

I Want to Know Christ

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[0:00] Take your Bibles once again and turn to Philippians chapter 3. Pastor John will pick up a series on the book of Philippians this morning.

Philippians chapter 3, we'll read the first 11 verses.

Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you. Watch out for those dogs, those men who do evil, those mutilators of the flesh.

For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus and who put no confidence in the flesh. Though I myself have reasons for such confidence, if anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more.

Circumcised on the eighth day of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews, in regard to the law of Pharisee, as for zeal, persecuting the church.

[1:25] As for legalistic righteousness, faultless. But whatever was to my profit, I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things.

I consider them rubbish that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.

I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of suffering, of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death.

And so, somehow, to obtain to the resurrection from the dead. I would like to thank each one of you who prayed for us this past week as we were at the General Assembly of our churches, the Association of Reformed Baptist Churches of America.

The blessing of the Lord upon my own heart was such that I could only conclude that people were praying and God was answering. So, we'll be giving a report this afternoon after the luncheon on those days together in Mesa, Arizona.

[2:47] But our text for today is just two verses, Philippians 3, 10, and 11. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so somehow to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

And we're confronted in this passage with the Apostle Paul's passionate desire, I want to know Christ. I want to know Christ.

Now, here's a man with strong desires. And they are redirected desires, aren't they? Ask this same man 30 years earlier, what do you want, Paul?

I want to kill Christians. I want to rid the earth of those blasphemers who follow the Nazarene. This was Paul's passionate desire, wasn't it?

And he pursued it with all the vigor and zeal that he could muster. And then one day he met the living Christ. He was on his way to Damascus, a foreign city, to persecute Christians there.

[4:04] And the glorified, risen Christ met him, and Paul was forever changed. And his desires were changed.

He's no longer the same man. Now, to look at him on the outside, you say, that is the same man. That's Saul of Tarsus. But to open his heart is to find that's not the same man.

That's a new man with new desires. The old desires were replaced with new desires, redirected, strong desires. But it's not, I want to kill Christians. I want to know Christ.

And something of that takes place in everyone who meets the Lord Jesus Christ. You want to know him.

But Paul, we could say, you already know Christ. You met him on the Damascus Road some 30 years ago. You then went to the desert of Arabia for many months where you received direct revelation from the Lord Jesus himself as to what you were to preach, as Galatians teaches us. [5:15] And you've walked with him now for some 30 years. And you've introduced many hundreds of people to him. How can you say, I want to know Christ?

Oh, but I want to know him more. I want to know him more. I feel like I only know the fringes of his way. The outer edges of who he is.

I feel like I'm ankle deep in a bottomless ocean. I want to know Christ. There's so much more to know of him. He's like a mountain.

And the further you go up the mountain, you then are able to see over a ridge and you see that there's more mountain yet to climb. And each step higher beckons you to come higher.

There's more to see. And you want to see more. Now that's different from some people. Some people, the more you know them, the less you want to know.

[6:19] Maybe they appeared to be something special at first and you saw them and you were impressed. And you said, wow, I'd like to get to know him. And as you did, and you got closer to them and you started to see them close up, you were very unimpressed.

They're not all that they were cracked up to be and getting close to them showed that to you. But that's never the case with Jesus Christ. He's altogether lovely, the Scriptures say.

There are no imperfections in him. You look at a needle, a sewing needle, a needle that Dad uses to get your splinters out. It's so shiny and smooth and it comes to such a sharp point.

It looks perfect. And then you put it under the magnifying glass or under the microscope and you see that that needle is not so smooth after all.

It's got jagged edges and pits all through it and the point, it's got a big chunk out of it. The closer you get, the more you see its imperfections.

[7:29] But the closer you press in to see Jesus Christ, the more you are amazed at his lack of imperfections, at his beauty, at who he is, at his person, that he is God and you come to see him as having all the attributes that God has.

Anything you can say about God is true of Jesus. He is eternal. He never was with a beginning. He's the Creator. Nothing created but what he has created.

