

COUNTING ALL THINGS LOSS ON ACCOUNT OF CHRIST

Scripture Reading: Phil. 3:7-8

THE HEART OF PHILIPPIANS

When we come to these verses, we come to the heart of this book. Here we are initiated into the experience of Christ. Paul speaks of "what things were gains to me." (v.7) The things that were gains to him (vv.5-6) Paul counted loss on account of Christ. All the different gains of Moses' law were counted as one loss by Paul because they all issued in one thing, that is, the loss of Christ, as indicated by "on account of Christ." All the things which were once gains to Paul hindered him and held him back from participating in Christ and enjoying Him. Hence, on account of Christ, all the gains were a loss to him. Whereas in verse 7 Paul refers specifically to religious things, he goes on to say, "I count also all things to be loss." (v.8) Paul counted as loss on account of Christ not only the things of his former religion, but all other things as well.

RELIGION, PHILOSOPHY, AND CULTURE

Paul's concept is not mainly related to material things. It is true, of course, that worldly, material things occupy people and keep them from experiencing Christ. However, Paul realized that the things which truly frustrate people from experiencing Christ are mainly the things of religion, philosophy, and culture. For the most part, the thoughtful, philosophical people are not occupied by material things. Those who are more philosophical care for religion, culture, and philosophy. Before Paul was converted, he was not one who loved material things. On the contrary, he was a person fully given to Jewish religion, philosophy, and culture. Apparently Jews care for their religion. Actually they care much more for their culture and philosophy than for religion. The same is true, of course, for people of every race, culture, and nationality. The items covered by Paul in verses 5 and 6 are related to religion, philosophy, and culture. This is a strong indication that as Paul was writing these verses he was conscious not of material things, but rather of religious, philosophical, and cultural things.

For thousands of years, Satan, the enemy of God, has been using religion, philosophy, and culture to possess people and to keep them from experiencing Christ. Man was made for Christ. But Satan uses religion, philosophy, and culture to hook people and to keep them from Christ. Although the more simple people may be hooked by material things, the more thoughtful ones are hooked by religion, philosophy, and culture. To people like Saul of Tarsus, wealth or material things mean nothing compared with their religion, philosophy, and culture. If we get into Paul's spirit and thought in Philippians 3, we shall realize that as he was writing he was thinking of religion, philosophy, and culture when he spoke of "all things." The "all things" in verse 8 must certainly include the three categories of religious things, philosophical things, and cultural things. Those who love the Lord may easily abandon material things for His sake. But it is not easy for them to lay aside their particular thought and logic. You may love the Lord and seek Him for years without dropping one bit of your personal philosophy or logic.

NATIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND DOMESTIC LOGIC

Every nationality and culture has its particular type of logic and philosophy. Every nationality is strong in its particular kind of cultural peculiarity. As a result of all the different kinds of logic and philosophy, Christ does not have a way with any group of

people on earth today. He does not have a way either with those in the Orient or with those in the West. We repeat, there is not one group of people on earth with whom Christ has been able to fully have His way. People of every nationality have been taken over by Satan and hooked by him through religion, philosophy, and culture. It has been difficult for the Lord to find any group of people available to Him for His move on earth. It is important for us all to realize that we still hold on to our national philosophy and domestic logic. Those from one part of the country hold to their logic, and those from another region cling to their philosophy. Holding to our domestic logic and national philosophy deprives us of Christ. In every part of the world, the national philosophy and the domestic logic are so strong that there is little ground **in the believers** for Christ. For the most part, people are willing to accept God's salvation for their personal benefit, but they are not willing to give full ground to Christ. In a sense, they receive salvation, but, experientially speaking, they may not receive Christ and allow Him to have a free way in them. The cause of this problem is religion, philosophy, and culture.

Paul was very concerned about the matters of religion, philosophy, and culture. His word about the dogs, the evil workers, and the concision in verse 2 confirms this. The concision, a contemptuous term for circumcision, is a matter not only related to religion, but is a matter especially related to Jewish culture. Then he goes on to give the reasons he once had for confidence in the flesh, listing seven items related to Jewish religion, philosophy, and culture. These are the very things Paul counted as loss on account of Christ. Do you know why he counted them loss? It is because they were all substitutes for Christ.

Oh, the subtlety of the enemy needs to be exposed! To some extent at least, we still have within us certain things which are a substitute for Christ in a subtle, secret way. These substitutes mainly involve religion, philosophy, and culture. As a result, we still are not fully and thoroughly occupied by Christ. We have not yet counted all things loss on account of Christ. Many of us have known 3:7 and 8 for years, and we are very familiar with these verses. However, we probably have not touched the depths of this part of chapter three. Without this, we cannot be initiated into the genuine experience of Christ. The reason for this lack of experience is that, until now, we have not probed into the depths of Paul's thought in this portion of the Word. We cannot experience Christ if we only drop the worldly, material things. If this is our understanding of "all things" in 3:8, we are far from the experience of Christ revealed here.

A PRACTICAL WORD

By the Lord's mercy and grace, may we learn to say that on account of Christ we count as loss our national philosophy and domestic logic, realizing that these things are a substitute for Christ and keep us from the deeper experience of Christ. We must confess that we are still hindered by this subtle substitute for Christ, that Satan is still using our national philosophy and domestic logic to hook us, to occupy us, and to keep us from going further and deeper in the experience of Christ. May the enemy's subtlety be exposed and may we truly count all things loss, including our own philosophy and logic, on account of Christ and the experience and enjoyment of Him!