

Lesson 7, PHILIPPIANS 3:1-9

The spotlight diverges from the dead body of Stephen to a new player, a man named Saul. As he held the coats of those stoning Stephen, he had no idea what God had in store for him. Jesus had already told the disciples how the progression of the gospel would take place: Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the world. In this chapter the shift from Jerusalem to Judea and Samaria takes place.

There are several lessons about Christianity that are revealed here. First, it is open to all, regardless of race or social standing.

1. In verse 2, who do you think Paul is referring to here? Hint: Some translations refer to mutilators of the flesh which refers to circumcision. Why do you think he is calling out these people as “dogs who do evil”? See Acts 14:19, 17:13 and 18:6 for clues.
2. In verses 3-9, Paul presents a comparison between the “flesh” and the power of Jesus. What are those things that Paul thinks of as “flesh” in his life? Compare this to what Jesus spoke about in Matthew 23:13-35.
3. What descriptive words does Paul use in describing those things of the “flesh” and “knowing Christ Jesus”? Compare this to Isaiah 64:6. How would you define things of the “flesh” today?
4. Jesus speaks of the flesh in John 6:63. In what areas of life do you depend more on the “flesh” than the Spirit?
5. What does Paul see as a “safeguard” from the menacing attacks of the outside world and our flesh? See verse 1.

Application: Ask the Lord if there is any area of your life where you are depending on yourself and your ability instead of leaning completely into the Lord Jesus.

Prayer: God our Father, we praise you and rejoice that you delight in being in our lives for every decision big and small. You take pleasure in guiding our steps moment to moment. Help us to live in the fullness of your Presence and to learn how to respond to the nudging of the Holy Spirit so we will live in the fullness of joy promised to those who know Jesus as Lord and Savior. Amen.

