

8/30/26

## **Man's Or God's Righteousness?**

**Phil. 3:8-11**

The Pharisees morning prayer was, “Lord, I thank You that You did not make me a woman, a Gentile or a slave”, they were deceived and blind to their own sinfulness and lostness.

\* Their constant self-righteousness was rebuked by Jesus and was used as a warning to all who desired to enter heaven.

Pharisaism will always be around as long as sinful man is around and is quite inferior to the righteousness of Christ.

So Paul the apostle told the Philippians to have their confidence and joy in the righteousness of Christ, not man.

1. He pointed out the righteousness of the Judaizers in view of the Law of Moses. Phil. 3:1-3

2. He pointed out his own righteousness before he came to Christ was a plie of manure as a Pharisee. Phil. 3:4-7

3. He pointed out the only righteousness excepted by God, the righteousness of Christ. Phil. 3:8-11

We want to focus our attention on Paul's settled conviction about the righteousness of Jesus Christ to

be excepted by God, which is described in three ways. Phil. 3:8-11

- I. Paul's deliberate choice is declared. vs. 8
- II. Paul's desired righteousness is defined. vs. 9
- III. Paul's determined purpose is described. vs. 10-11

### **I. Paul's deliberate choice is declared. vs. 8**

A. Paul chose the superiority of Christ. vs. 8a

\* “Yet indeed I also count all things loss”.

1. Paul had counted not only such things as he mentioned in the previous verses regarding his old religious life, but now he counted all things as loss by comparative value.

a. The word loss “zemia” is singular and found only one other place to describe the loss when Paul shipwreck. Acts 27:10, 21

\* The other two are here in verse seven and eight.

b. The word “all” includes anything else beyond the gains of his former life, profits that in fact robbed him and damaged his soul, all being absolutely worthless stock!

\* All his gains were counted as one great loss.

2. Paul had counted all thing a loss by personal experience and relationship.

- \* “for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord”.
- a. Paul had experienced a personal encounter with Jesus on the Damascus road.
  - 1) The word excellence “hupereko” means to be above, be superior in rank, authority, power, plain better.
    - \* The word appears two other times in the letter, translated “better” and “surpasses all understanding”. Phil. 2:3, 4:7
  - 2) The word knowledge “gnosis” means primarily a seeking to know, an inquiry, investigation, in the context it refers to the spiritual truth and understanding about Christ.
    - \* The word is used of husbands who are to dwell with their wives according to knowledge “gnosis”. 1Pet. 3:7
  - 3) He had been made to see by divine illumination that he had been fighting against God in his religious fervor, thinking he was doing service to God and chose the excellence of the knowledge of Christ immediately and still did thirty years after.
- b. Paul by divine conviction had made Christ Jesus his Lord.

- 1) The title Christ “cristos” refers to His deity and means anointed, equivalent to the Old Testament “Messiah”.
  - 2) The name Jesus refers to His humanity and earthly existence, He was a man like any other, yet without sin, the Gpd-Man.
  - 3) The title Lord “kurios” can mean master, husband, owner, here it refers to Master and owner the One who he lives for and the One who lives through him.
  - 4) The choice and commitment is personal “my Lord”, it cannot be by religious association or family relation or heritage.
    - \* The law and works were very impersonal and mechanical and only external, never affecting the heart of man!
- B. Paul saw the advantage of Christ’s excellence.** vs. 8b-d
1. He no longer held on to any works or personal virtue to merit his standing before God he had ceased any attempt to establish his own righteousness. vs. 8b
    - \* “For whom I have suffered the loss of all things”.

- a. Paul by divine illumination was able to see that to stand before Christ in his own righteousness was a great disadvantage.
  - \* The entire world, Jew and Gentile were guilty before God. Rom. 3:19
- b. Paul had suffered the loss of all things for Christ.
  - 1) The phrase is a business term meaning “to punish by exacting a forfeit” and could be rendered “I have been caused to forfeit”.
  - 2) The things he suffered loss were the things that men hold so dear in their eyes to be thought of as righteous or spiritual before God.
- 2. Paul no longer saw his works as valuable, but was able to properly assess the inferiority of man’s righteousness.
  - \* “And count them as rubbish that I might gain Christ.” vs. 8c-d
  - a) The word rubbish “skubalon” means dung or manure and is used for excrement and half eaten corps.
    - 1) The tense is the ongoing present.
    - 2) Remember it included his education at the University of Tarsus, with Gamaliel, this is thirty years after the Damascus experience!
  - b. **The motive of Paul** now was “that I may gain Christ.”

