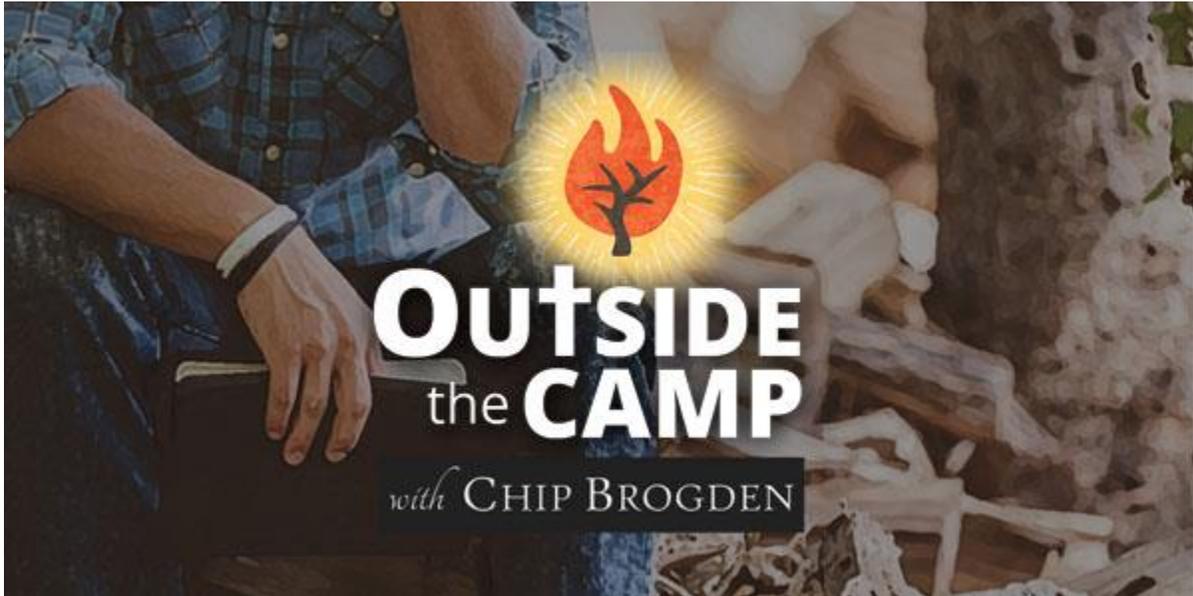


TRANSCRIPT

OUTSIDE THE CAMP WITH CHIP BROGDEN



EPISODE 1: Jesus Ruined My Life

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ANNOUNCER: Welcome to this edition of Outside the Camp with author and teacher Chip Brogden. Helping you discover the freedom and joy of a Christ-centered faith that is based on relationship, not religion. And now, with today's message, here's Chip Brogden.

CHIP: I want to read from Paul's letter to the Philippians, chapter 3, verses 3-8.

"For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: circumcised the

eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ.”

That word *rubbish* there, in the King James Version, is *dung*. Refuse. That’s strong language. You see, Paul was a very, very religious person. And as a religious person, he had a lot to boast about. But one day, on the Road to Damascus, Paul met Jesus, and that triggered a revolution in Paul. It changed his beliefs, it changed his behavior, it changed the way he saw himself, the way he saw his religion, the way he saw the world. Later on, they would say that Paul was turning the world upside down. But what I want you to see is that before Paul could turn the world upside down, Paul’s own world was turned upside down.

We like to think of all the miracles Paul did, all the sermons he preached, all the letters he wrote, all the churches he planted. But we do not think so much about all the things that he suffered. That meeting with Jesus there on the Road to Damascus was the beginning of a brand new life in Christ, but it was also the end of his old life. And when the Lord sent Ananias to go and pray for Paul after that encounter with Jesus, the Lord said, “I am going to show Paul how great things he must suffer for My Name.” And so, you might say, that Paul was going along pretty content with life, pretty satisfied with his ability to know God, to understand God, to follow God - even to the point that he felt pretty confident in persecuting and killing those who didn’t know, follow, and understand God the way *he* did. He was a Jewish man, a Pharisee, a zealot, a persecutor of Christians. But something happened to Paul when He met the real Jesus – not as a teaching, not as a sermon, not indirectly from someone else witnessing to him, but the

day his eyes were opened to see the real Jesus, that represented the end of life as Paul had known it! Now, he says everything he was before, everything he thought before, everything he might have boasted in before meeting Jesus, it's all dung. It's manure. Refuse. Crap. Rubbish. Compared to the excellency of the knowledge of Christ.

