Philippians 3:9-14 - *The Upward Call*

Paul counted the things that were gain to him as 'rubbish' for three reasons:

1 – That I may gain Christ – To experience Him more richly.

2 – That I may be found in Him – Paul wanted anyone who looked at him to see a man in fellowship with Christ.

3 – That I may know Him – To understand and experience the depth of his relationship to Christ.

Verse 9

That I may be found in Him –

Not having a Law righteousness but having a faith righteousness.
- *This righteousness if from God*
- *It is received by faith*

Verse 10

That I may know Him – In the sense of a personal relationship. To know Christ would work out in two ways:

The power of His resurrection – He wanted to experience the power that resurrected Christ and that was now within him because of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

The fellowship of His sufferings – A proper understanding of suffering deepens our relationship with Christ.

-Being conformed to His death – Knowing Christ will eventually lead to death to our own agenda for life. In some cases it may lead to physical death.

Verse 11

If somehow – Not "*in order that*". The idea is that *how* Paul lives his life "in Christ" will have an effect on his resurrection.

I may attain – The word is most often translated "*to come to*" or "*to arrive*". Paul sees the process. Note Ephesians 4:13.

To the resurrection from the dead – This is the only time this word is used in the Greek Bibles.

Resurrection = anastasis

Here it is *exanastasis* which literally means *"out resurrection".* The prefix intensifies the resurrection experience. The Kingdom age is sometimes referred to as the "resurrection" (Luke 20:33).

Note the parallel to Hebrews 11:35 and 2 Peter 1:11.

"…others were tortured…in order that they might obtain a better resurrection."

"…in this way entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus will be abundantly supplied to you."

Exanstasis = Fullness of resurrection!

Verse 12

Not that I have already obtained it – Clearly Paul knew that he would be resurrected (1 Corinthians 15:12-57, 1 Thess. 4:13-18, John 6:39-40, John 11:25). He is speaking of the reward of the "better resurrection".

Or have already become perfect – Not in the sense of sinless perfection (1 John 1:8). The idea is of reaching the goal of Christlikeness. Paul uses this word again in verse 15 in the sense of maturity. In relation to the better resurrection Paul is always in the process of "pressing on" to toward his goal.

That for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus – Paul understood that he had a purpose in Christ. Jesus had called him to be an apostle to the Gentiles and he strived to "*lay hold*" of his mission. He understood this was a life-long process that depended on his becoming daily more Christ-like.

Verse 13

One thing I do – We must learn the principle of "*one thing*" if we are to succeed in our Christian life. Note Mark 10:21, Luke 10:42, and John 9:25.

Forgetting what lies behind – Not that Paul refused to remember past things, but that he did not rest in his heritage or his past attainments.

Reaching forward to what lies ahead – Paul always kept an eternal perspective. He knew the reward and blessing of resurrection life would far outweigh any sufferings of this present age (2 Corinthians 4:17). The imagery is of the runner in a race who cannot look back but focuses on the finish line.

Verse 14

I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Goal – Literally the "*goal marker*" at the end of the course. The imagery here is clearly from the Olympian games. After each race or event, the winner would be "called up" to the victor's platform to receive his reward. Note the parallels between 1 Corinthians 9:24-27.

As an athlete is rewarded for his performance, so the faithful believer will be rewarded at the judgment seat of Christ.

How do we receive the Upward Call?

-Dissatisfaction – *Not that I have already obtained…*

-Devotion – *One thing I do…*

-Direction – *Reaching forward to what lies ahead…*

-Determination – *I press on…*