- 1) The word gain “kerdaino” means to acquire or take on for one’s profit.
  - a) The same word is used by Jesus as he declared, “What shall it profit a man if he “gain” the whole world and loses his own soul”. Matt. 26:26
  - b) Paul uses the word in his desire to “gain” the Jew, the Gentile without the law and the weak, to Christ. 1Cor. 9:20-22
- 2) The person of Christ Jesus is the ultimate gain of man and the wisest choice!
  - \* Man’s righteousness is as filthy rags, a menstrual garment. Is. 64:6

### Illustration

It may be true that there are two sides to every question, but it is also true that there are two sides to a sheet of flypaper. And it makes a big difference to the fly what side he chooses. (Ill. Bib. Preach:100)

### Application

- 1. Some people knowing the superiority of Christ choose to reject and not choose Christ.
  - \* “For many are called, but few are chosen”. Matt. 22:14
- 2. Some people make the wrong assessment of Christ due to a mere intellectual evaluation, rather than a personal commitment to His invitation to be saved.

\* “Come unto Me and I will give you rest, take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” Matt. 11:29-30

**3.** Too often Christ is not seen as a long term advantage, but rather an immediate disadvantage because of the present glamor of the world, fame and momentary pleasures in a life of sin.

\* “By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.” Heb. 11:24-27

***Paul's deliberate choice is declared to be the superiority and advantage of Christ's righteousness over man's!***

## **II. Paul's desired righteousness is defined. vs. 9**

**A.** Paul wanted them to understand that this imputed righteousness was based on a person.

\* “And be found in Him.” vs. 9a

**1.** He wanted them to know that this righteousness is based on the person of Jesus Christ by the pronoun Him.

- a.** Paul has already told them that they were to rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh. Phil. 3:3
- b.** Paul has mentions “Christ Jesus” and “Christ” in the previous verse.
- c.** Paul was identifying the God-Man, the very fulfillment of God's promise to redeem sinful man. Gen. 3:15
  - 1)** Jesus was God Incarnate. Jn. 1:1, 14
  - 2)** Jesus came in the form of a servant. Phil. 2:6-8
  - 3)** Jesus told the woman of Samaria He was the Messiah, not a mere legend or religious system. Jn. 4:21-24
- b.** Jesus was the Father's gift of His love to the lost world, man did not deserve Him. Jn. 3:16
- c.** Jesus is called by Paul God's indescribable gift to man. 2Cor. 9:15
  - \* **Jesus** laid down His life of His own will. Jn. 10:18
- 2.** He wanted to be found or discovered by all, embracing the imputed righteousness of Christ.
  - a.** The excellence Christ was imputed to Paul, meaning it was given to him, credited to his person.
  - b.** The gain of Christ was imputed, meaning he had nothing to boast about.

- c. The being found “in Him” was imputation, meaning he had to give God all the glory.

**B.** Paul wanted them to know that this righteousness was based on a position of faith not practiced righteousness of the law.

\* “Not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ.” vs. 9b-c

1. He said the law cannot make him or any person righteous, but only prove that he is not righteous.
  - a. The law provokes man to sin.
  - b. The law accuses man.
  - c. The law condemns man.
  - d. The credentials of Paul were of the law. vs. 4-6
2. The legal standing of Paul and sinful man is through faith in Jesus Christ.
  - a. Faith in what Christ did for me.
    - 1) The word faith “pistis” means conviction of the truth of anything, respecting man's relationship to God and divine things, generally with the included idea of trust and holy fervor born of faith and joined with it relating to God.

\* The article is found in both of these instances in this verse, focusing on Christ Jesus!

- 2) Faith is a position of trust.
- 3) Faith is a position of total abandonment.
- 4) Faith is a position of rest.
- 5) Faith is a position of reliance.
- 6) Faith is a position of another in my place.

\* Rom. 3:21-24; Gal.2:16

- b. The phrase “in Him” and “in Christ” is Paul’s only hope.

\* In Christ Jesus is a favorite phrase of Paul to describe our position before God and is found some twenty-seven times in the epistle to the Ephesians who are seated in the heavenlies with Christ.