So the first thing we note about Paul is the depth of his revelation of Christ, and we certainly see that in his letters to the young groups of believers recorded in the New Testament. The next thing we see about Paul is the depth of his sufferings. Stoned and left for dead, shipwrecked, beaten, whipped, and eventually, decapitated by the Roman emperor.

So you might say that meeting Jesus on the Road to Damascus was the best thing that ever happened to Paul, and that's true. But you could also say, with equal truth, that meeting Jesus on the Road to Damascus was the worst thing that ever happened to Paul, at least from the standpoint of his flesh, his pride, his position, his status in the Jewish religion. The revelation of Christ cost Paul all those things, and in the end, it even cost Paul his life.

Knowing Jesus as He is carries a price. And in a way, we could say that Jesus *ruined* Paul's life. From the point of view of the Jews, Jesus *ruined* Paul's life for the worse. But from the point of view of Paul, Jesus *ruined* his life for the better.

Now, I know exactly what that means because I have experienced it for myself. I began preaching when I was 13 years old. I was a pastor for several years. And just like Paul, I was something of a young rock star in my denomination – sort of a child prodigy, I guess. But in 1996, when I was 25 years old, I had an experience in my backyard that radically changed the direction of my life – although I didn't realize it at the time. I was a frustrated, burned-out pastor whose church had closed. I was angry with God. Why

didn't God bless me? Why didn't God bless the church? So I blamed God, I blamed the people, I blamed the devil. I suppose it's human nature to blame everyone but yourself, but in a way I did blame myself. What did I do wrong? What could I have done differently? I just didn't understand how someone as gifted and talented and anointed as I was could be a failure!

So I was sitting there with my Bible, praying and reading in the Book of Ephesians chapter 1. And I had gone to Ephesians to get some answers about spiritual warfare. I thought the devil had a lot to do with why my church had closed, and so I went to Ephesians because I knew it would tell me about wrestling with "principalities and powers and rulers of darkness of this world and spiritual wickedness in heavenly places." And I thought, yes, that's the problem – the spiritual warfare is just too great in this town, and I need to learn how to fight the devil better. Right? So that was my motivation, that's the reason why I was in Ephesians.

But something just moved on me to read from the beginning of Ephesians. I wanted to turn to Ephesians 6 and get to the spiritual warfare, but something told me I need to start from the beginning. So I began reading in Ephesians 1 and I saw where Paul was praying that God would give the believers in Ephesus "*the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ.*" And that struck me as odd. Why would people who already believe in Jesus need a deeper revelation of Him? I thought that was strange. But as I continued reading I saw where Paul says that God has raised Jesus from the dead and seated Him at the right hand of God, far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named in this age and in the age to come. I saw where it says that God has put all things under the feet of Jesus, and made Him head over all things.

Now I thought I understood all this, I had read this chapter many times, and so it did not penetrate my heart. It passed through my mind like a gentle stream and was gone. But I do remember thinking at the time, “You know? That’s good for Jesus. I’m glad He is exalted above all things. I don’t doubt that. I really believe He is Lord, and He is over all things, and of course I believe that He has more power than the devil. But I don’t see how any of this helps me. I’m the one struggling. I’m the one wrestling here. I’m the one down here on earth, trying to fight the devil. I wish I could be exalted like Jesus, then I wouldn’t have all these problems. But alas... He is up there, and I am down here, and that’s just the way it is.”

That’s what was going through my mind, and I almost gave up reading at that point. I could have easily skipped on over to Ephesians 6 just to get on to what I really wanted to read about, or I could have just set the Bible aside and given up out of frustration. But I continued reading to Ephesians 2. Thank God for Ephesians 2! Thank God for “the next chapter!” Listen: no matter where you are now, no matter how “stuck” you think you may be, I encourage you, do not stop. Do not quit. Do not give up. There is always a “next chapter” waiting to be discovered – the next chapter in your life, the next chapter in your walk with God, the next chapter in Scripture. The next chapter is waiting for you! So keep pressing on.

