

133 – Count it all as Refuse That I May Gain Christ

Sunday night I was speaking with Laura about some planning regarding my move. The conversation became a challenging, heart rending, soul purifying occasion, as I needed strong reproof in some areas. That night I awoke from sleep at around 2:00am. I was reflecting on our conversation, and as I did so, scriptures were coming to me. Finally it dawned on me that I should write all this down. So the material that follows is from that evening and some further study. Various verses applicable to my situation were evident, and I believe that these will help the ecclesia as well, as they are bedrock concepts that God wants us all to embrace if we have not already.

Lets start in:

Mark 8:34-38 – He calls the throng to Him. If anyone is wanting to come after Me, let him **renounce** himself and pick up his cross and follow me.

I had heard that there are two Greek words for renounce so I looked this up:

Parneomi: “unlamb”, disown, deny, contradict, renounce. The word is used in **Luke 9:23**: Peter disowned knowing Jesus. **“I don’t know the man.” (Mark 14:68)** Moses disowned the term **“son of Pharoah” (Heb. 11:26)**

Aparneomi is the word in **Mk. 8:34**, and is a strengthened form of parneomi, which means to *disown utterly, to abjure, to affirm that one has no connection with a person.* It is used in by Jesus in **Luke 12:9** **“Now he who is disowning Me before men will be renounced before the messengers of God.”** What a terrifying thought to be renounced by God before the angels!

I realized I must affirm to have no connection with the person David! I do not know the old man! That is my only hope! My only hope to walk with God and Jesus is to utterly disown myself, and my desires, my expectations, my dreams, my wish list.

For, he who **“may be wanting to save his soul will be destroying (lose) it, yet whosoever shall be destroying his soul on account of me and the evangel will be saving it.”**

Strong words from our Savior!

What else did Jesus say related to this losing of self:

Matthew 10:34-39 – *He who is fond of father or mother, or son or daughter, or wife, or friends above Me...is not worthy of Me.*

God will order our relationships. He is the master builder.

Luke 14:25-27 I looked up *hate* in the Word, and it is the same word used for hate in many other contexts. Laura and I were talking about our relationship as husband and wife, and that we can love God so much more that in comparison to our love for each other it might be looked on as hate. As we are given wholly unto God, we can be in a right relationship with each other. Laura has been a great model of this to me of loving God more than me or anyone else.

We are to be so aligned with God, disowning our own will and interests “***Not my will but thine be done***” is our foolproof preoccupation. God this is your child, your spouse, your relationship. You build it, shape it, form it the way you want as the master potter. We are the clay.

This may not look anything like we thought it would. Actually, it will be MUCH BETTER, USEFUL, PERFECTED, PROTECTED, an earthenware vessel useful to the master.

God, these are all yours....my goodness, dreams, Biblical understanding, aspirations, material goods, money, time, family (let the dead bury their own dead), role in life, health, purpose, security, where I live - are all yours!

Awhile back I asked God to have a relationship with Him like Laura has, not really knowing what I was saying. Little did I know what that request would lead to. He will bring us to our knees in love so He becomes our ALL in ALL. He will help us His Way, not ours (**Isaiah 55:8-9**).

Paul had this attitude of renouncing all, utterly disowning himself and destroying his life. I had recently been studying **Philippians 3**, and this seemed to fit as I continued to write my notes that night.

Let's see how he viewed his life, and particularly his past.

Phil. 3:7-10 – He lists off his resume (**vs 4-6**) and then in **vs 7**...

Whatever was to his *gain* (Greek word means to lead, count, esteem, judge, suppose, think) he counts as...

“forfeit” (Greek = “fine”, lost as a penalty,the ship was lost (**Acts 27:10,21**); **damage**, loss, lose, receive damage, suffer loss (with special reference to the things in his pedigree he already mentioned)

DAMAGE! LOSS! Like your car gets damaged in an accident, our past has damaged us. These things damaged his life! He, and we choose them, but they damage us. Our past is not just neutral encounters or choices.

They were gain to him at one point but now they are LOSS!

