I regard and forfeit all things. Not just those things, not just those gains, but I forfeit everything in order to gain Him and be found in Him.

And now he talks about in verse 9 a whole different kind of righteousness. The righteousness he had lived for all of his life was about what I do and how I act and how I perform and what I stay away from and what I stay in, what he could accomplish.

And now it's nothing regarding himself. Now it's a righteousness that's been given. It's a gift. It's a righteousness because of Christ's faithfulness, not his.

And it's a righteousness that's from God and based on faith, received by faith, not by doing anything, by trusting. So he's gained and been found in Christ in one way and now he adds another in verse 10 and 11.

Another that. Another not accomplishment but as a result of having gained Christ. Now he's going to talk about a deeper relationship with Christ.

[10 : 25] Because now he mentions again in verse 10 that I may know Him. Well, it's knowing Him that caused this whole determination and transfer of his life.

Because I know Him now I forfeit all. Now he's going to say but that leads to again I want to know Him more. So I think he needs a deeper knowledge of Him, a greater experience of Him, a greater

walking with Him.

Because that's what relationships are about. Don't they deepen? You know, unless we neglect them, they deepen. We spend more time and get to know each other better. Even after years you can discover some things you didn't know.

Maybe something didn't come up but just now it comes up. Like, what do you mean you don't like Chicago? I don't get that. That's like that. No, I've always known that. She's always been true about. That's my music. I listen when I need to stay awake when I'm on a long drive. So, okay. Sorry. As well as the women of gospel. Those ladies keep me going.

[11:32] All right. Sorry. So we come from the glory of gaining Jesus to the goal of knowing Jesus. Because now He makes it a goal. There's gladness in Christ.

There's glory in Christ. And now there's the goal of knowing Him more. So what does Paul mean by knowing Him and how can I then know Christ or how can I deepen my relationship with Him?

Paul mentions two things in verse 10. He says, remember, he's still saying, I regard all things as loss and I've forfeited all things as loss that I might gain Him.

And that I might know Him, verse 10, and the power of His resurrection and may share in His sufferings becoming like Him in His death.

There's a lot there. I really like the first part, don't you? to know the power of His... I want to know the power. And then he comes up with the fellowship of His suffering.

[12:38] What we need to understand is the way that Paul wrote it in the Greek, there's one article covering both of those statements. So he says, the power of His resurrection and fellowship of His suffering.

So in other words, the power and the suffering go together. You can't have one without the other. So I just want the power. Well, you only get the power because of the suffering. Those go hand in hand.

And so those two things are what he's defining as knowing Him more. I get to know Him, yes, by prayer and the Word and listening and walking with Him.

But I will get to know Him on a deeper level. And this is what Paul wants. By experiencing the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering, I get to know Him more closely as I walk the road He walked and the road that now He walks with me.

It's not just that I walk the road with Him, but He's now walking that same road with me. And I get to know Him. Okay, Lord, where are we going?

[13:55] Are you sure? Okay. All right. All right. He's walking with me. So, first of all, application one, to know Jesus is to know by experience His resurrection power.

Interesting he puts that one first. Isn't suffering come first and then resurrection? He puts power first, power of His resurrection first. To know by experience His resurrection power.

The power of His resurrection. To know. What is knowing Christ? Well, the word know there, to know Him, it's the second time He's said it, is to know by experience, to know by familiarity, to have a relationship.

It's not just, it's not head knowledge. I know facts about Him. I think I mentioned last time, I've read about George Washington. I know a lot about him. Dude was a great man.

Not a perfect man, but a great man. Compared to the guys at his time? Absolutely. But I don't really know Him.

[15:00] I didn't sit with Him. I didn't ride with Him. I didn't walk. I didn't see how He endured through the world. I didn't, I can get a sense by reading about Him to kind of know Him.

Get the idea of what kind of man He was. I don't really know any nuances about Him. Right? So here is about to know by experience, to know by walking with Him, to know by talking with Him, to know by listening, to know by spending time together.

