**The Surpassing Worth of Knowing Christ**

**The Word**

Read together Philippians 1:1-11

**The Big Idea**

In this passage, Paul calls us out of a life of religion where we put our confidence in our own achievements and accomplishments and invites us into the gospel where we simply put our trust in what Jesus has done for us.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. Sunday’s message began with a basic question: “Where’s your confidence? What do you bank on when it comes to feeling that you are right with God?” We looked at some of the things Paul looked to in his former life of religious Judaism, and we mentioned what some modern equivalents might be (e.g. born into Christian family, baptized, go to church, pray the prayer, read Bible, serve, etc.). What do you tend to put your confidence in apart from Jesus?

2. Sunday’s message dealt with a gospel that is very familiar to many of us. As you heard the message on Sunday, what was fresh for you? What helped you hear the gospel in a new or fresh way?

3. To those burdened with a life of religion, Jesus offers this gracious invitation: “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light (Matthew 11:28-30).” What would it look like for you to receive that invitation this week?

**Digging Deeper: Sermon Outline**

I. Introduction

A. Where is your confidence? What do you lean on, what are you banking on, when it comes to thinking things are right between you and God?

B. The “Judaizers” (v. 2) were Jews who may have actually believed that Jesus was the Messiah but who pressured people to put their confidence in their abilities to observe God’s law (circumcision, kosher food, religious rites and days, etc.) as a way of being made right with God.

C. Today, when it comes to whether they think they are going to heaven or not, most people put their confidence in the fact that they are basically a good person and the good of their lives outweighs the bad.

D. The Gospel: Paul invites us into a very different way of seeing the world. Even though many of us are familiar with the gospel, we need to be reminded again and again (see v. 1).

II. Paul’s former life of religion (v. 4-6)

A. He lists 7 things (7 “works of the flesh”) that gave him great confidence in his relationship with God.

B. When he considered the scale of good verses bad (or the accounting sheet of gains and losses), he thought the scale was overwhelmingly in his favor .

C. A modern equivalent of his list might go as follows: Born into Christian family, baptized, grew up going to church, prayed the prayer, read Bible, pray, serve, give $

III. Paul’s new way of thinking now that he’s encountered Jesus (v. 7-8)

A. On the road to Damascus, Jesus knocked Paul down to the ground and showed him how blind he actually was to the truth.

B. All those “gains” are actually one big “loss” next to gaining Christ

1. Those gains don’t compare to Christ

2. Those “gains” actually prevented him from putting his confidence in Christ.

IV. The gospel (v. 9)

A. Religion: We can be found alone and try to produce a righteousness from within ourselves by faithfully obeying all of God’s laws.

1. The problem with this way of life is we can never achieve it. God’s standard is his own perfection.

2. Analogy: it would be like trying to run and jump off the Newport Pier and land on Catalina Island. Some might jump farther than others, but we all fall short.

B. Gospel: Or we can be found in Christ and receive his righteousness that comes as a free gift from God simply through faith/trusting in what Jesus did for us

1. We receive an “alien righteousness” that doesn’t come from ourselves—Martin Luther

2. 2 Corinthians 5:21: “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

3. Romans 4:4-5: “Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation.However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.”

-You can try to work in a way that puts God in your debt so that he owes you his acceptance, or you can stop working and simply trust that he’s the kind of God who takes broken sinful people and credits them with righteousness through faith.

C. With religion, we can keep our pride and self assurance, but we lose freedom and joy. With the gospel we have to lose our pride and self assurance, but we gain freedom, joy, and salvation.

V. Now that he has found Jesus, Paul just wants more of Jesus (v. 10)

When knowing Jesus means power, he’ll take the power. When knowing Jesus means suffering, he’ll take the suffering.