*3 times in these two verses he uses **FORFEIT**. I think maybe he is trying to make a point!*

He goes on to say “And deeming it to be **refuse** that I may be gaining Christ and be found in Him....”

It struck me, that to be gaining Christ, I must count my past as refuse!!!

Refuse = (Greek = “*dung, excrement which is cast out from the body*” or the leavings (scraps) of a feast that which is thrown away from the table...some connected this to throwing it to the dogs). Imagine me trying to pack some in a suitcase to take with me to my new home. How ridiculous and repulsive that would be! Or carry it in a purse with you?

NOOOOOOO! We flush this stuff away! We don't value it, or pine for it! Paul saw his past as damaging, as loss, as dung!

Here's where he was:

3:2-3 Beware of the curs (Greek – “teemer”) (in the east they had wild dogs that were savage)

Watch out for the evil workers! EVIL – legalism, works, striving, law righteousness!
EVIL!

2 Corinthians 3:6 – The letter KILLS, but the SPIRIT is VIVIFYING

They are the true circumcision and are glorying in Christ Jesus and “*have **no confidence in the flesh***”. God was teaching him a new, glorious way where he could put absolutely no confidence in his works, goodness, accomplishments, victories or blessings. So his boasting would be in Christ Jesus and not in the flesh. Isn’t that what God is doing with all of us right now? May we not fight him, or complain, or give up!

This showed me that my legalism, works, striving is evil! It Kills!

His great pedigree meant nothing to God! It was a loss, a negative, a deterrent. He was from the who’s who of family lines, a Pharisee, becoming blameless in the law.

So he connects counting the past as refuse with the knowledge of Christ. You can’t have one without the other. It makes sense. As we jettison the chains of our past, we are light afoot to move forward in Christ. (Lay aside every weight and sin that so easily entangles **Heb. 12:1-2**). If we are not moving forward, then we haven’t throw the past overboard. We can’t cherish the past and move forward.

It has helped me at times this week to think, “Oh that thought is just refuse, from my past. Bye! Begone!”

Then he speaks of our righteousness. I get so much encouragement to realize that it is not my righteousness that matters at all, as it is all HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS, a RIGHTEOUSNESS of the FAITH OF JESUS! Jesus had all the faith we need to be righteous! Praise God as my faith is imperfect. I love **1 Cor. 1:30** where it says that Jesus “***became to us wisdom from God, besides righteousness and holiness and deliverance***”

God told me, that he wanted to “***strip off all this unrighteous righteousness***” from my life!

Tom added that what is being said is that we have NO RIGHTEOUSNESS of our own. It is all out of God. We can bring no righteousness to God.

Phil. 3:10-15 he continues:

- To know the power of His resurrection
- The fellowship of his sufferings (there it is again, from our study last week regarding pursuing suffering)
- Conforming to his death “I die daily”
- Yet I am pursuing (“chasing” from last weeks study)...to grasp hold of Jesus who grasped hold of us (I see him grabbing us by the shirt, not violently but firmly and lovingly holding onto us)
- Tom: this was the unique grasping that God did with Paul, knocked him off his horse, blinded him....told him how much he would suffer for Jesus’ name
- Then a real key: **ONE THING - Forgetting what lies behind - forgetting** (Greek “*be-on-oblivious*”). The disciples forgot to bring bread (**Lk 12:6**). God won’t forget your work and love shown to his saints (**Heb. 6:10**)
- Tom: the only thing that matters, only thing that has any positive results, only thing that gives meaning, is our giving our selves wholly to God, pursuing the prize of God’s calling above in Christ Jesus.

Paul was utterly disowning his life, denying himself to be able to see the glory of Christ.

As I was writing down the verses that night, a series of verses came to mind about Jesus and his full reliance on God and not himself. I can’t live in my old humanity and live in Christ. My allegiance must change, to total giving of my mind, heart, actions, obedience to Him, just as Jesus did. We disown ourselves and let the will of God take over, to fill us up, and guide us.

