Daily Devotion #169

**Knowing Jesus**

**Philippians 3:10 (NASB)** *“ That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death*.”

This life is surrounded by pain and suffering. Just a quick look at the news will tell anyone that. And there is no greater hurt than when you are personally affected or someone you know is personally affected. Not that we don’t care or feel for those who have had great losses, but it is not the same until it hits you personally.

Paul was someone who understood the pain this life brings. And sadly, it was from people who should have known better. The very ones who professed to be followers of God were the very ones who mistreated him the most.

That stands to reason because those who hear the good news of the Gospel, without having any knowledge of God, often will be attentive to the message. But unfortunately, it is those people who have had exposure to the Scriptures, but don’t see it modeled in other believers, who fall away and become the greatest hindrances to those who follow the truth. And one of the fundamental differences in these people is that those who profess to know Christ, really don’t know Him. Because if they did know Him and His love, they would never turn away from Him.

When Paul wrote these words to the church in Philippi, he had been through great struggles as a direct result of his faith. He had been greatly taken advantage of physically and in other ways. But the more Paul struggled and suffered at the hands of others, the more he learned about Christ. His suffering gave him a greater appreciation for the suffering Christ endured for him. That’s why he could write these words, **Philippians 3:7-8 (NASB)**  *“But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ*.”

Paul has so learned that this life is diametrically opposed to the life with Christ that nothing had the same value. So the more he let this world go, the more he knew Christ. Paul knew that true life begins with knowing Jesus and what He suffered for our sakes.

You see beloved, the joy of knowing Christ is to understand that Christ knows the suffering we face. Jesus lived a life of suffering. Not that each day was suffering, but ultimately, He came to be rejected and suffer so that those who put their hope and trust in Him will be freed from the pain of this life. And Paul wanted to know more and more about Jesus’s suffering because he knew that whatever he suffered, Jesus suffered more and could understand all the suffering Paul was enduring.

You may think there is no one who understands your pain. You make think there is no one who could possibly help you in your times of agony. But that is not true. Jesus knows. He knows what it means to be rejected by others. He knows what it means to be left out because of your stance for righteousness. He knows what it feels like when others don’t want you around or don’t understand you. He knows what it feels like when someone you love is mistreated or injured or sick. Whatever is causing you pain in this life because you follow Him, He knows. He has been there.

Suffering is part of this life of sin. But to suffer for Christ and to know Him intimately is far different than suffering because you live in a cursed world. To know Him and be in fellowship with His sufferings for righteousness is something that we too should long for. Just like Paul. Because that is where we see Jesus the clearest. That’s where we know Him or will get to know Him the best.

It’s becoming more difficult to stand for truth and righteousness in our day. But when we do, we have the promise that we will be blessed, and we have the promise that we will come to know Jesus in a way we never dreamed possible.