Jesus uses the same word in the upper room in John 14. Remember, this is right after Jesus had said, I am the way and the truth and the life and no one comes to the Father but through me.

So He mentions the Father. Philip, remember the accountant, of the group, the member during the feeding of the 5,000, he's the one that says, how much would it cost, Philip? Well, man, we need 20,000. You know, he's the accountant in the group.

He's the numbers guy. So he's not a real personal guy. So we want to see the Father, He says. No one comes to the Father but through me. And so Philip says, show us the Father.

[16:09] We want to see the Father. And Jesus says to Philip, Philip, have I been with you so long and you still don't know me? I'm not talking about know about me.

Have you been with me all these years? Philip, you've walked with me. You've seen my signs. You've been with me.

You've gone where I've gone. And you still don't know me? Don't you know me? Aren't you familiar? Haven't you experienced me yet? Don't you get who I am?

A lot of big clues. He says, if you've seen me, seen the Father.

Experience me. You've experienced God the Father. So to know Him means the time, the experience, the familiarity, the personal relationship, the walking with Him, watching and listening and time.

[17:11] Like a relationship. So to know Him as a person. So He doesn't say, my goal in verse 10 is that I may know about Him. My goal is to know Him as a person.

Talk with Him and listen to Him and spend time with Him and learn what pleases Him. And then to seek to learn Him more. To know Him more at a deeper level or a wider level or expanded level in new ways, new situation.

So how do we know Him? Well, He mentions, first of all, to know Him and the power of His resurrection. What kind of power is that? That's big kind of power.

It's life-giving power. It's life over death kind of power. It's dramatic power. life-giving power. It overcomes death.

Ephesians 1.19 says, the power that God uses to work in us is the same power that raised Jesus from the dead. We even have a song we sing about that.

[18:19] Same power, same power. Same power that raised Jesus from the dead works in me. And that's exactly what Paul says in Ephesians 1.9. Well, okay. Here's one way we get misled by that.

Okay. Resurrection power. That's pretty dramatic power. Jesus raises Lazarus. Pretty dramatic power. Right? Pretty outstanding, dramatic, wow moment stuff.

So I look at my life. Okay. Do I see that kind of wow stuff in my life? Big drama? What does that mean? That it's the same power works in me. Let's not be misled that it has to be dramatic.

Okay. Let's not be off track and thinking it's big drama stuff. No. Because the same power that worked in Jesus worked in him in Gethsemane.

Remember in Gethsemane? Father, please let this cup pass from me. Okay. Sweating drops of blood. He's angry.

[19:23] He's just, I don't want to go through this. Please let the cup pass. And in that prayer, he comes to what? Yet not my will, but thine be done.

That's power. Power to change his will right then. What his human will wanted to do, he's been transformed. But keep reading in that passage because he has to pray that two more times.

Three times he prays, let this cup pass from me. Yet not my will, but thine be done. So in other words, that dramatic power allowed Jesus to sustain his faith and to overcome his human will for about an hour.

And he comes back and needs to pray it again. Are you with me? Do you see what that power looks like? It's not necessarily, oh, now he never has to worry again. It's the kind of power that we're going to find out later in chapter four of Philippians that when we have anxiety and worry, Paul says, do not be anxious.

But what? Pray, supplications. With thanksgivings, that's really, really clue because that takes faith to do that in the anxieties. And then what happens when we thankfully pray before God?

[20:44] And the peace of God. The peace of God. This transforming, powerful comfort comes from God that doesn't make any sense.

The power that passes understanding. How can you have peace in this anxious time? That's power. Experiencing that power.

It's extraordinary power. It transforms us. But it might only show in a small way. It comes through the spirit in the inner man.

He's walking with us. It helps us to overcome trial, to overcome hardship, to overcome loss. It gives us strength in the trial.