He's omniscient. He knows everything. He's omnipotent. Nothing he can't do. And then we see that this one who is God is also man, as much a man as you and I are, human, with a body like ours, with a soul, with emotions, a mind, a will, affections.

And we wonder, how can this one who is God at the same time be man, fully God, fully man, two natures in one person?

And we press in and we examine him and we look at his works and we see his perfect obedience to the Father.

[8:47] We see him as a 12-year-old submitting to his parents, going down to Nazareth and obeying them. We see him teaching and preaching.

We see him tempted and tried and in all of this, never sinning. And we're drawn in. We want to come in closer and look more closely upon him.

We see his glory. We see his love. We see his friendship. To know him is to love him, isn't it? To know him is to want to know him better.

I want to know Christ. So yes, Paul would say, I do know him already. You're right in that. But it only increases my desire to know him further.

And that is a mark of everyone who knows Christ. They're not satisfied with their present knowledge of him. They want to know him better. And as they get to know him better, that desire only grows.

[9:55] Maybe you've been working out in the yard all day. And you're tired and you're hungry and you come in at the end of the day and your wife has a steak right off the grill. You sit down and you take a bite and you're just savoring that bite.

And you're telling how much you enjoy that steak. And she says, well, I'm glad you like it. And she takes the rest of the steak away. And you say, wait, I'm not done enjoying the steak.

You see, one bite doesn't satisfy your hunger. It only stirs up your juices to want to take the second bite and to get to know that steak a little better.

And in some ways, that's the way it is with Jesus. Every experience with the risen Christ, in one sense, leaves you satisfied.

That's what I was made for. Fellowship with Christ. But in another sense, it leaves you very unsatisfied, hungering to know more, thirsting to know more of Him.

[10 : 55] And that's why Paul says, I want to know Christ. And isn't it that that keeps bringing you back to the Bible, Christian?

Isn't it that that brings you back to pour over the Scriptures? Because these are they that testify about Him. Christ is revealed here in the Scriptures.

This is where we meet Him. Here His voice is heard. Christ in the Word draws near. Here the Redeemer's welcome voice spreads heavenly peace around.

And life and everlasting joys attend the blissful sound. My sheep hear My voice, Jesus says. Where do they hear His voice? They hear His voice here in all 66 books.

He's speaking. Ever speaking. And that's why the Christian is never done reading His Bible. You ever met a Christian? And you might ask him, well, have you read the Bible?

[11 : 53] Oh yeah, I read that book. As if it's all past tense. I mean, that's the way we treat a lot of books, isn't it? Have you read the Chronicles of Narnia? Oh yeah. And I moved it from my library from the to-read section over to the read section.

I have read it. I've read that book. But you never meet a Christian who says of the Bible, oh yes, I've read that book. And as if they're done reading it.

A Christian never gets done reading this book. Why? Because it's here that Christ meets with us. It's here that we get to know Jesus Christ better. When I met Dr. Francis Schaeffer over in Switzerland, he had read the Bible through 40 times.

And he wasn't done. He wasn't done yet. And so the Christian never is done reading his Bible because it's here that Christ is revealing, reveals himself more and more to the Christian.

And don't tell us that you want to know Christ if this is not the book of books. To you. You say, I'm not a reader. You know what?

[13 : 12] When you come to know Christ, you become a reader. Don't you? I've met many of you. I've heard many of your testimony. I wasn't a reader. But I got to know Christ. And I became a reader.

Because it's here, in His Word, that He is made known. It's there that we get to know Him better. What would you say of someone who says, I want to get to know you. But every time He came over to speak to you, you suddenly got bored, you turned your eyes away, you started daydreaming, you walked away and just left you there, or they walked away and left you there just talking to yourself. You say, if they don't listen to me, they don't really want to get to know me, do they? And so it is with Christ. Don't say that you want to know Christ if you do not come to the very place where He meets with people.

