

Devotional Thoughts :: Even More on the Resurrection and Sanctification by Bob Hoekstra**Even More on the Resurrection and Sanctification by Bob Hoekstra - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2011/3/23 10:54**

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

Paul's all-consuming passion was "that I may know Him." This verse does not list four matters for which Paul sought an acquaintanceship (a knowledge of God, resurrection power, a fellowship in Christ's sufferings, and conformity to His death). Rather, it points out one great quest (a knowledge of God) and three different arenas in which that knowledge could grow (resurrection power, a fellowship in Christ's sufferings, and conformity to His death). We saw in our last meditation how resurrection power and suffering can increase our knowing of the Lord. Now, we add another amazing aspect to a growing acquaintanceship with Jesus: "being conformed to His death."

There were some unique aspects to the death of Christ upon the cross (for example, His atonement for sins). However, there were other aspects of His death that God wants to repeat in our lives. As Jesus was placed upon the cross, it looked like defeat. It seemed to be the greatest wrong that man could ever do. Yet, God was working out His sovereign purposes. "Him, being delivered by the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death" (Acts 2:23). At times, we are placed in situations that seem certain to lead to a deadly defeat. Yet, the Lord is unfolding His sovereign plan for us. In taking us through such impossibilities (and turning apparent defeat into victory), the Lord is allowing us to become more acquainted with Him and His ways.

When Jesus was dying, He hung helpless upon the tree. He entrusted Himself into the hands of His Father. "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit" (Luke 23:46). The Father would have to prove faithful, if Jesus were to come forth from the grave. "Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father" (Romans 6:4). At times, we are in circumstances that are personally crucifying. We are in situations where everything so obviously requires a mighty work of God. If He does not prove faithful on our behalf, there will be no way out of the agonizing dilemma. When our Lord is so clearly our only hope (and then He comes through faithfully), we again grow in a deeper knowledge of Him and His ways.

Dear Father of glory, help me to not shrink back in fear and doubt when You are conforming me to the death of Your Son. When everything looks like defeat and disaster, remind me to look to You to work out Your will, in spite of the evil intentions of foolish or godless people. When I am hanging helpless in the midst of crucifying circumstances, remind me to commit myself to You and Your great faithfulness. Lord, I want to know You more through any means You choose, Amen.