It gives us sustenance in the trial. It nourishes us to take the next step. Have you noticed in your Christian life that God gives you what you need for the next step, not for the whole day or the rest of

the week?

[22 : 02] That's why he taught us to pray, you know, give us this day our daily bread. Not, you know, so when we go to Sam's, I can get the whole month's supply.

And pray. And nothing wrong with doing that. And just saying, you know, Jesus' day, they didn't have refrigerators. So it's like day to day. But he means that because that's faith.

That was what the Israelites learned in the desert. Like manna each day. Don't gather more than you need. One day. One day at a time. Walking with him one day at a time. That's how the power comes.

And I found it's not even one day at a time. As Jesus experienced, it's not even one day at a time. It's not even one full session. Okay. So it's that kind of power.

I just want to kind of bring this down to earth. It can be dramatic. Certainly. We've all had experiences where God just, wow, he stepped in. All praise to him.

[23 : 03] But there's so many little ways he does that for us all the time. As we walk with him. And then he mentions this future hope. Walking with Christ gives us this future hope.

He talks about the resurrection of verse 11. Odd language though. He says that by any means possible, I may attain the resurrection from the dead. Now, doesn't that sound like he's not all together sure?

Like I'm hoping, you know, somehow I'll get to the resurrection. That doesn't square with the way he talks about the resurrection elsewhere. The end of the chapter, chapter 20, 21, he talks about it. It says, verse 20, our citizenship is in heaven. And from it, we await a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

That's absolutely certain. So what is he, why is he using this language here in verse 11? That by any means possible, I may attain to the resurrection. Well, he's not uncertain about the resurrection.

[24 : 12] What he's uncertain about is how he'll get there. Okay. Is, is Christ coming back before I die? Is that how I get there? Will I be a martyr?

Because memory is sitting in jail. To live is, to die is gay. So maybe it'll be, maybe it'll be by old age. I don't know how it's gonna get, I'll get there. I just don't know by what means I'll get there.

It's a future expectation. It's the ultimate goal. Again, remember for Paul to live is Christ. To die is gain. Because to die means to be with him. To be with him.

He's with me, but I want to go be with him. It's no longer by faith. Now it can be by sight. And it can be relief. That's the final transformation.

So let's ask a practical question. How does God's power work in us? How does it show? What does that look like? Paul gives us another description in 2 Corinthians 4. Describes how we are, are jars of clay.

[25 : 16] We're weak jars of clay and yet God's power works through us. So he says in 2 Corinthians 4, 7, we, we have this treasure, this treasure of walking with God, this treasure of faith, this treasure of grace.

We have this treasure in jars of clay. Interesting description. Or jars of clay, cracked pots. There's a Christian comedian that does the word cracked pots.

I don't remember her name, but she's a Christian comedian. So we have the treasure in jars of clay. Why? To show that the surpassing power belongs to God, not to us.

So there's power. How does God display his power in these jars of clay? He says we, for our part, we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed.

We're perplexed. Isn't that good that Paul got perplexed? Because I'm perplexed all the time. It's good to know the smart guy was, you know, he got perplexed too.

[26 : 18] He got confused. Perplexed, but not driven to despair. Oh. Persecuted, but not forsaken.

Persecuted, but not forsaken. When you're persecuted, it can feel like he's forsaken you. He says no, no, no, no. Persecuted, no. Spirit of God rests on me when I'm persecuted. Don't have all the mushy feelings about it, but I know that by faith.

Struck down, but not destroyed. Watch how he says it. Always carrying in the body the death of Jesus. Interesting phrasing.

Always carrying in the body the death of Jesus. So that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. Wow.

So when I go through the affliction and the perplexity and the struck down stuff, I'm dying. But Jesus gets shown.

[27 : 25] Oh, I can't do that. He does that. For we who live are always being given over to death. Always. Does he have to say always? We're always getting given over to death for Jesus' sake.