His Word. He's speaking. Did you know that? Christ is always speaking in His Word. He always is speaking. But many times, you've got His mouth shut.

You've got the covers of your Bible shut. You can't hear Him speaking, can you? You're busy playing video games. You're busy on the computer. You're busy on the telephone.

[14 : 28] You're busy doing this and that. Christ is speaking all the time. You know that. He's talking. But you're not listening. Can you really think that you want to know Him if you're not listening to His voice?

Oh, dear Christian, read your Bible to know Christ better. Read your Bible to know Christ better. That's where we meet Him. And that's why you're often found praying too, isn't it?

Because you hunger for fellowship with your Lord. And in communion with Him, you come to know Him better. He pours out His heart to you. He opens His heart to you and tells you of His love. And then you pour out your heart to Him and tell Him of your love for Him. That's what keeps bringing you back to church. You want to meet with Christ who is present with us as we gather in His name.

For wherever two or three are gathered in My name, there am I in the midst of them. And so you come to worship because you want a meeting with Christ.

[15 : 41] His special presence is here in the meeting of His saints. And that's why you're not satisfied simply to go through the rituals. Just to be in the right place at the right time.

Oh, it's church time. We're here. We're doing the right things. We stand when the minister says stand. We read when He says read. We pray when it's time to pray. We sing.

We go out the doors. You're not satisfied with that. You've come to meet Christ. And you will go home disappointed if Christ doesn't meet you in the worship because you want to know Christ. You're like those Greeks that came to Philip and said, Sir, we would see Jesus. We're here for one thing. We want to meet with Christ.

Now lead us to Him. And the man, the woman, the boy, the girl that knows Christ wants to know Him better. And that's why they keep coming to worship. That's why they come to the public assemblies.

[16 : 42] They want to meet with Christ and have personal dealings with Him. Let me just say, in all the means of grace, your private reading of Scripture, praying, the public worship of God, singing, reading, of Scripture, don't stop short of Christ in all the means, the use of the means of grace.

Get to Christ. Be sure to get to Christ. Whether you're at home or whether you're here. Because it's in these means of grace that Christ meets with His people and reveals Himself.

Behold, I stand at the door and knock. In every one of His means of grace, He's knocking. He's seeking admittance. He wants to come. And what does He say? He says, If you open the door, I will come in and will sup with you.

I'll eat with you. The most intimate of fellowship is table fellowship. It's eating with someone. And Jesus says, You open the door and I will come in and will fellowship with you.

Be sure to get to Christ in all your means of grace. He wants to meet with you, Christian. He wants to reveal more of Himself to you.

[17 : 59] Whoever has my commands and obeys them, He is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father. And I too will love Him and will show myself to Him.

I will reveal more and manifest more of my love, more of my faithfulness, more of my grace, more of my power to that one. We would see Jesus. Something's drastically wrong with those who claim to be Christians, who claim to know Christ but have no interest in knowing Him further.

No longings, nothing that could be called pantings and hunger pangs to drive Him to the Word, to the prayer, to fellowship with Christ.

Satisfied with a little bit of religion. Well, I know Christ and I know that Heaven is mine and that satisfies me. Nothing more that could draw me in and make me want to know Christ more.

And we wonder, what Jesus do they claim to know? Surely not the wonderful Counselor.

[19 : 12] Surely not Him whom to know is eternal life. Surely not Him whose loving kindness is better than life. No, when we come to know Christ, we want to know Him better.

We can't be content just to receive His gifts. All week long we've been receiving gifts. All our life long we've been receiving gifts from our Lord Jesus.

And we're not satisfied just to receive His gifts. It'd be like every day a package arrives at the door of your house and there's this benefactor out there in the world who sends you things every day.

Good things. Expensive things. Things that you want. Things that you need. And it's faithful.

Every day the postman comes with this box. Care package for you. What would you think of the person who just takes these packages in every day and his life is enriched in every way because of this benefactor but he had no interest in getting to know who it was that was his great benefactor.

