



FROM JEANINE KOWALEWSKI - MARCH 10, 2025

***The Lesson:*** Philippians 3: 2-12

***Key Verse:*** 3: 7-9

Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, 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 faith.

***The Devotion:***

To be truthful, I had a hard time with this week's readings and finding something I wanted to write about. It has been a rough couple of weeks involving various family members' health issues and a few friends dealing with the loss of loved ones. And I really wasn't sure what Paul was talking about with all this gain and loss, and rubbish and righteousness. So I read several Bible translations of Philippians 3: 7-9. I consulted a few resources about the meaning of Paul's letter. And I discovered God had things I needed to hear from this piece of scripture.

The Apostle Paul had been a rule follower. I am like Paul in this regard. In fact, the other kids used to call me a "goody-two-shoes". Paul had a long list of attributes (see v4-6) cementing his social status and religious importance. Am I like Paul in this way? Probably not, yet we all have traits we think are worthy. We you taught as a teen to 'think before you act' so as not to tarnish your reputation? Were you taught to be independent, self-sufficient, and not ask others for help? While these values are not wrong or bad, elevating their importance can keep us from relying and focusing on God. Paul had every right, in the world's view, to be proud and confident. Yet he tells the church in Philippi that these things are nothing and he throws them in the trash. Why? Because of Jesus Christ. Because Paul has learned that the most valuable possession we can have is knowledge of and faith in Jesus. He also knows there is nothing we can do to become right with God, apart from believing. Jesus has already taken care of this!

This verse reminds me that my relationship Jesus should be my primary focus. It is the one thing I have that means everything. I need to rely on God, not my own abilities. I have been doing a lot of praying for people and situations these past few weeks. It is the one thing I can do for my family and friends who are hurting. It is the one thing that will guide us through life. As the familiar children's song states: Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so. This knowledge is the greatest possession in the world.

***The Prayer:***

Father God, Guide us during this season of Lent to commit our focus to our relationship with You. Touch our hearts with the knowledge of all Jesus has done for us. In His name we pray. Amen.