When I began reading Ephesians 2 I noticed Paul shifted from talking about Jesus to talking about *us*. And then I got down to verses 5 and 6. It says that God has made us alive *together* with Christ, and raised us up *together*, and made us sit *together* in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. And when I read those words - *together, together, together* - it was as if a bolt of lightning struck my heart, as if God had personally reached out through the pages of this book and slapped me across the face! *Together, together, together* with Christ!

And that's when I saw it. That's when, for the first time, I saw that Christ was in me, and I was in Christ. And I looked up from where I was sitting – it was a beautiful spring day, the sun was shining and the sky was a gorgeous Carolina blue – and I looked up to heaven and smiled. And God opened my eyes to see it. I don't mean I had a vision. But God opened my eyes in the sense that Paul had just prayed: that God would grant me the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, that the eyes of my understanding would be enlightened, that I would *know*. Not just a theory. Not just a philosophy. Not just an idea. Not just a doctrine. Not just a few little verses of Scripture. But that I would know a Man – a Person. And from that moment on it was not just a letter in a book, but it was real, living, transformational truth. And faster than it takes for me to explain it to you right now, I entered into that revelation. I just knew.

Maybe you remember the movie *The Matrix*. I love that movie for all of its spiritual symbolism. I wrote a couple of articles about it when it first came out in 1999. In the movie, after Neo wakes up in the “real world” and realizes that nothing is as it appears, he goes through this training process to learn how to fight with the enemy Agents. But this training program is very different. They plugged him into the computer, punched a few buttons, and he gets zapped with some kind of power, right? Then maybe three seconds later he opens his eyes and says, “I know Kung Fu!” I know Kung Fu! That's what I'm talking about! I mean one minute he doesn't know anything, and in a few seconds all the knowledge is just imported into his brain and suddenly he knows Kung Fu. When I first saw that scene I thought, “That's exactly what happened to me five years ago in the backyard! *I know Jesus!*”

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CHIP: So this revelation of Christ came to me and my eyes were opened to see everything. I saw Jesus and I myself together, together, together with Him. When God

raised Him, God raised me together with Him. When God placed Him far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name, He placed me there together with Him so that I am far above all these things, too. When God put all things under His feet, God put all things under my feet together with Him, too. And I saw that all my feeble attempts at spiritual warfare was just foolish – it was me trying to fight to get a victory that I already had together with Christ, which certainly changes the way you read Ephesians 6, which is not telling us how to fight the devil, but how to stand in the victory that is already ours in Christ.

And you know, once Neo “knew” King Fu, he wanted to know more. They loaded him up with every kind of martial art in the computer, and he soaked it all up like a sponge. Well, in my case, I had my eyes opened to see many things in a split second – as if the mysteries of the universe had been unlocked. I looked up into the sky and I saw myself together with Christ in the heavenly places. How did I get there? I was raised together with Him. How was I raised with Him? Because I was made alive with Him, Scripture says. Why did I need to be made alive with Him? Because I was buried with Him by baptism into His death. And if I was buried with Him, Scripture says, then certainly I died with Him as well. And if I died with Him, then it must be true that I was *crucified* with Christ. And so I finally understood what Paul meant when he said, “I am *crucified with* Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me.” I saw that inside and out, upside down and rightside up, forwards and backwards, in all different colors. All those Scriptures became real – not just words in a book, but actual, living, experiential truth. It was beyond my head, above my thoughts. I did not “learn” it – I just knew it. Because I experienced it. I entered into it. It was real.

There is no limitation in the Spirit realm – everything is open, transcendent, infinite, limitless. *We* limit God with *our* unbelief. *We* limit God with *our* doubt. *We* limit God with *our* traditions, the way we have always believed and behaved. Even after Neo got all

of that revelation (so to speak), he still struggled with the limitations that he put on himself. Morpheus said, “You’re going to have to let it all go Neo. Fear, doubt, and disbelief. *Free your mind!*” That is the paradox of revelation. You can have the revelation of Christ and still struggle.

Look at Peter. He had the revelation of Christ, and he struggled. When Peter said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God,” Jesus said, “Peter, you are blessed because flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but it is the revelation of My Father in heaven.” Well, right after that, Jesus begins to tell them about the cross, and Peter says, “No way Lord! That’s not gonna happen!” See what I mean? He had the revelation of Christ, he knew who Jesus was, but then he falls right back into the old way of thinking and behaving. So Jesus had to say, “Hush Peter! You don’t know what you’re talking about. You’ve got this great spiritual revelation but now you’re putting your own ideas ahead of God.”