[20 : 22] And you see that's us and every day we're receiving and Christian every day we have him giving to us and he's loving us and he's giving himself for us.

And now he's becoming a man for us. Taking on a human nature for us. And now we see him being tempted for us and obeying for us so that he would have a righteousness to give to us that God himself would approve.

And now we see him dying for us. Being buried for us. Risen for us. Ascended for us. Praying for us. Interceding for us.

Reigning for us. Coming for us. Preparing a place for us that we might be with him. And we're not satisfied just to have all that be done to us.

We want to know him. Who is this great benefactor? Who is this one that has enriched our lives so greatly every day and through all of my eternity? Here's a man.

[21 : 31] The Apostle Paul. Who's walked with Christ for 30 years and is still found panting after him like a deer after the water brooks. I want to know Christ.

Is that you? Do you long to know Christ? How long have you known him? Some of you have only known him a year. But you want to know him better don't you?

Some of you have known him for 10 years. 30 years. 50 years. But there's always more to know about Jesus than what we yet have known.

Amen. And that's why Paul prays for the believers for the believers at Ephesus.

And he says, I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ the glorious Father may give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation so that you may know him better. You need to know him better.

[22:30] And I'm praying that you'd come to know him better. And I want you to know his love to be able to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge.

You need to know this love better. And I'm praying that you'd have power to grasp this love of Christ. And he writes to the Colossian believers that they might be growing in the knowledge of God.

And that's what Peter writes to his dear Christian friends in present day Turkey, but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Yes, you know him, but grow in that knowing of him.

We know enough to know that there's more to know. And so we can say with Paul, I want to know Christ. Now here's something worth desiring.

Here's something worth seeking after, to know Christ. Think what people are seeking after today. How about wisdom in the world's eyes?

[23:37] How about strength? How about riches? And this is what the Lord says. Let not the wise man boast about his wisdom.

Let not the strong man boast about his strength. And let not the rich man boast about his riches. But let a man boast about this, that he knows and understands me.

Now that's something worth rejoicing in. That's something worth boasting in. That you know God.

That you know his son. The apostle Paul says that he would, he has counted all things as loss for the all surpassing greatness happiness of knowing Christ his Lord.

Here's something worth desiring. It was reward enough for Paul to compensate for all of his losses that he knew Christ. He knew Christ.

Paul was not satisfied simply to know about Christ. He doesn't say here, I want to know about Christ. That's part of it, but that's not what he says, is it?

[24:57] I want to know Christ, he says. Knowing is a word that denotes relationship, intimacy, love. Adam knew his wife Eve and she conceived and gave birth to a son, Cain.

to know is to love, is to be in relationship. Salvation is a personal relationship with the Son of God. He's more than a doctrine to believe.

He's more than a hero in a story. He's a real person to know just as much as that person sitting beside you. A real person to know.

And Paul says, I want to know him. I want to know the person, Jesus Christ. There are many religious people who know a lot about Christ but don't actually know him. Do you realize that? Many today in churches who know a lot about Jesus, but they don't know Jesus. They know he's the Son of God. They know he's the creator of the world. They know that he was born of a virgin.

[25:58] That he lived a sinless, perfect life. They know all about his miracles, his teachings, his perfect example. They know he was betrayed, crucified, buried, risen, ascended.

They know all of that. They know that salvation is only found in him and that he is coming back to judge the living and the dead. They know it all, but him they do not know.

They don't know Christ. There's no personal loving relationship with Christ. Christ. And it's to such religious people that Jesus refers in Matthew 7, 21 to 23 when he says that not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, you see, there's the claim to know him.

Not everyone who says, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven, because many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name?

And in your name cast out devils? And in your name done many good works? Here's a people who knew a lot about Christ, who did a lot of things purportedly in his name.

[27:08] And Jesus says, I will say to them, depart from me, you evil doers, I never knew you. You knew a lot about me, you did a lot of things supposedly in my name, but I didn't know you.

