

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

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IN

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WITNESS LEE

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Scripture Reading: [Phil. 3:8-9](#)

According to [Philippians 3:9](#), it was Paul's expectation and also his aspiration that he would always be found in Christ. If we would have a proper understanding of this verse, we should not isolate it from [verse 8](#). Rather, the end of [verse 8](#) must be read in connection with the beginning of [verse 9](#). "I have suffered the loss of all things," Paul declares, "and count them to be refuse that I may gain Christ, and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God based on faith." Paul suffered the loss of all things and counted them to be refuse in order to gain Christ and be found in Him. Furthermore, Paul's desire was to be found in Christ in the condition of having the righteousness which is of God based on faith, not of having his own righteousness.

PAUL'S ASPIRATION

In [verse 9](#) we see that Paul's earnest desire was

to be found in Christ. In the past Paul was fully in the Jewish religion under the law and was always found by others in the law. But at his conversion he was transferred from the law and his former religion into Christ, and he became “a man in Christ” (2 Cor. 12:2). Now he expected to be found in Christ by all those who observed him—the Jews, the angels, and the demons. This indicates that he aspired to have his whole being immersed in Christ and saturated with Christ so that all who observed him could discover him in Christ. We also should aspire to be found by others in Christ. To be found in Christ actually means to be observed, seen, or discovered by others in Christ.

Before Paul was converted to Christ, he lived in the law and under the law. Whenever someone met Paul, that person found Paul in the law and enveloped by the law. Saul of Tarsus was a person altogether encased by the law, fully boxed in by it. He was living by the law, with the law, and under the law. But one day he was transferred out from under the law into Christ. Henceforth, whenever others saw him or observed him, they could tell that he had become a person in Christ. Paul was not in culture, philosophy, or religion. He was a person who lived in Christ, and his

aspiration and expectation were that he would be found by others in Christ. Paul suffered the loss of all things and counted them refuse in order to gain Christ on the one hand and to be found in Him on the other.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD BASED ON FAITH

In [verse 9](#) Paul does not speak merely in a general way, but in a very definite way. He says that he did not want to have his own righteousness, but he wanted the righteousness which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God based on faith. “Not having my own righteousness...but...the righteousness which is of God” is the condition in which Paul desired to be found in Christ. He wanted to live not in his own righteousness, but in the righteousness of God, and to be found in such a transcendent condition, expressing God by living Christ, not by keeping the law.

Before Paul was saved, he had no idea that Christ could be his righteousness. The righteousness of the law is the righteousness which comes from man's own effort to keep the law, as mentioned in [verse 6](#). Formerly, Paul lived in

that righteousness which was according to the law. Others could invariably find him enveloped by the righteousness of the law. But now Paul's desire was to be observed as a person living in Christ and having Christ as his righteousness.

The righteousness in which Paul wanted to be found was the righteousness "which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God based on faith." The expression "the faith of Christ" implies our believing in Christ. Such faith issues from our knowing and appreciating Christ. It is Christ Himself infused into us through our appreciation of Him, who becomes our faith in Him. Hence, it is also the faith of Christ that brings us into an organic union with Him.

The righteousness which is of God based on faith is that righteousness which is God Himself lived out of us to be our righteousness through our faith in Christ. Such righteousness is the expression of God, who lives in us. It is based on faith because it is on the basis, or condition, of faith. Faith is the basis, the condition, for us to receive and possess the righteousness out from God, the highest righteousness, which is Christ (1 Cor. 1:30).

A VISION OF THE PRECIOUSNESS OF CHRIST

It is one thing to have a doctrinal understanding of being found in Christ; it is quite another thing to be found in Christ in our daily living. If I were to visit you in your home, where would I find you? Would I find you in your good behavior or in Christ? Where we are when others observe us indicates the realm in which we live. If we live in our culture, we shall be found by others in culture. If we live in our good behavior, we shall be discovered by others in our behavior. In whatever realm we live, that is where we shall be seen, observed, and discovered by others. When Paul was still living by the law, he was found in the law. But one day he began to have the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. He saw the vision that Christ must be his everything: love, kindness, humility, wisdom, patience, intention, attitude, and even his words, utterances, and expressions. On account of this excellency of the knowledge of Christ, he was willing to count all things to be loss. Furthermore, he suffered the loss of all things and counted them refuse in order to gain Christ and be found in Him.

We need to have a vision of the preciousness of Christ. Then we need to gain the very Christ we have seen. For example, suppose a person visits a jewelry store and sees many valuable items on display. To see these items is one thing, but to gain them is another. To know Christ is not merely to have the knowledge concerning Him, but to gain His very Person. Christ is the embodiment of the fullness of the Godhead ([Col. 2:9](#)) and the reality of the shadows of all positive things ([Col. 2:16-17](#)). To gain Him is to experience, enjoy, and take possession of all His unsearchable riches ([Eph. 3:8](#)). As we gain Christ, we should also live in Him and become those who are in Him in experience. Then when others see us or observe us, they will find us in Christ. We shall not be found in our own virtues—we shall be found in Christ and in Him alone. Oh, that we may gain Him and be found in Him! May we be willing to suffer the loss of all things and count them refuse in order to be found in Christ.

If we gain Christ and live in Him, He as our righteousness will become our expression before both God and man. Then we shall not simply be found in Christ in a general way, but we shall be found in the very righteousness

which is Christ Himself lived out of us. Only when we are found in Christ will the Lord be satisfied. Likewise, those who serve the Lord will be pleased and satisfied only when the believers are found in Christ.

