



# Lesson 9—Knowing Christ

*Philippians 3*

In order for the church to be healthy, it must be composed of healthy Christians. But in our churches and institutions there are many sickly Christians. **The light which the Lord has given me** is plainly expressed in the **third chapter of Philippians**. This chapter should be carefully read and studied. The lessons it contains should be practiced. (15LtMs, *Ms 24, 1900*, par. 29)

# Who was Paul?

1 Corinthians 11:13

Acts 22:1–11

Acts 5:27–42

Did the great apostle to the Gentiles make any real sacrifice when he exchanged Pharisaism for the gospel of Christ? We answer, No! With decided purpose he turned away from wealth and from friends and social distinction, from public honor, and from his kinsmen whom he loved fervently and earnestly. He chose to link his name and his destiny with that of a people he had regarded as low and the offscouring of all things; but for the sake of Christ he suffered the loss of all things. (4LtMs, *Lt 1, March 29, 1883*, par. 40); written to J. N. Andrews—who went to Europe 1874, died in Switzerland 10-21-1883)

His labors were more abundant than any of the disciples, his stripes above measure. He was beaten with rods, stoned, shipwrecked, in deaths oft. He was in peril by land and sea, in the city and in the wilderness, from robbers and from his own countrymen. He prosecuted his mission under continual infirmities, in painfulness, in weariness, in watchings often, in cold, in nakedness.

When he became Paul the aged, and the crown of martyrdom was to be his, he was left almost alone. When he answered the bloodthirsty Nero, no man stood with him, but all men forsook him, leaving him alone. But did

Paul devote his precious time to the relation of his grievous abuses? No, he called the attention from himself to Jesus. (Ibid., par. 41)

He did not live for his own happiness, yet he was happy. Amid all his conflicts, that which he felt the keenest were trials brought him in consequence of false brethren; yet he presents a cheerful front. "I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation." [2 Corinthians 7:4.] And in the last days of his life, with a martyr's death in full view, he exclaims with satisfaction: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." And fixing his eye upon the immortal future, which had been the grand, inspiring motive of his whole career, he adds, in full assurance of faith, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day"—and then this man who had lived for others forgets himself—"and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." [2 Timothy 4:7, 8.] Oh noble man of faith! (Ibid.)

Prominent among the Jewish leaders who became thoroughly aroused by the success attending the proclamation of the gospel, was Saul of Tarsus. A Roman citizen by birth, Saul was nevertheless a Jew by descent and had been educated in Jerusalem by the most eminent of the rabbis. "Of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin," Saul was "a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." Philippians 3:5, 6. He was regarded by the rabbis as a young man of great promise, and high hopes were cherished concerning him as an able and zealous defender of the ancient faith. His elevation to membership in the Sanhedrin council placed him in a position of power. (AA 112.1)

Paul says that “as touching the law”—as far as outward acts were concerned—he was “blameless,” but when the spiritual character of the law was discerned, when he looked into the holy mirror, he saw himself a sinner. Judged by a human standard, he had abstained from sin, but when he looked into the depths of God’s law, and saw himself as God saw him, he bowed in humiliation, and confessed his guilt. He did not go away from the mirror and forget what manner of man he was, but he exercised genuine repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. He was washed, he was cleansed. He says, “I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.” (6BC 1076.5)

In order for the church to be healthy, it must be composed of healthy Christians. But in our churches and institutions there are many sickly Christians. **The light which the Lord has given me** is plainly expressed in the **third chapter of Philippians**. This chapter should be carefully read and studied. The lessons it contains should be practiced. (15LtMs, *Ms 24, 1900*, par. 29)

The Lord has instructed me to present the following Scriptures to our physicians:

“Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk, and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. ... For this is the will of God, even your **sanctification**, that ye should abstain from fornication: that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor.” [1 Thessalonians 4:1, 3, 4.] (15LtMs, *Ms 24, 1900, par. 1*)

“As ye have therefore received the Lord Jesus, so walk ye in him, rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the **faith**, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. **Beware** lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”  
[Colossians 2–8.] (15LtMs, *Ms 24, 1900, par. 1*)

There are only two kingdoms in this world, the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of Satan. To one of these kingdoms each one of us must belong.

In His wonderful prayer for His disciples Christ said, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. **Sanctify** them through thy truth; thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." [John 17:1-18.] (Ibid., par. 26)

It is not God's will that we should seclude ourselves from the world. But while in the world we should sanctify ourselves to God. We should not pattern after the world. We are to be in the world as a corrective influence, as salt that retains its savor. Among an unholy, impure, idolatrous generation we are to be **pure and holy**, showing that the grace of Christ has power to restore in man the divine likeness. We are to exert a saving influence upon the world. (Ibid., par. 27)

“This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our **faith**.” [1 John 5:4.] The world has become a lazar house of sin, a mass of corruption. It knows not the children of God because it knows Him not. We are not to practice its ways or follow its customs. Continually we must resist its lax principles. Christ said to His followers, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” [Matthew 5:16.] It is the duty of physicians and nurses to shine as lights amid the corrupting influences of the world. They are to cherish principles which the world cannot tarnish.

(Ibid., par. 28)

In order for the church to be healthy, it must be composed of healthy Christians. But in our churches and institutions there are many sickly Christians. The light which the Lord has given me is plainly expressed in the third chapter of Philippians. This chapter should be carefully read and studied. The lessons it contains should be practiced. (Ibid., par. 29)

He who cooperates with the Great Physician will keep nerve, sinews, and muscles in the best condition of health. In order to do its work properly, the human machinery needs careful attention. The harmonious action of the different parts must be preserved. (Ibid., par. 30)

**So it is with the soul.** The heart is to be carefully watched and guarded. “What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” [Mark 8:36, 37.] Christ must abide in the heart by faith. His Word is the bread of life and the water of salvation. Truth in its fulness comes to us through constant communion with God. By eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ we gain spiritual strength. Christ supplies the lifeblood of the heart, and Christ and the Holy Spirit give nerve power. Begotten again unto a lively hope, imbued with the quickening power of a new nature, the soul is enabled to rise higher and still higher. (Ibid., par. 31)

Sin then appeared in its true hideousness, and his self-esteem was gone. He became humble. He no longer ascribed goodness and merit to himself. He ceased to think more highly of himself than he ought, and he ascribed all the glory to God. He was no longer ambitious for greatness. He ceased to want to avenge himself, and was no longer sensitive to reproach, neglect, or contempt. He no longer sought earthly alliance, station, or honor. He did not pull others down to uplift himself. He became gentle, condescending, meek and lowly of heart, because he had learned his lesson in the school of Christ. He talked of Jesus and His matchless love, and grew more and more into His image. He bent his whole energy to win souls to Christ. When trial came upon him because of his unselfish labor for souls, he bowed in prayer, and his love for them increased. His life was hid with Christ in God, and he loved Jesus with all the ardor of his nature. Every church was dear to him; every church member was a person of interest to him; for he looked upon every soul as the purchase of the blood of Christ (*The Review and Herald*, July 22, 1890). (6BC 1076.6)