You didn't know me. We didn't have a personal relationship of love and affection. Kids, do you know Peyton Manning?

You say, yeah, I know he plays for the Colts, doesn't he? And you might claim to know him because you've memorized all the things on the cards and all of his stats, you know it.

Maybe you could find him on your Facebook, and find out what his favorite food is, his favorite movies, and all the things that he does and likes.

Yeah, I know him. You maybe even saw him. You saw him on TV. I know him. Maybe you actually saw him in real life once somewhere.

[28 : 15] I know Peyton Manning. but can you call him up and say, hey, Peyton, I'll be over at seven o'clock, just the two of us, and we'll hang out together. What would he say?

Who is this? I don't know you. We have no relationship. No way. Click. You don't really know Peyton Manning, do you?

You have a lot of knowledge about him. You may have read every sports article you can read on him, but you don't know him. You don't have a relationship with him.

And what Paul wants is a real relationship with the risen, living Christ. I want to know him. And yes, we can come and speak with him any time we want.

Just the two of us. We know him that well, don't we? And he speaks to me. I speak to him. We open our hearts to each other.

[29 : 22] I want to know him. Not enough to know about him. To say, I know Jesus has power to cleanse from sin. Friend, have you been washed in the blood of the Lamb?

Have you been cleansed? Have you known that power of cleansing, sin in your life? Not enough to say, I know that Jesus is the door to heaven.

Friend, have you entered that door? Have you found it open and walked through it? Say, I know he's the way. Have you come to the Father through him? I know he's the truth.

Are you trusting him? I know he is the life. Are you living through him? I know he is the good shepherd.

Are you one of his sheep? Is he caring for you? Do you hear his voice and follow him? He's the bread of life. I know that. I remember the passage in John.

[30 : 24] No, no. Have you eaten of him? Are you drawing daily nourishment and strength for your task at work, your task at school, your task in the home?

Are you living on Christ? Is he your food, your bread, that which you must have to live? He's the vine. Well, are you abiding in him?

He's the great physician. Has he healed your sin-sick soul? You may say, I know the offices of Christ. I know he's a prophet, priest, and king. Well, is he your prophet?

Are you bringing your mind to him and asking him, teach me prophet, teach me. You say, I know he's a priest. Well, are you bringing your sins to him to have him cleanse them?

He's the king, but are you bringing your will to him to have him lead you and direct you in your life? It's all the difference in the world between knowing about Jesus and knowing Jesus.

[31 : 27] It's the difference between reading about what a strawberry tastes like. And you can read volumes of things of what people have said a strawberry tastes like. And then you take one and you bite into it and you feel its consistency and you feel the sting upon your taste buds.

You have experienced the real strawberry. It's that way with Christ. You can hear what everybody else says, but have you partaken?

Have you eaten of him? Have you drunk of him? Have you received him? Do you know him? I want to know Christ. It's the most practical thing, isn't it? You may have been around the things of Christ for a long time.

You may have learned the lingo long ago and you can speak it with the best of them. You may know all about the gospel. You may even know the doctrines of grace, but you no more know Christ than you know President Bush.

You have no relationship, no personal relationship with him. Oh, come to him. Come to him. Not just come to church. Not just come to the Bible. Not just come to pray.

[32 : 36] Come to him. Come to me, he says, the person, me. Come and get to know him by faith. Whom to know is life eternal. There's nothing more practical than this, to know Christ.

And that's what Paul wants. And so he goes on and says, I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection. He wants to know Christ and the power of his resurrection. We just studied the resurrection.

Haven't we recently? We've just come through the Easter season. Who can speak of the power of Christ's resurrection? There he is at one moment, a corpse, lifeless, as cold as the stone that he's lying on.

He's not breathing. His heart's not beating. He's just plain dead. And suddenly he's alive. Have you thought about the power to accomplish that?

suddenly he's breathing. His chest is heaving. His heart's beating. How did that happen? Death, life. [33 : 40] And his cells in his body spring into life. And all that's going on inside a cell, it's been described as a city with all kinds of activity. In each cell, it all starts buzzing again with life.

