

Text: Philippians 3:4-14

Theme: Lost Garbage, Gain Christ

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

My dear beloved flock, the text for our meditation this morning is the Epistle lesson of Saint Paul to the church in Philippi, the third chapter, verses four through fourteen.

Boys and girls, I pray that you are doing well today. What kind of things do you place your trust and confidence into? Moms and dads can be pretty trusting that they will provide you with food and drink. Maybe we place our trust in the validation of those around you, your friends and what they think of you. Maybe we trust that our favorite toy will always work. Getting an A+ on a test is certainly something that we can trust will help our grades. Saint Paul calls everything rubbish apart from Christ. Where does rubbish go? It goes in the trash can! Why does Saint Paul say this? How can we value Christ above all else? Ponder these questions as you hear the rest of the sermon. You may go back to your seats and those who love you.

What things do you have confidence in?

What gives you confidence in your life? There are many things that we can have confidence in. We can have confidence in our family, being the best husband or wife and being faithful, having the best-behaved children. We can have confidence in our work, that we are using our skills and talents for their best

use. We can have confidence in our money, always making sure that we have enough to pay our bills, and put food on the table. Thinking that because I have a faithful wife, or a lot of money, or have a lot of honor and fame, then I am saved. My friends think well of me. I used my smarts and got an A on the test, I am good! Because of our sinful nature, many times we have an over confidence in the things of this world, that they will get us salvation. We fall into the trap of thinking that they of more value than anything, even Christ.

Paul knew a thing or two about placing confidence and trust in worldly things, like status, money, and heritage, what he refers to as the confidence of the flesh. 'If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵ circumcised on the eighth day (a sign of the Abrahamic covenant carried out by faithful Jewish Parents) , of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin (One of only two tribes to be faithful to the house of King David), a Hebrew of Hebrews (Pure Jewish blood, not a drop of Gentile blood in him); as to the law, a Pharisee (A strict observer of every Old Testament Law); ⁶ as to zeal, a persecutor of the church (going above and beyond what was required of the Law in order to show how faithful he was); as to righteousness under the law, blameless. ⁷ But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law,

but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— ¹⁰ that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.”

Saint Paul says they are rubbish, garbage, throw it away, no value

All of this worldly confidence? Saint Paul calls them dung, garbage, and rubbish. What do you do with garbage? You throw it in the trash, it is of no value. They are worthless, less than nothing. That is what Saint Paul considers those things which he formally had confidence in.

Why? Gain Christ!

Why? Because they do not give us true confidence when it comes to our salvation. The confidence of our salvation comes only in and through Jesus Christ. In fact, having confidence in the things of this world are distracting from Christ and what He has done for us. If anything takes us away from Christ, it should indeed be thrown away. Yet, in throwing these away, have we lost anything? No, rather we have gained everything.

We have gained everything because Christ gave everything for us. He in a sense, threw away, the glory of heaven. Gave up the full use of the Divine Majesty in the state of His humiliation, deigning to enter into His creation order to save and redeem it. To the point of suffering, bleeding, and dying for us upon the cross. On the third day, He rises again from the dead as proof

that all of our sins are forgiven. Jesus gave up everything in order to give us everything, every blessing under heaven is ours, why would we look for anything else? To do so would be the very heights of folly. To gain Christ is to gain everything that is His.

This we have, dear Christian, not because of ourselves, but because of the Faith given to us in Jesus Christ. Through the working of His Holy Spirit, we cling to Jesus and His suffering and death for us. Worldly things, we view them in their proper place, good blessings from God but clinging solely to Christ for our salvation, viewing everything else as utter rubbish. In this faith we stand, knowing that we are not perfect, we will fail. But in forgiveness and grace, we keep pressing on. We keep striving, looking forward to the great things that Christ Himself has prepared for us in the world to come.

May the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard and keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.