Why? So that the life of Jesus, the power, so the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our mortal flesh. So there's these two things going together, the suffering and the power.

They're going on together. And the power gets shown through the suffering. He ends it in that chapter, verse 16.

He says, So, we do not lose heart. Boy, it's easy to get to lose heart when the affliction comes and the perplexity comes and the struck down stuff comes.

You know? I mean, that can wear on you. But we don't lose heart. Why? Because though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.

[28 : 24] It's not about the externals, it's about the internal. For this light, momentary affliction, say it doesn't feel light or momentary, but thank you, Paul.

This light, momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison. How do you come up with that? Because it's about how we look at things.

As we look not at the things that are seen, but to the things that are unseen. How do I see the unseen? By faith.

By remembering what God says and promises and trusting that. For the things that are seen are transient, temporary. The things that are unseen are eternal and that's what we rest on.

So the power works through our affliction, the trials of our lives. As Paul says later in 2 Corinthians, in my weakness, he is strong.

[29 : 33] in my dying, he lives. I experience his resurrection power because he sustains my faith.

He enables me to walk and overcome things or go through things. He strengthens me, gives me peace beyond understanding. That's how power works.

It also works in transforming our minds because what I look at when I'm down makes all the difference. If I look at, like Nehemiah, look at the wall, it's only half built, it's all rubble.

Right? Oh, we'll never finish it. Nehemiah says, get your eyes off the wall. Get your eyes on the Lord. We'll get it done.

Trust in the Lord. So, to know Jesus is to know by experience his resurrection power. Let's look secondly at to know Jesus is to know him by participating in his suffering and death.

[30 : 47] Second application. Talks about the power of his resurrection. Now we're talking about the sharing of his sufferings or the, literally the fellowship of his sufferings. Want to grow deeper in your knowledge of Jesus?

Know him in his sufferings. I don't know if I want to know him that well. Right? No, I do.

Oh, I don't know. I'm just, how are you on that? That doesn't sound good. But wait a minute, I've come to know him.

And you know, when I get to know him more is when it, it's hard stuff. How do I know him deeper by knowing his suffering?

So, my translation has a verse 10, sharing that we may share his sufferings. Paul used the word fellowship, koinonia, the participation, sharing. It means to share.

[31 : 54] Fellowship means to share. We share in common. He used the word earlier in chapter one, we talked about, I pray with joy about you guys because you are koinonia with me in the gospel.

You are sharing in the gospel. You are partners in the gospel. You're not just kind of sending a check and good luck to you. You're praying for me all the time.

You are sending me stuff in my needs. You are also out there. So, you're partners. You really believe in the gospel. So, here, you talk about being a partner, being a participator in the suffering of Jesus to experience similar affliction.

Now, we say, oh, his sufferings were way beyond what I'll ever go through. How do I share in his sufferings? He's crucified on a cross. He's whipped. He's beaten.

I don't go through anything like that. That's real suffering. You know, how do I ever share in his suffering? Well, understand the scriptures describe lots of different affliction and suffering.

[33 : 05] Jesus suffered in other ways besides physically. He suffered rejection. You suffered rejection because you walk with Jesus? Probably.

Probably. Slander? False accusation? Jesus was regarded as one with no esteem. They had no esteem for him. Well, if you're a Christian, you're probably regarded that way by some people. Christian. Crutch, fool, weak.

Yeah, that's part of suffering. How did Jesus suffer? Well, Paul summarized that earlier for us back in chapter 2 when he talks about in verse 5, have the mind in yourselves which is yours in Christ Jesus.

Who, what did Jesus do? Who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God as a thing to be grasped or to be manipulated, to be used, but made himself nothing.

[34 : 12] So he emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men and being found in human form, he humbled himself. So he empties himself and he humbles himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

That's his suffering. He first regarded himself. What did Paul talk about? Regard what I don't, no longer value, the things that are lost for the sake of Christ.

So Christ regarded himself, what? To take on flesh. Why would he do that?