We talk about power, the power of Christ's resurrection. And Paul says, I don't just want to talk about the power of Christ's resurrection. I want to know Christ so well that I experience in my life that kind of power.

That kind of power. A lot of people who claim to have the form of godliness, but deny the power of it. That's not Paul. I want to know Christ. I want to know the power of his resurrection.

I want to be so united with Christ that his resurrection is mine and I'm raised to newness of life and I start to live a whole new way by the power of the resurrected Christ.

And that's what he wants for us to know. What he wants the Ephesians to know. That you might know his incomparably great power for us who believe that power is like the working of his mighty strength which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms.

[34 : 52] Ephesians 1 19 and 20. Folks we're forever feeling our weakness aren't we? We walk up to the command and we say oh I see what I'm to do but I have no power.

I see my duty in this situation in the home. I see my duty in this situation at work but I'm powerless. I'm weak. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection.

We lack the spiritual dynamism. We don't have the spiritual determination. We don't have the spiritual stickability, the patience, the perseverance. Paul wants us to know him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or think according to his power that is at work within us.

Have you thought about that Christian that the power that raised Christ from the dead dwells in you? That power is in you? So the next time you walk up to that commandment and you feel so inadequate, good, good, you are inadequate.

But in Christ you have all the resources of deity. In him dwells the fullness of the Godhead and we are complete in him.

[36 : 11] It's yours. You've been raised with Christ by virtue of your union with Christ through faith. And so you can ask and you can expect and you can lean upon him and find that power to kill that pride, to kill that lust, to kill that greed, power to resist temptation, power to obey from the heart, power to serve God, power to witness, power to deny yourself, power for self-control, power to not worry, to not be afraid, power to not conform to this world.

Yes, power to seek your interest above my own and is found in Christ and in knowing him and the power of his resurrection.

Paul longs for ever increasing supplies of this power of the risen Christ exerting itself in his life, working renewal of his heart and renovation of his life.

You're finding, aren't you, as I am, that the Christian life is a supernatural life, that what it requires of you is far more than you bring to the table, that to love your enemies is requiring more than what you can do to esteem others higher than yourself, to do nothing out of selfish ambition and vain, to do absolutely nothing, that requires something supernatural, something above what nature brings to it.

You're finding that, aren't you? What a wonderful word is this. There is a Christ to know and the power of his resurrection in our lives.

[37 : 58] So where are you lacking power? The answer is in Christ and knowing him and the power of his resurrection. But he wants to know more than that.

He wants to know Christ in the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death. He not only wants to know the power of Christ's resurrection, he also wants to know and share in the sufferings of Christ, in his sufferings.

Isn't it something that we are so united with Christ, believer, that our sufferings for Christ in his name are considered his sufferings? I want to know Christ and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings.

Paul counted to suffer for Christ as a high honor. I want that, he says. When following Jesus and his word brings me to suffering, I don't want to balk back.

I don't want to hold back. I want to go forward and follow Jesus and I want to experience in my life fellowship with him in his sufferings. Peter said the same, rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.

[39 : 16] If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed for the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. I want to know Christ and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings.

Whatever hardships come for Christ, I want to know him in the midst of those sufferings for his namesake. And many of you can testify that you never came to know Christ better than when you were suffering.

And it was in the suffering that Jesus himself drew near. And you can say, I want to know Christ. It was worth it. It was worth it.

I wouldn't want anybody else to have to go through it, but I wouldn't have traded it for the world. I got to know Christ in a deeper way. fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, even to the point of becoming like him in his death.

We've spoken of knowing the power of his resurrection, fellowship with him in his sufferings, and even becoming like him in his death. Becoming like him.

[40 : 20] That's what the passion of Paul is. I want to know him and become like him. And you know, the more that you know Christ, the more you become like him. There's this transforming power in knowing Christ that the more you know him, the more you become like him.

