

Phil 3:1-11

1 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. For me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but for you it is safe.

2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation! 3 For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, 4 though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: 5 circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; 6 concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

7 But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. 8 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 9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, 11 if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

In verses 5 & 6 Paul lists 7 qualifications that prove he was a full-blooded Jew.

- Four are by heredity or by birth;
- three were by choice or personal conviction.

5 circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee;

6 concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

Circumcision on the eight day.

- Abrahamic covenant according to Gen 17:10.
- Boys were named on that 8th day.

He was stressing that

- He was not a proselyte or an Ishmaelite but a pure-blooded Jew.

He was of the stock of Israel.

He could say that because his parents were both Jew.

Of the tribe of Benjamin.

Jews were saying

- Gentiles could become members of Israel.

Paul said,

- “I can trace my family down to the very tribe.”

He came from the tribe of Benjamin.

- First king of Israel was King Saul.

Paul may have been named after Saul.

So he says, 5 circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews;

He may have mentioned this for two reasons.

- He was born a Hebrew,
- not a Greek who learned to speak Hebrew.

And second, I mentioned early in our study of Philippians, the Romans

- captured the city of Philippi in 168BC and in 42BC.
- The citizens were then regarded as citizens of Rome
- and GIVEN special privileges.

Nothing was given to Paul.

Concerning the law, a Pharisee.

Originally, to be a Pharisee meant to be separated.

They originally believed they'd give

- their life to studying and obeying the written and oral law.
- But soon became a hypocritical group of people.

Paul studied as a Pharisee under a man by the name of Gamaliel

- who taught him how to think and speak persuasively.

As a student, he learned large sections of the OT.

Concerning zeal, persecuting the church;

Paul was willing to protect

- the Jewish religion even if it meant exterminating
- the church of God.

He's contrasting his former zeal against the church

- to his new way of serving Christ.

The Judaizers now in their own way were persecuting the church as well.

Concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

It's difficult sharing the gospel with the religious.

Those people have enough morality to keep them out of trouble but not enough righteousness to get them into heaven.

Paul said to the Judaizers in verse 3 to have no confidence in the flesh.

People walk around chasing things of the world which amount to nothing!

Not one person's self-righteousness, will get a person into heaven apart from the work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

That's why Paul said, Have no confidence in the flesh!

We were once self-centered, self-focused, greedy, stingy, angry, lustful, prideful, vengeful, arrogant, religious, "but God!"

7 But what things were gain to me (his religious achievements that he just listed in verses 5 & 6), these I have counted loss for Christ.

Another version reads: But Christ has shown me that what I once thought was valuable is worthless.

This is the same person Paul whom Jesus spoke to

- when Paul was on the road to Damascus

At that very moment Paul's life must have flashed before his eyes

- knowing he'd wrong this entire time.

Isa 64:6

6 But we are all like an unclean thing,
And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags;

Paul used the same Greek word for loss in verse 7 as used in Acts 27:10 where he said

- the cargo and lives would be lost in a shipwreck.

The cargo was eventually thrown overboard

- and the ship was broken up.

Paul was storing up for himself riches on earth, not in heaven.

However, his past wasn't all for nothing:

- The Lord has a way of taking away the bad,
- then He takes the good and makes it better.

For example, Paul once persecuted the church

- in pursuit of his own righteousness.

During his studies under Gamaliel,

- he memorized large sections of scripture
- which he later used when writing much of the NT.

8 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

In verse 7 Paul used the past tense to say, I counted those things loss for Christ.

Now in verse 8 he used the present tense "I count"

- as if to say, "I don't regret what I left behind"

As a Christian,

- you don't regret your decision to leave things behind,
- neither should we return to our own vomit.

Don't go back to see if there's anything you've missed.

Paul counted the things lost as rubbish.

- The word he used is translated in Greek as "dung,"

The word was a vulgar term back then

- Paul may have intended it as a shock value for the readers.

He may have been saying, this is what your flesh produces,

- nothing but dung.

