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The Naz Prayer Ministry



Knowing Christ

“If it feels good, go for it.”

Those few words may be the ultimate motto for life in our current culture. We have come to believe that if life hands us anything other than personal pleasure and contentment, we need to find a good lawyer, because we will feel good again if somebody is made to pay for the inconvenience of our unpleasantness.

With that as a backdrop, Philippians 3:10 must sound like the mysterious mumblings of madness.

I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead. I want to suffer with him, sharing in his death (NLT).

The Apostle Paul is simply bearing the passion of his heart “to know Christ.” Of course, Paul already had a rather jolting introduction to Christ on the Damascus Road. And in Galatians 1, Paul recounts his experience of spending three years in Arabia, during which the Spirit of Christ turned on the light of truth in his heart, reframing what he thought he already knew. But obviously these words reflect something deeper.

His opening thought about connecting with power appeals to our natural fascination with miracles and healings and signs and wonders. But we are a bit taken back when Paul abruptly shifts to suffering and death.

The reason we scratch our heads is our failure to grasp the implications of the first few words about power. Paul is not referring to power for multiplying loaves of bread and a few fish or even making lame people walk again, although the same power that raised Christ from the dead may indeed be evidenced through us in other ways. Paul is talking, however, about power to face suffering and death and do so triumphantly. The power of resurrection is by definition linked to the subject of death.

When Paul says he wants to suffer with Christ and even share His death, he is not focused on whips and nails and hanging on a cross. Paul’s passion goes far beyond the mere physical suffering of Christ.

Even before the betrayal, the trial, the scourging and the cross, we encounter the suffering Christ as He looks over the city of Jerusalem and cries out “How often I have wanted to gather your children together as a hen protects her chicks beneath her wings, but you wouldn’t let me” (Luke 13:34).

In the Suffering Servant, we encounter the Christ who in John 1:10-11 was described as the Light that came into the world and then was rejected. To know Him more fully is to share more fully His redemptive purpose, but we cannot escape Jesus’ words in John 15:20 that because He was persecuted, we will be as well.

Yet sharing His suffering and conforming to His death is not merely about suffering for our faith. It is a call for our hearts to be broken by what breaks His heart. We are to share the suffering of Christ for a world that turns aside and stumbles on, blind to Light and deaf to Truth.

In the intimacy of prayer He discloses to us His passion. We listen and are changed.

Taking Our Next Step Together

*“Change My Heart Oh God. Make it ever true.
Change my heart Oh God. May I be like You.”*

(Lyrics and music by Eddie Espinosa)