The more you put your neck in the yoke and walk with him and learn of him, the more you yourself become lowly and meek in heart, just like he is. Paul says, I want to know him and become like him, even becoming like him in his death.

What was Jesus like in his death? Well, he was very obedient, wasn't he? He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

I want to know more of that in my life. I want to know Christ and become like him in his death. I want to so obey God that I will die for him if that is necessary, and everything less than that.

I want to know him and become like him in his death. What's he like in his death? Well, he was concerned for others above himself, wasn't he? That's why he's dying.

[41 : 31] Even in the midst of his death, he's thinking of others. He's saving others. He's ministering to others. He's praying for others. He's speaking to that thief, salvation on the cross.

I want to be like Christ in his death, concerned for others. He was submissive to his father, wasn't he, in his death? As he comes to face death in Gethsemane and again the next few hours at Calvary, what is his prayer?

Not my will, my father, but yours be done. I want to know Christ to where I become more like him in his death. To where I say, day by day, difficulty by difficulty, trial by trial, father, if it be possible, let this, let this pass, let it, let it go away.

But if not, Lord, it's your will that I want, not my own. That's what happens the more we get to know Christ. Lightfoot says, the agony of Gethsemane, not less than the agony of Calvary, will be reproduced, however faintly, in the faithful servant of Christ.

I want to become like him. Don't you want that likeness to Jesus in his death? Paul wants to be like Jesus in his sufferings and his death and in his resurrection.

[42 : 52] For he says in verse 11, and so somehow to attain to the resurrection from the dead. We start with the power of Christ's resurrection, the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

You see, there's two resurrections that the Christian enjoys. He enjoys a spiritual resurrection upon his conversion, upon his being united to Christ. He's raised from that deadness of sin and to a newness of life.

And he lives now in resurrection power. But one day, too, he will die. And so he needs another resurrection, doesn't he? A resurrection from the dead. The final resurrection.

And that's what Paul finishes this section with. I want to attain. I want to know Christ so as to attain to that final resurrection. When Jesus Christ will return. And we who have died in Christ will rise first.

and go to be with Christ forever. Well, do you know this Jesus? Do you know him? Is he precious to you?

[43:55] Do you know anything of his power in your life? The resurrection power of Christ to defeat sin, to live for him. Do you know that longing and desire to know him and to be coming more like him?

Fellowshipping with him in your sufferings, his sufferings. And are you longing for that final resurrection that will bring you to be with him forever? Last week, as I said, we were at the General Assembly in Mesa, Arizona.

General Assembly of the Association of Reformed Baptist Churches of America. And last Sunday morning, I was eating breakfast down in the hotel lobby there.

My bowl of raisin bran in the styrofoam bowl and trying to not cut my lip with that sharp plastic spoon. And there's just a table about the size of this little pulpit desk and chair on either side. And there's a big hulk of a man on the other side. And there's no other places. Do you mind if I join? No. I said, I had a Colts championship hat on. You like the Colts, do you?

[45:07] Yeah. From Indianapolis. He takes it off, shows me he had a signature, one of the players. Where are you from? I'm from Bremen. Oh, Doc Bowen. Yeah, best governor Indiana ever had.

Well, what are you doing here? Well, I'm here visiting, visiting family for two weeks. And what about you? Well, I'm here for a gathering, a conference of, an association of churches.

What's, what are you, what are you gathering about? What's the theme? What are you, what are you, what are you doing? Well, the theme is the glory of the gospel. Isn't the gospel a wonderful thing?

That it is the power of God unto salvation. He picked right up on that. You're right, he said. Let me tell you about the conversion of my father-in-law.

He accidentally shot and killed his seven-year-old daughter. And it was found to be an accident. I don't know the particulars of that.

[46:10] Didn't ask him. What he did tell me was that her last words to him, as he was holding her in his hands, daddy, you killed me.