He's God. He deserves glory. Doesn't need to do anything. Yet he looks at his self-regard and denies it.

He denies himself. He empties himself and then he humbles himself. He doesn't need to be obedient. Everyone should be obedient to him. Yet he is obedient.

[35 : 16] For others. So suffering, knowing his suffering is to do the same kind of thing. To empty ourselves. To not seek our own glory. It's to humble ourselves for the sake of others.

Which sometimes means bearing with others. How many of you, is that your favorite? Bearing with others. Isn't that fun?

Bearing with them. There's something, do I confront them on or do I just bear it? Okay, this is just me, so I just bear it. That's fun. Grin and bear it.

Or forgive. Okay, that's a step. Whew. Remember Paul talks about how do we walk with one another? It's by bearing one another and forgiving one another. Being kind to one another.

Loving one another which expresses usually by how we receive people and how we treat them.

That's what Jesus did.

[36 : 15] He did all of this for others. He's bearing and he's forgiving and he's doing things for others. He's not doing it for himself.

He's doing it for others. That's suffering. So what's the result? He says at the end of verse 10. The result is that we become or that he is becoming by knowing the power and by knowing the suffering he is becoming like Jesus in his death.

So in other words, those two things, to experience the power of his resurrection and to experience the fellowship of his suffering, those things together are a process of causing him to become more like Jesus.

Being conformed. It's not I conform myself. He doesn't say I'm conforming to him. I'm being conformed.

In other words, it's passive. It's action coming to me. It's not action I'm doing. My doing is the knowing. I'm walking with him. I'm trusting him.

[37 : 32] And through those things, God is using that process to conform me. Day by day. It's a process. It's being, not having been.

It's being. It's a process. It's a lifelong process. I'm slowly being conformed as I learn to experience his power and his suffering.

As I learn those things, that's what God uses to conform me to be more and more like him. Ah. He's not saying you need to be like Jesus.

You should, should, should. Don't should on one another. Be conformed. Let him work.

Work. As I put no confidence in the flesh.

[38 : 39] As I learn to regard my gains, my earthly gains, as loss. As Christ leads me by his spirit to forfeit all, to gain more of him.

As I learn, as Jesus called me, to deny myself and take my cross. See, it's all that language that Jesus used. Paul's just using a different language.

Still talking about deny yourself, take up your cross, follow him. Paul's just learned to, here's how I put it. So how do I know Christ?

Well, we die to know him. Dying to know him. We build a relationship with Jesus by prayer, by listening to him, by reading his word, by walking with him in dependence, learning to abide in him so that he bears fruit through us.

All of that personal walking with him. But to deepen it, I learn by experience the power of his resurrection through the fellowship of his sufferings. And in that, I'm being continually conformed to him, to be like him.

[39 : 59] And as I walk that road with him, I learn more of what he did for me. Because what I'm going to experience in suffering is not a match for what he experienced in suffering.

But I get a taste. I get a taste. And then it's not just me following in a path, it's me following him and him walking with me now. Peter talks about, man, when you suffer, the spirit of God rests on you. You feel that? No. Nope. Nope. Don't feel that. Don't feel that under the pressure. But it's true. The spirit of God is resting.

That's why Jesus says, you're blessed. You're blessed. You're on the right road. So, this is God's plan.

God is working to conform us to his son. That's his great purpose in our personal walk. Romans 8. Now, please note how Romans 8, 28 starts.

[41 : 12] We know. We know something. We know something. We don't guess. We know. We know that for those who love God, all things work together for good.

Right? We've all heard that verse. Good stuff. I claim this verse all the time. Well, I trust it. I'm claiming. I'm trusting it. Because it doesn't always feel good. Right? So, we know that for those who love God, those who are following God, those who are really in a relationship with God, all things work together for good.

For those who are called according to his purpose. What's his purpose? For those whom he foreknew, he also predestined. Watch this. He predestined.

