

Philippians 3:7-11 (New International Version 1984)

⁷ But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.

⁸ 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

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ 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,

¹¹ and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Good Morning First Baptist Members and Friends. Each week I find that I need to praise God some more. According to USA Today this is one of the worst flu seasons for the elderly. Those with other health issues, particular diabetes are at a very high risk. So I want to praise God that He has kept me through whatever this is I have. I am grateful that God saw fit to give me some more time and so I praise Him. Now I really don't know what you came to do this morning, but I came to praise the Lord. If you came to praise Him feel free to make some noise.

As this is 3rd Sunday and all of our youth are in the sanctuary would you allow me to make my teaching points as simply as I know how in order that they –the youth - may have a Word from the Lord to sustain them in the coming week.

This morning we continue with our study of Paul's letter to the church at Philippi. The editors of the David C. Cook Sunday school lessons have suggested that the purpose of the first 11 verses of the 3rd chapter is to help us recognize the value of knowing the Messiah as Lord. Paul presents his case by telling his story – his testimony – the way he came to know and love the Lord. He tells the people about his past. He tells them about his present and finally in v10 he shares with them his desires for the future. Listen to the passage again from The Message.

7-9 The very credentials these people are waving around as something special, I'm tearing up and throwing out with the trash—along with everything else I used to take credit for. And why? Because of Christ. Yes, all the things I once thought were so important are gone from my life. Compared to the high privilege of knowing Christ Jesus as my Master, firsthand, everything I once thought I had going for me is insignificant—dog dung. I've dumped it all in the trash so that I could embrace Christ and be embraced by him. I didn't want some petty, inferior brand of righteousness that comes from keeping a list of rules when I could get the robust kind that comes from trusting Christ—God's righteousness.

10-11 I gave up all that inferior stuff so I could know Christ personally, experience his resurrection power, be a partner in his suffering, and go all the way with him to death itself. If there was any way to get in on the resurrection from the dead, I wanted to do it.

I invite you to pray with me and for me as I ask:

WILL YOUR LIFE MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR ANYONE ELSE?

What Paul is sharing with the church is what every Christian ought to be able to share. We ought to be able to tell someone who we use to be; who we are trying to be and what we hope to be.

Now, I can imagine that for some of you this sounds a bit boring. Why should I keep telling somebody the same thing? Why should I keep listening to somebody tell the same old story? How will all this telling and listening change anything?

You may not believe me now, but there will come a time when you will begin to understand the importance of history – that is what your past is – your personal history. There will come a time when you will want to share what is happening in your life right now – your present. And if you continue on this journey with Christ you will reach a point when you want to tell everybody about your plans for the future – your plans to be with Jesus for all eternity.

We all have a past, a present and a future. But what you need to remember is that how you live you past and your present will determine your future.

As many of you know my undergraduate degree, my college major was history. I loved studying the past, teaching the past and learning how to use the past to predict the future. All of my parents' early life was history and understanding it helped me to understand them. (Depression Era – keep everything, eat all the pig, save \$ at home cause the banks will fail – trust nobody)

The life you are living right now will one day be history for someone else. The life you are living right now might one day help someone else live his or her life better. The life you are living right now might one day make a difference for someone else.

On this Sunday called King Sunday and on this Sunday before the inauguration of Barack Obama for his second term of office we need to pause and think about our own personal history.

I want to ask you three questions that will help you answered the big question:

WILL YOU LIFE MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR ANYONE ELSE?

Questions I hope you will consider this week and for the rest of your lives.

1. What have you given up that you might know and follow Christ?
2. What is the story you have to tell about your relationship with the Savior?
3. What can people see in you that will help them to be better?

MLK Jr was the great grandson, grandson, son, brother and nephew of ministers. His goal was to follow in their footsteps. He sought to be well educated, well informed and to make a difference in the lives of black folks in the south. That was his past. In his present he became a leader and a model for non-violence civil disobedience.

In the official recommendation for the Nobel Peace Prize you will find these words:

'the first person in the Western world to have shown us that a struggle can be waged without violence. He is the first to make the message of brotherly love a reality in the course of his struggle, and he has brought this message to all men, to all nations and races'¹

Although MLK's life is over his future still lives in us.

Every time we register to vote and vote

Every time we have the same opportunity for education

Every time we can live, shop, eat and go wherever our money will take us. It is because of MLK and his dream, his work, his past and his present.

The fact that there is a black family in the White House and the fact that that family is Christian is part of the legacy of MLK.

Tomorrow before you go to celebrate your day off from school and perhaps work take 5 minutes and ask yourself

WILL YOU LIFE MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR ANYONE ELSE?

¹ nobel prize.org

1. What have you given up that you might know and follow Christ?
2. What is the story you have to tell about your relationship with the Savior?
3. What can people see in you that will help them to be better.

BENEDICTION

²³ May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

²⁸ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. (1 Thess 5:23, 28)