THE SIX-THOUSAND-YEAR TRADITION

If you visit another country and stay in a brother's home, you will probably find it impossible to avoid the national flavor prevailing there. The reason for this is that we are all still under the influence of six thousand years of tradition. When Paul wrote [Philippians 3](#), deep within him was the realization that the traditional forms of human living occupy everyone. Whether a person is sinful or not sinful, moral or immoral, that person is occupied by something other than Christ, by some element of the thousands of years of human history. We may call this the six-thousand-year human tradition.

The building up of the church has been hindered by this tradition for more than nineteen hundred years. The Lord Jesus said, "Behold, I come quickly" ([Rev. 22:12](#)). But more than nineteen centuries have passed, and still He has not come. How can the Lord come back when His

purpose on earth has not been accomplished? Satan, the subtle one, is lurking behind the six-thousand-year human tradition. Due to his influence, we live in this tradition instead of in Christ. With the exception of Paul, hardly anyone has ever touched this powerful stronghold. No matter how spiritual we may be, others rarely find us in Christ. Rather, they find us in something other than Christ, in some aspect of man's six thousand years of traditional living. During times of prayer, we may be released temporarily from this tradition. But even in our prayers it is sometimes possible to sense the flavor of the six-thousand-year tradition. What a serious situation this is!

If we would be found in Christ instead of in the thousands of years of tradition, we must be willing to forget our past, even our past Christian life, humble ourselves before the Lord, and ask Him to have mercy on us. We have come to the place where we are facing a huge rock standing in our way. For many of us, there seems to be no way to go on. Furthermore, many of us have come to a stage where it seems difficult for even the Lord to get through in us. This is very much related to the fact that when others see us, it is

very probable that they will find us in something other than Christ.

Should you visit a certain brother, you may not find him doing anything sinful or wrong. But, instead of finding him in Christ, you may find him in his good behavior or in his habitual way of living. I do not have the assurance that if you visit me at home, you will find me in Christ. On the contrary, you may observe that, as an elderly person, I live simply in my natural goodness. You may find me in so many things other than Christ.

The book of Philippians was written by Paul in his later ministry, not long before he was to depart from this earth. Hence, when Paul wrote this Epistle, he was quite mature. Nevertheless, he still did not have the assurance that he would be found by others in Christ. For this reason in [verses 8 and 9](#) he used the present tense, saying, “I count also all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord...and count them to be refuse that I may gain Christ and be found in Him.”

If we would be found in Christ, we need to be watchful moment by moment, continually on the alert to live in Christ. If we are not alert, we shall immediately be distracted from Christ and

live in something other than Christ. Our living may be very good, but in our experience we are not in Christ.

OUR UNIQUE EXPRESSION

We must not regard Paul's word in [3:8 and 9](#) as mere doctrine. We need to consider seriously before the Lord just where we are right now. Are we in Christ? As the angels and demons observe us, do they find us in Christ? When others meet us, where do they find us—in Christ or in some good thing that is not Christ Himself? Paul's word about being found in Christ is of great significance. Deep within Paul was the aspiration to be found in Christ.

May we all aspire to be found in Christ. We need to pray, "Lord, my desire is to be found in You. In everything I do day by day, I want to be found in You."

Paul could say that he counted all things as refuse in order to gain Christ and be found in Him. This is a very important statement. All that he says in [verses 5 through 7](#) help him to reveal his aspiration expressed in [verses 8 and 9](#). Let us pray that we may be found in Christ by our wife or husband, by our children and relatives, and by our neighbors, colleagues, and classmates.

If we are truly found in Christ, all other things will lose their hold on us. We shall no longer be under the influence of religion, philosophy, or culture. How marvelous to be found only in Christ! When we are found in Him, religion, philosophy, and culture are annulled.

To be found in Christ means that He is our unique expression. Because Paul could be found in Christ, Christ was his expression. In every aspect and from every angle, only Christ could be seen upon him. Paul's aspiration was that Christ would be his only expression. He did not want to be found in such natural virtues as humility, patience, and love. These were among the things that he counted refuse, trash, in order to gain Christ and be found in Him. Culture, human patience, natural love, and submission—all are refuse when compared to Christ. We should not aspire to be found in our own love for others or in our natural submission. Our earnest desire should be to be found only in Christ.

THE STANDARD OF GOD'S SALVATION

The standard of God's salvation is very high. Paul refers to this salvation when he says, "I know that for me this shall turn out to salvation

through your petition and the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ” (1:19). Salvation here is Christ Himself, the very Christ in whom we may be found by others and even by angels and demons.

If we see the high standard of God’s salvation, we shall realize how desperately we need God’s mercy. We are far below His standard, for people can find us in many good things other than Christ. All these things belong to the six thousand years of human tradition. Satan, God’s enemy, uses this tradition as a means to occupy us, to frustrate us, and to keep us from the higher and richer experience of Christ. For this reason, in Philippians, a book on the experience of Christ according to God’s high standard, Paul expresses the aspiration that we would experience Christ to such an extent that we may be found in Him.

Oh, we all need to bow down before the Lord and pray, “Lord, have mercy on me. Cause Paul’s aspiration to become my aspiration also. O Lord, create in me the hunger and thirst to pursue after You that I may be found in You. I don’t want others to find me in anything other than Yourself. I want to be a person wholly in You, and I want others to find me in You.” May

the Lord grant us mercy that we may be found in Him!

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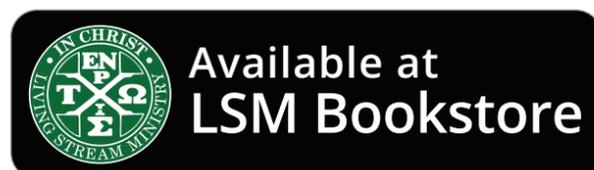
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