It stinks. The things I put my hope in apart from Christ, stink!

8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord,

That's what separates Christianity from any religion out there.

- We know God.

We have a personal relationship with the living God, the creator of all.

Jn 10:14, I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own.

John 17:3

3 And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

Jesus prayed for believers:

John 17:20-21

20 "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; 21 that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; **that they also may be one in Us**, that the world may believe that You sent Me.

9 and be found in Him,

No religion can say, "I'm in Him."

- The Mormons don't say, I'm in Joseph Smith.
- The Jehovah's witnesses don't say, I'm in Charles Taze Russel,
- the Muslims don't say I'm in Mohammad.

Only Christians can say, "I am in Christ"

not having my own righteousness, (having a right standing with God)

None had a right standing with God prior to surrendering to Him.

He made us righteous in Him.

We couldn't produce what only He could provide, His righteousness.

2 Cor 5:21

21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Verse 9:

which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;

Rom 10:3

3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness (the way God wanted to establish righteousness), and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.

Instead of following God's righteousness, they sought to establish their own.

Paul gives two options:

- we can try to do things under our own righteousness or thru God's righteousness.

Phil 3:10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

11 if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Paul isn't doubting his position in Christ, he's humble.

- He's speaking of his unworthiness.
- He never forgot who he was in the past,
- where Christ brought him from.

He said before, I am the least of all the apostles, of all the saints.

He once lived under the law, now he was under grace.

- He once lived under a set of rules,
- now he lived under the Savior of the world.

Gal 2:20

20 I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

He realized being crucified with Christ meant

- he'd be raised in Christ.

1 Cor 15:51-52

51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed –
52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

This is our final victory.

When we surrender to Christ, our gain far outweighs our losses. That's why Paul said in verse 7, what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.

The things of the world suddenly were of no value.

Paul felt much like you and I do at times in that we don't always feel worthy.

Phil 3:12

12 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected;

Paul spoke of Timothy and Epaphroditus, two ordinary men serving the Lord.

Now he's saying, "hey, I have not already attained, or am already perfected"

God's plan in our life is progress, not perfection.

Many years ago, a promising Greek artist named Timanthes was under the instruction of a well-known tutor. After several years, the young painter created an exquisite portrait. He was so thrilled with what he had painted that he sat day after day gazing at his work.

One morning, however, he was horrified to discover that his teacher had deliberately ruined his painting. Angry and in tears, Timanthes ran to him and asked why he had destroyed his cherished possession. The wise man replied, "I did it for your own good. That painting was retarding your progress. It was an excellent piece of art, but it was not perfect. Start again and see if you can do even better." The student took his advice and produced a master-piece called "Sacrifice of Iphigenia," regarded by some as one of the finest paintings of antiquity.

God never wants us to be content with our accomplishments. He wants us to reach even higher plateaus of service and Christlikeness ... Child of God, don't be satisfied with your spiritual attainments. With His help, keep pressing on!

God never wants us to be content with our accomplishments.

And that's what Paul says in verse 12, I press on!

Perfection in this life is not possible.

- We are all sinners saved by grace.

Paul is a man that faithfully served the Lord, and he's saying, I'm not there.

In Romans 7:24 he says, "O wretched man that I am!"

In 1 Tim 1:15 he said, that Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.

And here in Philippians he says, not that I have already attained:

Just because we're not there yet, doesn't mean we don't press on striving toward maturity in the Lord.

Jesus gave the model prayer in Luke 11 showing how one is to pray.

The Model prayer, Luke 11

Paul said, "I press on" this verb phrase indicates a hard pursuit of something.

1 Tim 6:11

11 But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.

2 Tim 2:22

22 Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Reggie Jackson - "Mr. October"

that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.

Are you seeking Christ like He sought you?

Someone said that a vulture soaring through the air does not see the beautiful landscape, brooks, flowers, and green grass. It sees only the dead rabbit under the bush, because that is what it is seeking.

The Lord promised if we seek Him, we will find Him!