



# Gaining Christ

## THE SWEET NEARNESS

# 12

It will be an affectionate knowledge of Him; indeed, if I know Him at all, I must love Him. An ounce of heart knowledge is worth a ton of head learning. Our knowledge of Him will be a satisfying knowledge. When I know my Saviour, my mind will be full to the brim—I shall feel that I have that which my spirit panted after.

*Charles Haddon Spurgeon*

**K**NOWING JESUS POSITIONALLY (THE ESSENTIAL FIRST step), and then gaining knowledge of Him through the narrative of God's word (the logical next step), does not *produce* the intimate nearness of our Lord and Savior.

*It reveals it.*

From the moment of our conversion, Jesus is near: a faithful friend and guide, a companion, a tutor, a confidant. If we are not aware of Him, that speaks volumes about us, but nothing of Him.

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The king of Aram was warring against Israel, and, to his dismay, he discovered that someone was tipping off the king of Israel to his

intentions. Filled with rage, the king of Aram demanded to know who in his own camp was the traitor. But his servant informed him that the one who was revealing his plans to Israel was actually a prophet named Elisha. The king decided before he could successfully wage war against Israel, he would have to wage war against her God's prophet. So he sent a huge force to Dothan, where Elisha and his servant were staying.

In the wee hours of the morning, Elisha's servant woke to the alarming realization that he and his master were surrounded by a massive enemy force. Running back to Elisha, the servant wailed, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?" But Elisha was not troubled, for he knew something his servant did not.

**So he answered, "Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." Then Elisha prayed and said, "O Lord, I pray, open his eyes that he may see." And the Lord opened the servant's eyes and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.**

*2 Kings 6:16-17*

When we gain Christ—when we truly *know* Him—we know He is beside us. We feel Him. We sense His presence. We can go confidently into the day of battle, because we know His "chariots of fire" surround and go before us.

**Behold, the Lord God will come with  
might,  
With His arm ruling for Him.  
Behold, His reward is with Him  
And His recompense before Him.  
Like a shepherd He will tend His flock,  
In His arm He will gather the lambs  
And carry *them* in His bosom;  
He will gently lead the nursing ewes.**

*Isaiah 40:10-11*

A believer who has not gained Christ may blithely pass his days thinking that communion with Jesus is little more than a promise for the future, something to look forward to—a promise indeed, but a promise realized only after he has passed over the threshold of heaven. Like Elisha's servant, he will have learned the basics about God. He will know who He is, and he might even know a little about His personality and ways. But he will be missing out on the close reality of God working in his life, so that when hard times come, he will despair.

The believer who *has* gained Christ, however, will pass his days—every day, every hour—exulting in the sweet and reassuring companionship of his Lord. He will know *right now* the quiet intimacy and otherworldly power that comes from living day by day with Christ Jesus.

## THE OVERFLOWING FULLNESS

When we commit ourselves to gaining Christ, we gain more than just an introduction to His reality. We gain more than just intellectual knowledge about the second member of the tri-unity of God. We gain more, even, than a faithful defender and advocate, ready always to stand with us against the foe.

Imagine for a moment every close relationship you have on earth: every friend, every brother or sister, parents, spouse. Select out the one dearest to you, the one who knows you best, your closest and most intimate confidant. Now imagine that relationship amplified even further, perfect in every way.

Compared to the relationship one has with Christ when one is actively gaining Him, that earthly relationship is little more than a passing acquaintance.

Jesus Christ is Immanuel: *God with us*. No matter who you are, no matter where you are, no matter what you have done, if Jesus is your Lord, He is *with* you. More than a friend, more than a brother, more even than a faithful spouse, Christ Jesus is *part of you*—and, greater than that, *you are part of Him*.

When we gain Christ we tap into that relationship to the full. Oh, assuredly, no matter your effort He is always there in every believer. But when we pass up the privilege of *gaining* Him, we miss out on the rich, overflowing fullness of what He has to offer.

Teach me to do the thing that pleaseth Thee;  
Thou art my God, in Thee I live and move;  
Oh, let Thy loving Spirit lead me forth  
Into the land of righteousness and love.

Thy love the law and impulse of my soul,  
Thy righteousness its fitness and its plea,  
Thy loving Spirit mercy's sweet control  
To make me liker, draw me nearer Thee.

My highest hope to be where, Lord, Thou art,  
To lose myself in Thee my richest gain,  
To do Thy will the habit of my heart,  
To grieve the Spirit my severest pain.

Thy smile my sunshine, all my peace from thence,  
From self alone what could that peace destroy?  
Thy joy my sorrow at the least offence,  
My sorrow that I am not more Thy joy.

*John S. B. Monsell*

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