Laura and I had talked about not saying anything that was not of God, of letting the Spirit guide and lead my life. I haven’t always done this as many know, but am guided by these verses. This is seen in the following verses:

John 5:19-20 – Jesus did not do anything of Himself, but only what He observed the Father doing. God was showing Him what to do because He was fond of the Son.

That may have been the most encouraging line in *The Shack*, “*Oh, I am extremely fond of that one,*” God kept saying of various characters in the book.

John 5:30 – *I cannot do anything of Myself.* What He was hearing he was judging....why? Because he wasn't about His own will but God's.

John 8:29-30 – From myself I am doing nothing but according *as My Father teaches Me*, these things I am speaking.

John 14:10 – The declarations which I am speaking to you *I am not speaking from Myself.* Now the Father, remaining in Me, He is doing His works.

John 14:24 – And the *word which you are hearing is not Mine*, but the Father's Who sends me.

John 14:31 – But the world may know that I am living the Father, and *according as the Father directs Me, thus I am doing...*

Tom: The Garden which Jesus would soon be entering after these words in John, was the first time Jesus would be all on his own, without the guidance of God as seen in the previous verses. It was Jesus' will or the Father's...no new direction was coming to Jesus at that time.

I want to be like Jesus, to follow Him. Let him guide me in:

- What is right and wrong
- Righteousness, where it comes from
- Financial security
- Expectations in relationships
- Job
- Guilt, accusations in thought
- What God's character is really like
- Thoughts for the future
- What God highly values and what He despises
- What to do next
- What discipline I need in my life

- What to say to others

James 1:19-20 – swift to hear, tardy to speak, tardy to anger

Do my words glorify God right now? Think of that in every situation.

Proverbs 10:19 – In the multiplying of words, transgression does not halt, Yet he who keeps back his lips is intelligent

This is great FREEDOM, surrendering our will, heart, tongue, actions to God:

John 8:31-32, 36

Tom – **John 8:31** – “...*My Word*” both have articles in front of them. Not just *any* word being given here, but **THE WORD**....from God, the only words that matter. God is so much better at being God than us.

Matthew 11:28-29 – What freedom, joy, release! But there is only one way to get there – death, utterly disown ourselves ***Come to me ALL who are...***

I have felt trouble, turmoil, and at times have been fighting God. **Those broken by their sin and lives will come to HIM!!!!**

Toil = (Greek = strike”, labor excessively, the result of toil) STRIVING!!!

Striving but not getting anywhere.....not changing, not seeing the victories

Laden = (Greek = heap, load) Like loading a ship (**Acts 27:10**). Pharisees put loads on people (**Mt:23:4**) Teachers of the law did too (**Lk: 11:46-47**)

Rest = (up-*cease*) rest persons, sooth feelings – given through Jesus)

Rest, ease, peace, quiet

Lift my yoke on you – I must do this, no one can for me. His fits perfectly. When I put my own yoke on it gouges my neck or leads me into the ditch. You can't look back with a yoke on either.

Learn from Me (Greek = learn up, acquire knowledge by study, observation, inquiry)

Meek – (Greek – mildly submissive)

See Vines Dictionary P. 737-738)...does not struggle against God, accepts his dealings with us as good....

Humble – (Greek – low, below the normal level) God exalts the humble (**Luke 1:52**)
Gives grace to the humble (**James. 4:6**)

When we come to Him rightly, He is not nasty, harsh, condescending or impatient, but welcoming, affectionate, understanding, gracious, up building.

Kindly – (Greek – “use”, agreeable to the senses) God’s kindness (**Rom. 2:4**) “Taste that the Lord is kind” (**I Peter 2:3**)

Tom: the kindness of God is at times ruthless, to help our lives, as we have seen in the strong words God has been delivering lately.

Light – (Greek – of slight weight, not heavy)

What an encouraging passage!! If I will just lay my life down, I will be in Jesus loving arms, and he will give me rest!

As we put his yoke on, disown our lives, renounce them into His hands, forget the past (be-on-oblivious), God can rebuild us. He fills in the brokenness.

Choose Life or Death! It is my choice. Actually we choose Death to have life! God will bless this choice!