**C.** Paul wanted them to know that the plan of their righteousness comes from God the Father by faith.

\* “The righteousness which is from God by faith”. vs. 9e

1. The apostle Peter declared to those at Pentecost that the Father delivered His Son by His determined purpose and foreknowledge. Acts 2:23
2. The Son submitted to the Father even unto the death of the cross. Phil. 2:8

3. The Son was to be the propitiation for our sin but not only for ours but for the whole world. 1Jn. 2:2
4. The Holy Spirit was the other comforter just like Jesus, sent by the Father to continue the ministry of Jesus to convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. Jn. 16:8-11
5. The church was birthed at Pentecost by the coming of the Holy Spirit, as the fulfillment of the Fathers plan to impute the righteousness of Christ, from God by faith.
  - a. Therefore the apostle Paul was not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation, to the Jew first and then to the Greek, for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith. Rom. 1:16-17; Eph. 2:8
  - b. Jesus said, “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.” Jn. 12:32
    - \* All sinners do not repent, the majority reject the gospel and choose to go to hell!

### **Illustration**

Martin Luther said, “He who would gain righteousness by faith and works is as the dog who runs along a stream with a piece of meat in his mouth and deceived by the reflection of the meat in the

water, opens his mouth to snap at it, and so loses both the meat and the reflection. (Ill. Bib. Preach:308)

### **Application**

1. Often people desire only to add the person of Christ to their lives as any other patron saints or religious leader, philosophies and beliefs, rather than substituting His person for all of their beliefs.
  - \* Jesus said, “I Am the way, the truth and the life, and no man comes to the Father but by Me”. Jn. 14:6
2. Two danger exist when people do not completely understand their position of faith in Christ, they may think that they may continue in a life of sin and magnify God’s grace by the forgiveness of their sins or that they always point to their works of righteousness as their merit before God.
  - a. Paul says, “Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound, perish the thought, how can we who died to sin live any longer in it.” Rom. 6:1-2
  - b. And if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what do the Scriptures say? Abraham believed God, and it was accounted, imputed to him for righteousness. Rom. 4:2-3
3. Some people think that the plan of God of salvation was only for good people, but it was for a rebellious and sinful world.
  - \* “For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a

righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation. Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.” Rom. 5:6-12

***Paul’s righteousness is defined by the person of Christ, his position in Christ and the plan of God!***

### **III. Paul’s determined purpose is described. vs 10-11**

- A.** Paul determined to experience a personal, intimate on-going relationship with Jesus.
  - \* “That I may know Him”. vs. 10a
  - 1.** The word know “ginosko” means a taking in knowledge. to come to know, recognize and understand by experience.
    - a.** In the New Testament it frequently indicates a relation between the person knowing and the object known, resulting

in value to the one who knows, establishing a relationship.

- b.** It is used of the Old Testament word for sexual intercourse between a husband and wife as well as the New Testament.
  - \* Matthew says that Joseph did not know Mary till she had brought forth her first-born, Jesus. Matt. 1:25
- 2.** The apostle Paul is describing in these two verses imparted righteousness through a sanctified life as one yields to the Holy Spirit.
  - a.** Paul had already told them that he was in prison by appointment. Phil. 1:12
  - b.** Paul had also told them that for him to live was Christ and die was gain. Phil. 1:21
  - c.** Paul has already told them that he puts on the mind of Christ to be His servant. Phil. 2:5
  - d.** Paul had repeatedly told them of his rejoicing for the gospel and them and that they should do the same, being evidence of life in the Spirit. Phil. 1:18, 26; 2:17; 3:1

- B.** Paul determined to experience the power of the risen life: The positive.
  - \* “and the power of the resurrection/” vs. 10a

1. To know by personal experience the potential of the new life to be set free from sin nature and respond as a new creature. 2Cor. 5:17
2. To be experiencing the benefits of the new life. Eph. 1:15-20
3. To be desiring the things of God. Col. 3:1-3
4. To be completely aware that His divine power has given to us everything pertaining to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him. 2Pet. 1:3

C. Paul determined to experience oneness with Jesus in the difficult times: The negative.

\* “To know the fellowship of His sufferings.”  
vs. 10b

1. The word fellowship “koinonia” is a rich word that cannot be translated in one word.
  - a. It means oneness, participation, commonness.
  - b. It has the idea of reciprocal benefit with the motive of the other person in Christ.
  - c. It is used for the Lord’s communion, for contributions and the believer’s interaction throughout the New Testament.
2. The determined purpose to know the fellowship of Christ’s sufferings is not teaching masochism or the practice of

penitence by inflicting physical pain to oneself in order to be worthy of God’s love.

a. It is determined to not live after the flesh, denying one’s own will as a disciple of Christ.

\* Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. Lk. 9:23

b. It is saying no to sin causing the believer to suffer through trials and testings.

1) Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of [his] time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. 1Pet. 4:1-2

2) Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trials which are to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. 1Pet. 4:12-13

3. Suffering by physical persecution for living godly.

- a. If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part, He is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter. 1Pet. 4:14-16
  - b. Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. 2Tim. 3:12; Acts 9:16; Phil. 1:29; Col. 1:24
- D.** Paul determined this would result in being Christ-like in this life.
- \* “being conformed to His death”. vs. 10c
- 1. The word conformed “sumorphomai” means to be fashioned and like in appearance.
    - a. The believer is predestined to be conformed into the image of His Son. Rom. 8:29
    - b. The believer will ultimately be conformed to Christ’s glorious body. Phil. 3:21
- \* The same root word is used for a metamorphosis is taking place and one day it will be finalized!

- 2. Paul is talking about an ongoing transformation of our spiritual lives Rom. 12:1-2
    - a. Paul expresses the concept of Christ's death and how it is to be modeled in us daily. Rom. 6:3-7; 2Cor. 4:7-12
    - b. Everything in verse nine and ten describe a person who is hungry for the things of God.
    - c. This is Paul's application for us in view of the righteousness of Christ lived out daily.
- E.** Paul determined he would one day take the ultimate step and be resurrected.
- \* “if by any mean, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead”. vs. 11
- 1. There is no doubt in Paul’s mind that every believer will experience it the resurrection.
    - a. If by any means does not convey doubt, but a desire and the goal in the future.
    - b. The resurrection is the final gain to be in the presence of the Lord and be just like Him, the crucified life! Gal. 2:20
  - 2. Paul expressed his longing for the rapture of the church in the future, “I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.” vs. 11c
    - a. The phrase “I may attain” is one word in Greek “katantao” and means to come to, arrive or attain to a thing.

- b. The final goal of Paul was “the resurrection from the dead”, which indirectly refers to the rapture, when all believer will receive their glorified body and be just like his Savior! 1Cor. 15:35-58; 1Thess. 4:16-17
- 1)) The word from “ek” means out from the dead.
  - 2)) Paul will mention the rapture again in the last two verses of the chapter, “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who **will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body**, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.” Phil. 3:20-21
  - 3)) Those who die before the rapture are instantly present with Christ, but they are not in their glorified body. Phil. 1:6; 2Cor. 5:1-8

### **Illustration**

The Chinese character for “righteousness” is most interesting, It is composed of two characters, “a lamb” and the pronoun “me”. Between me, the sinner, and God, the Holy One, there is interposed by faith the Lamb of God. By virtue of his sacrifice, he has

received me on the grounds of faith, and I have become righteous in His sight. (Ill. Bib. Preach:307)

Another Chinese character for “crisis” is made up of two words also, “danger” and “opportunity”, righteousness before God is a “crisis” which is dangerous if you trust your own righteousness to stand before God, a tremendous opportunity for salvation if you truths the righteousness of Christ!

### **Application**

1. Don’t allow your passion to know Christ turn into a passive conformity of mediocrity.
  2. Don’t avoid depending on the power of the resurrection or you will be a walking dead man.
  3. Don’t miss the fellowship of His suffering, they will make you a person of character, conforming you into His image from day to day.
  4. Don’t worry about the resurrection, God will raise you up, if you are in Christ at the rapture!
- \* “For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, 10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.” 1Thess. 1:9-10

*Paul's determined purpose is described as personal, in the power of the Spirit, beyond his own ability and waiting to be glorified!*

**Conclusion**

Paul declared his settled conviction about the righteousness of Jesus Christ to be excepted by God in three ways.

- I.** Paul's deliberate choice declared!  
\* What is your choice of righteousness?
- II.** Paul's desired righteousness defined!  
\* How do you define yours?
- III.** Paul's determined purpose described!  
\* What is your determined purpose, to be more like yourself or Christ?