Why? Talk about breakfast. Daddy, you killed me. Well, how do you deal with that in your life? When accident happens, how do you cope? He had no coping mechanism for that. He had no resources to deal with that problem in his life.

So you know what he did. He went to the bottle and he tried to drown out the voice of his daughter in alcohol. But every morning the voice was there, daddy, you killed me.

Every night, the silence of the night. Daddy, you killed me. Drove him mad. Twelve years, ruining his life, ruining his relationships. He didn't know Christ, you see.

[47:17] And one night he was at home listening to the radio and a local preacher was preaching the gospel and he heard of Christ and he put his trust in Christ and he became a new man in Christ.

joined to Christ by faith. Christ's death was his death to sin. Joined by faith to Christ.

Christ's resurrection to newness of life was his. He's a new man now, you see. He doesn't need alcohol. He has Christ. Christ. You say, well, John, I don't think in all my years I'm ever going to have a problem like that.

Don't be so sure. There were 30 some young people just going to university class. Didn't expect anything unordinary in the day who are in eternity today, who have parents and brothers and sisters grieving.

Suddenly, they're called upon to cope with reality that's so painful. What do you do in a day like that? Like Monday.

[48:28] And even if you could make it through this life without ever facing such a problem that would try you to the core, there is coming a day when you must take your last breath and die.

Oh, what it will be worth to know Christ in that day. To have Him take you by the hand and go down into the valley of the shadow of death with you and to bring you up on the other side.

Eternal life with Him. To know Christ in the day of your death. And there's a day coming after that.

At the moment that Christ returns, you're going to need to know Christ in that day too, aren't you? When you stand before your Maker and with the righteousness of His holy commandments. That's the standard of judgment. He opens the books. Now let's see what has John Heaney done with my laws.

Oh, to be found in Christ in that day. To know Christ. And to have a righteousness. His righteousness. Not a righteousness of my own through keeping the law, but a righteousness that is

by faith in Jesus Christ.

[49:37] Christ. What's it worth to have Christ as mine? To know Him and for Him to know me in that day. Do you know Christ? Do you know anything more than just about Him?

Do you have a relationship with Him? If not, my friend, come to Him today. Come to Him now. We who know Him are ashamed that we can't tell you better how good He is.

And if you know Him, press in closer, brother. Draw in closer, sister. Just a closer walk with Jesus. Get in close. And the more closely you examine Him, the more you love Him, the more you want to be like Him, the more you want to know Him.

We have not known Thee as we ought, nor learned Thy wisdom, power, and grace. The things of earth have filled our thought in trifles of the passing hour. Lord, give us light, Thy truth to see, and make us wise in knowing Thee.

The purpose of this service is to bring us to Jesus. Sir, we would see Jesus. Well, Jesus is here. Christ is here. Have dealings with Him. Personal dealings with Him.

[50:49] Let's pray silently. You go to Him. Pour out your heart to Him. For whatever your need is, come to this Savior. And then I'll close in prayer.

Living Lord, we want to bow in Your presence and acknowledge we who know You that that is our treasure, that there is nothing more valuable to us than knowing You.

Just a moment's thought shows us how poor we are without You, how unprepared for life, for death, for judgment we are without You. And we are amazed that You would want to know us and that You would give us the cross.

You're taking our punishment so that we could come to know You. And we do confess our sin, Lord, that often we have had our attention arrested, our affections turned aside to other things that we thought at the moment were more valuable than knowing You.

Forgive us for such vain thoughts, such foolish thoughts. And oh, draw us closer, Lord. And Lord, we are concerned for those who do not know You.

[52:07] would You show them their poverty, how poor they are, and show them that in knowing Christ they are rich. And we know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for our sake He became poor, that we through His poverty might become rich.

Please enrich many today, draw them by faith, to look and to live, to trust in Christ alone, to save them from their sins. Receive the praise then, and give us to know You better.

May not a week pass in our lives, Lord, but that we are pressing on to know You better. We ask in Jesus' name and for His glory's sake. Amen.