

Seize Him Who Seizes You

April 6, 2025

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Philippians 3:8-14 ⁸ Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which *is* from the law, but that which *is* through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; ¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, ¹¹ if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. ¹² Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. ¹³ Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, ¹⁴ I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

How do you swing on the monkey bars? As an adult I don't. Even if I wanted to, my feet touch the ground, so it doesn't work. As a kid I remember starting on one side and swinging from one bar to the next. I remember the hesitation of letting go with one hand. But to get to the next bar you must let go of the one behind and reach for the one ahead.

Paul reminds us in our text today that we also must let go of everything behind and seize Christ. This is something we are often hesitant to do. The comforts of this life, and the things we are proud of can be hard to let go of. These things have no value to us and only serve to slow us down. In order to keep swinging ahead we have to let go of that which is behind and seize the promise that Christ has put ahead of us.

Seize Him Who Seizes You

Nothing in this world is worth holding on to compared to the riches of heaven, yet we have problems letting go. Christ has laid hold on us that we might not miss out on his riches.

Philippians 3:8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ

I count all things as rubbish compared to what I have in Christ Jesus

This isn't idle talk on the part of Saint Paul. He did indeed give everything up for Christ. Not only money and comfort but also prestige and the praise of men as well. He was an up-and-coming star among the Pharisees. He had a world class education.

Of course he didn't give this all up on his own. Jesus had to blind him and speak to him personally. Which is why Paul confess later that Christ Jesus "laid hold of me" or a better translation, "seized me." As Jesus reminds us

John 6:44 No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him

Unless the Father seizes him and pulls him no one will come to Jesus. Like Paul on our own we would be all too willing to hold on to the valuable things of this world, and would miss out on those things of heaven which are so much better. Paul says they are of surpassing excellence compared to the things of this world.

Like Paul Jesus has laid hold of us as well. He has seized us and drawn us often kicking and screaming away from the empty things of this world that we might experience instead the wonders of God.

Philippians 3:9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;

The source of our righteousness is not ourselves but Jesus Christ

My brother Jesse likes to drive to an Artesian well east of Fond Du Lac to get his drinking water. He says it tastes much better. Many bottled water companies advertise that their water comes straight from a spring or straight from a glacier. The source can make a big difference.

Here Paul reminds us of the source of our righteousness, where does our righteousness come from? It does not come from the law, it comes from Jesus, from the cross which the kids carried to the front today. If it comes from us, it is putrid and filthy. If it comes from Christ, it is pure and clean.

Not only is it important that we get our righteousness straight from the source it is also important that we do not mix it with anything. Even a little bit of contaminated water will contaminate the whole jug. There is no room to claim any deed that I have done. There is no room for any boasting or praise of myself. All our righteousness comes only from Jesus.

Hab 2:4 "Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; But the just shall live by his faith.

This too is something we need to let go of. We need to let go of the desire to brag about our deeds. We need to let go of the desire to claim we deserve anything from God. Let go of this belief that we are basically good people. Let go of any remnant of our own righteousness and cling only to Jesus. God is dragging us away from any boast about ourselves that he might give us the pure righteousness which is from Christ alone.

2Co 5:21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Philippians 3:10-11 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

The result of letting go of the things of this world and our own righteousness is that we "**know the power of his resurrection,**" and "**the fellowship of His sufferings.**" Again, not that we have any power to let go on our own, but that God dragged us away from those things.

What is this “power of his resurrection” that Paul speaks about here? This isn't some mystic power that we can use as we see fit. This isn't some inner glow that makes our lives an unending series of happy faces. The power of his resurrection is this: that our sins are washed away, and we are going to heaven. Just as the power of jet engine to lift off a runway, so the power of Christ's resurrection is to lift us out of our sin and present us to God without fault or blemish.

Romans 4:25 who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.

Rom 8:34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

1Pe 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

What do we experience when we let go of earthly things, and legal righteousness and cling only to Jesus? We experience justification, that is the removal of all guilt and all sin through Jesus Christ.

He suffered, he died, he rose from the dead. Through baptism we are united in his suffering, death and resurrection, so that they become ours and the result is that we receive the benefit, the forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

This is the fellowship of his suffering, that we are united with him in his suffering and death so that we are united with him also in his resurrection.