He purposed. He planned to be conformed to the image of his son. That's God's plan. To conform you to the image of Jesus. Whatever you're doing in life, whatever you're going through in life, that is God's purpose.

[42 : 21] To conform you to the image of his son. It's not going to be done all at once. It's going to chop off a little bit here. Trim back a little bit over here.

Huh? Really reach down in here. Huh? To conform us to the image of his son in order that he, Christ, might be the firstborn among many brothers.

And those whom he predestined. Look how God has just planned it all. Those whom he predestined, he also called. Those whom he called, he also justified. Those he justified, he also glorified. As if our glorification has already happened.

It's so certain. If he's called you, you're already glorified. And that's it. I mean, God's taking care of it. We're still back in the, you know, justification section. Experientially.

So he says, if God does all this, what shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who could be against us? I mean, God's got it from beginning to end. Who?

[43 : 23] And then he goes on, who shall separate us from the love of Christ? I mean, we got blessings. Oh, how do I look at those blessings? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation?

I don't like tribulation. No, it won't separate. Distress? Persecution? Famine? Nakedness? Danger? Sword? Now he's going to quote the Old Testament. As it is written, for your sake, we are being killed all day long.

There it is again. For your sake, we're being killed all day long. Well, that doesn't sound like blessing. Right?

We're being killed. For your sake, God, for you, we're being killed all day long. We are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered. Just get rid of those Christians.

No. In all these things, we are more than conquerors. What? How are you conquering when you're dying? How are you conquering when you're regarded as sheep to be slaughtered?

[44 : 26] We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am certain, I am sure that neither death nor life nor angels nor rulers nor things present nor things to come nor powers nor height nor depth nor any else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Do you know that? Do you trust that? When you're in tribulation, do you know that? When you are in distress, do you trust that? And notice, it's the same kind of experience Paul's talking about in Philippians.

God is working all things together for good to conform us to the image of His Son. That's His purpose. We have hope of an ultimate goal of resurrection, of glory.

We have power and suffering working together. as we experience tribulation and distress, as we're being killed all day long, yet we experience victory in the fact that His love never leaves.

That's the power. That's the conforming. He is with us.

[45 : 49] How do we experience victory in distress? Because we know something. We know that God is faithful. We know that God is good.

We know that His love will never be taken away from us. These things we trust. Our victory is not an earthly victory. Yeah, if you're dying, if you're in distress, if you're persecuted, if you're naked, you're in soil, right?

It's not an earthly victory. It's an eternal victory. It's about God's promise that His love will ultimately bring us home. That's what we trust.

Our kingdom, His kingdom is not of this world. It's much better than that. Abraham figured that out.

Moses figured that Joshua figured that David figured that out.

The Pharisees of the first century did not figure that out. Christians figure that out. Doesn't mean He won't build some earthly thing for a while for the Jews.

[46 : 58] I don't know what He's going to do. But I know for me, He's already on His throne. He's already putting enemies under His feet. And I can trust.

last questions. How about you? When you think of applying all this, can you relate to Paul's language?

Can you relate to this? Do you see the Christian life in this way? is it all about knowing Him? Is that what recenters you?

When everything goes on, it comes back to, okay, I walk in with Him. It's all about Jesus. To live is Christ. He's going to be with me through all this.

And I get to know Him more. Let's pray. Father, we thank You for Your Word. We thank You for Paul. What an amazing transformation that You did in his life.

[48 : 05] What an example of a zealot going the opposite way and You just taking him and totally transforming him. We thank You for His example after 27 years to still long to know You more.

Father, we desire that kind of faith in You, that kind of passion, that kind of zeal. But that's not something we can stir up.

We depend on You, Lord, to work in us. So as we walk with You, Father, we pray that You would begin to give us the experience of the power of Your resurrection as we experience the fellowship of Your suffering, that we might be conformed more and more to be like Jesus.

This we pray in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.