Ah. There is more I can tell you about that moment. For example, when I saw Jesus, I saw the Body of Christ. I saw the whole family of God in heaven and in earth. I still did not have a concept of the *Ekklesia*. I had never heard that word before. Didn’t know what the *Ekklesia* was. My idea of church was a building with a steeple on top. My concept of church was three fast songs, three slow songs, an offering and a sermon. But in that moment, as God is revealing Christ to me, He is also revealing the Body of Christ to me – the *Ekklesia*, the spiritual house of living stones, and I saw where I had messed that up too. All of that was wrong! God showed me the truth about the *Ekklesia*, He showed me where Organized Religion had failed, and why. I couldn’t believe how simple it was, and how stupid I had been! But that’s the way revelation is. You’re going along, minding your own business, doing and thinking the way you are used to doing and thinking, and then God does something to get your attention, to show you something

new, something you never considered, and you think, “Well, now I see it. I have been totally, completely wrong for most of my life. But now I get it. Now I see it.”

Now, you’re listening to this and maybe you haven’t had that kind of epiphany, revelation, vision, or whatever. And people who think they don’t have it always want to know how they can. Some people say you just have to wait for it, but I disagree. Paul did not say wait for it. He was praying for the Ephesians to see something about Jesus that they had not seen yet. There is a depth of Christ that we have yet to discover. Paul, toward the end of his life, said his goal was to *know* Him. And Jesus says, “When the Holy Spirit comes, He will lead you into all truth.” Why? “Because there are many things that I want to tell you, but you can’t bear them now. You can’t handle it. If I were to share all the things I want to share with you now, you could not take it. However, when the Holy Spirit comes, He will testify of Me, and He will lead you into all truth.”

So you see, you and I, we, are learning new things, seeing new things in Him all the time. You never stop learning. You never stop growing. But my goodness, there has to be a beginning somewhere – some radical, eye-opening insight that shakes you to the core and shakes you *out* of your ignorance and your complacency! Paul was praying for the Ephesians, that God would grant to them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, that the eyes of their understanding would be enlightened, that they would *know*. See, I think a lot of people who say they are following Jesus are really just following a religious idea of God. They just so happened to be born in a Christian country where most people are Christians and their parents took them to church so they naturally just became a Christian. Well, that’s great, it’s better than nothing I suppose. But do you realize that has nothing to do with knowing Jesus? That’s a product of social conditioning, of religion. It’s all in the realm of beliefs and customs, mental acceptance of what the church tells you, peer pressure to conform. I was a part of that for many years, so I know what I’m talking about. And I’m saying you can have a religion *about*

Jesus without having a relationship *with* Jesus. You can have religion with no revelation. But revelation leads to *revolution*! And that's what repentance is – a revolution, a total change in your mind, your heart, your behavior that takes you waaaay beyond where you were, and takes you to a brand new place you never dreamed was possible.

Is that your experience? Has Jesus ruined your life? Has He revealed Himself to you in such a way that everything you thought you knew before now just seems like crap by comparison? If so, then you know what I'm talking about. And if not, why not?

Is there a way to go deeper into the Lord? Do you just have to sit around and wait for Jesus to reveal Himself to you in a powerful way like Paul, or is there something you can do, or something you can be doing, in the meantime? Is this deeper revelation of Christ something to seek, or is it something that just happens?

Well, those are good questions, and I'm going to explore those questions and try and answer them for you... on the next episode of *Outside the Camp*. In the meantime, may God bless you and keep you, and grant you that spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ. Thank you for listening, and remember that GREATER is He that is in you than He that is in the world!

ANNOUNCER: You've been listening to Outside the Camp with author and teacher Chip Brogden. We hope you enjoyed today's broadcast and found it helpful and encouraging. If you'd like to get additional teachings, audio recordings, books and other Christ-centered resources to help you grow spiritually, visit us online at ChipBrogden.com. Outside the Camp is made possible by the prayers and financial support of listeners like you. Until next time, on behalf of Chip Brogden, I'm Kathy Smith, reminding you that you can do all things through Christ Who strengthens you!