

October 08, 2017

# Pastoral Notes

Reverend Dr. Brigitte A. Black

## Ministry of Encouragement

### That I May Know Him

#### Philippians 3:4-14

Information is readily available with the click of a button or even asking Alexa or Cortana. You can get information about your favorite person, historical facts, astronomy questions, weather, climate, politics, economics and just about everything you ever wanted to know. Your computer or phone has become an electronic encyclopedia. If you are romantically interested in someone you can do a background check, check out dating sites, or just type in their name and see what comes up. Yet, electronics does not replace the old fashion way of getting to know someone by spending time with them. Paul, the author of Philippians, a missionary, and crusader for Jesus Christ desires to know Jesus on a more personal level. Paul wants to move the relationship beyond what he has heard about Jesus to what he experiences. Our experiences are real and helpful in getting to know a person. Beware if your first impression is danger, danger do not shrug it off, that is real. Let's see what our text can teach us.

There was a group called the Judaizers who competed with Christianity for the attention of Christians. The Judaizers were Jewish Christians that taught one had to be circumcised and grace must be earned to be saved. Grace was not a free gift from a loving God for them. Paul is countering that teaching. He begins by giving his autobiography of what he could have been confident in. Paul had an experiential encounter with Jesus on the Damascus road on his way to rounding up and killing Christians. Paul was no longer confident in birth rights and chosen privileges. All of what had been given to Paul by birth, a full blooded Jew, circumcised on the eighth day, of the tribe of Benjamin, and son of Hebrew parents and the privilege he chose to be a very good Pharisee, a persecutor of the church, and extremely flawless in legalistic righteousness was nothing. To gain a relationship with Jesus those things counted as nothing. All that he had had confidence in was nothing, loss. He had a personal experience that taught him about the love, grace, and mercy of Jesus Christ. He desired to know Jesus even more intimately in the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his suffering. The power of Jesus resurrection enables our ministry to reach the lost and overcome all the power of the enemy. The fellowship of his suffering is suffering for righteousness sake. Not suffering because of our own wrong doing.

Therefore, Paul speaks his goals and ambitions so the Philippians we see this as a worthy example. Paul had not attained this but was striving, reaching towards these lofty goals and ambition. Paul was pressing towards the mark, forgetting those things which were behind and reaching forward. His goal was to have a more intimate relationship with Jesus. Not just to know of him or about him, but to know him and to be known by Jesus.

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## Prayer

Mighty and magnificent God, we praise You. We adore and extol You. Thank you for Your dazzling display of artistry in the fall colors. We worship You in the beauty of holiness. You are the God of grace and the God of glory, heal your children's warring madness. Comfort the families of the deceased and wounded in the Las Vegas mass murder. Teach us that war, killing, murder is not the answer to our problems. May we come to know that Jesus, love, and peace is the answer. You are not a God of war but the God of love and peace. Comfort those who are grieving, mourning and bereaved. Protect our children and grant our leaders wisdom in governing. This we pray in Jesus name. Amen!

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## Stewardship Moment

***10 Remember this: Whoever Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it. 11 I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit," says the LORD Almighty.***

***Malachi 3:10-11 NIV***

Christian stewardship and tithing is more about love than obeying the law. When God sees that you can be trusted, God will invest in you. God will sow into your life and will not let the enemy take advantage of you. God promises to defend the finances of the tither. The desire of the enemy is to sift you like wheat, to steal, kill, and destroy your faith in God. The enemy wants to take your praise and testimony. Your praise ushers you into the presence of God. God lives in the praise of the people. Your praise affirms the wondrous works of God in your life and how much you appreciate God working in your life. Praise is a weapon of your warfare. You will defeat the enemy with your testimony and praise. Tithing says you trust God with your finances and you believe God will pour out blessings that you will not have room enough to receive. We give generously because we are loved by God generously. God so loved us, that He gave Jesus Christ to pay for our sins by death on a cross. Loving and giving are matters of the heart.

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## Sermon Scripture

**[Philippians 3:4-14](#)**

### No Confidence in the Flesh

***4*** "though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: ***5*** circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; ***6*** as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless. ***7*** But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. ***8*** What is more, I consider

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everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup> and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in[a] Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. <sup>10</sup> I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, <sup>11</sup> and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead. <sup>12</sup> Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. <sup>13</sup> Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, <sup>14</sup> I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.