

8/23/26

Philippians 3:1-11

Having spoken about servants after the example of Christ, who went as far as to jeopardize their lives as their Master, he brings in sharp contrast, the Judaizers.

Paul the apostle told them that Christ is the believers life, their mind and the Judaizers could claim neither of the two.

He is going to contrast the righteousness of man and that which comes from God.

3.1-3 The warning about the Judaizers.

3:1 The untiring concern of a father.

1) Paul addressed them affectionately, “Finally, my brethren.” vs. 1a-b

a) The expression finally “to loipon” idoes not always mean coming to a close, here is a good example since forty percent of the letter is still to come.

1)) The better meaning in this case would be furthermore or in addition.

2)) Some propose Philippians is composed off several letters, this being the conclusion of the first one, but it is unnecessary and erroneous.

3)) Some see a digression that is returned to later. Phil. 3:1; 4:8

4)) Other say this section belongs to a different letter, but it is not so!

2) Paul exhorted the Philippians, “rejoice in the Lord.” vs. 1c

a) The exhortation to rejoice is in view of what Paul has told them about the sufficiency of Christ to make men servants as He, like Epaphroditus, Timothy and himself to be.

b) Also that the exhortation to rejoice in the Lord is not confined to good time or exempt from difficulties, but in the fact that the Lord’s servant knows that he or she is in the will of God and doing the will of God by appointment. Phil. 2:18

c) Therefore the exhortation to rejoice in the Lord also looks forward to the warning about the judaizers and their opposition.

d) Rejoicing in the Lord is the fruit of the Spirit and happiness is it’s byproduct versus the pursuit of happiness which is the foolishness of man for it is very temperal, ever empty and unsatisfying.

1)) These things I have spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy may be full. Jn. 15:11

2)) Jesus said, “Your joy no man taketh from you.” Jn. 16:22

3)) “I have written that your joy may be full, in fellowship.” Jn. 1:3-4

- 4)) The Kingdom of God is not meet...
Rom. 14:17
- 3) Paul warned the Philippians, “For me to write the same things to you is not tedious.”
vs. 1d
- a) The expression “to write the same thing” some say refers to rejoicing, others to the warning about the Judaizers in the next verse, the context better fits the warning to come about the Judaizers.
- b) The Philippians had been warned by Paul perhap in a previous letter since he had received two gifts from them? Phil. 4:16
- c) Certainly he had already warned them about opposition, now the Judaizers.
Phil. 1:27-30
- 4) Paul was concerned about their spiritual deception, “but for you it is safe.” vs. 1e
- a) The warning is not a tedious thing to Paul being their spiritual father who loved them and it was a safe thing for them to not be spiritually deceived.
- b) The word safe is to be taken in the active sense, tending to make them safe. Linski
- c) There is a great value in repetition and an important Old Testament principle, “line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, there a little...” Is. 28:10
- d) Paul was the watchman over the church of God and was innocent of the blood of any man. Ezk. 33:2-6; Acts 20:26

- e) Peter said, “I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though you know them and be established in the present truth.” 2Pet. 1:12

3:2 The identity of the Judaizers.

- 1) Paul decried the Judaizers as dogs, “Beware of dogs.” vs. 2a
- a) The word speaks of a stray, vicious, snapping dog that roamed the street and garbage dumps, an expression of reproach and disdain. Deut. 23:18
- b) The word dog is used for the false prophet, “all dumb dogs, greedy dogs”.
Is. 56:10-11
- c) Jesus used it for the Jews in the Sermon on the Mount. Matt. 7:6
- d) The Jews used it as a derogatory term for the Gentiles as a rule.
- 2) Paul described the Judaizers by their character, “beware of evil workers.” vs. 2b
- a) The Judaizers were emphasizing works of the Law to be righteous before God and to earn salvation, fanatical errorist.
- b) Their works were evil for they contradicted and opposed the gospel of grace that rested completely in the work of Christ on the cross. 2Cor. 11:13, 26-27
- c) The adjective describe their moral character not merely their fruits.

- * They were going about to establish their own righteousness. Rom. 10:3
- 3) Paul described the Judaizers by their religious zeal, “beware of their mutilation!” vs. 2c
- a) The word the mutilation “kata tomen”, means to cut up and refers to the rite of circumcision.
- 1)) The Judaizers who were insisting on the law for salvation. Gal. 6:12, 14
- 2)) The word is used in the LXX of cuttings forbidden by the Law. Lev. 21:5; 1King 18:28
- b) The phrase is an expression of sarcasm, for placing the emphasis of salvation on the sexual organ that can only reproduce after it’s own kind, another sinner.
- 1)) It was a mark of self-righteousness explained in the next verse.
- 2)) It was a trap for the Jew and stumbled the Christian, so Paul sarcastically said they should go all the way and castrate themselves. Gal. 5:12
- 3)) To submit to such a demand for righteous before God was to fall from grace. Gal. 5:3-4
- c) Three times he repeats the word “beware” to identify the same individuals.
- 1)) The warning is emphatic of great importance, “be constantly on your guard”.

- 2)) There are people who are always trying to bring people under bondage to a self-righteous standard which endangers the believer’s freedom and misrepresents the gospel of grace!
- 3)) The verb is a present active imperative command to indicate they had not yet made their way into the church, but possibly could appear!

3:3 The identity of the believer.

- 1) Paul explains and interprets the previous verse, “For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit.” vs. 3a-b
- a) The believer “we” is emphatic, the circumcision that worships God in Spirit and truth, not traditions, rites or ceremonies.
- 1)) True circumcision is of the heart. Rom. 2:25-29; Deut. 10:10; Jer. 4:4
- 2)) The circumcision made without hands, being born again. Col. 2:11
- 3)) Faith which works through love is the worship God in Spirit. Gal. 5:6
- 4)) Jesus told the woman of Samaria, “The hour is coming and now is...” Jn. 4:23-24
- 2) Paul declared the joy of the believer, “rejoice in Christ Jesus.” vs. 3c
- a) A believer rejoices in Christ having satisfied all things, deserving all glory.

- b) Believers boasts not in the Law or works.
- c) Nothing can surpass the atoning efficiency of Christ to forgive sins and bring sinners to the Father.
- 3) Paul declared the sole trust of the believer, “and have no confidence in the flesh.” vs. 3d
 - a) The believer is one who does not rely or depend on his abilities of the flesh, the the abilites of the sinful nature of man.
 - 1)) The flesh represents the natural man.
 - 2)) The flesh represents the works of man. and self-righteousness.
 - b) The word confidence “peitho” means to be persuaded or induce by words to rely or depend on something.
 - a)) Paul used thirty times in his letters.
 - b)) The context will depict the positive or the negative.

3:4-7 The worthlessness of Paul’s own merits of the flesh compared to Christ.

- 3:4** The declaration of Paul’s confidence in his past works before coming to Christ.
- 1) Paul stated he was not lacking in works of the flesh for confidence, “though I also might have confidence in the flesh.” vs. 4a
 - a) The flesh identifies his own endeavors and abilities in which sinful man boast about.
 - b) He said he had plenty of works to be confident in before knowing Christ.

- 2) Paul challenged anyone to compare to his credentials, “If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so.” vs. 4b-c
 - a) Paul had a proudful excellence as to his reputation, as a Pharisee.
 - b) Paul was feared by Christians.
- 2) He had surpassed his equals in abilities, passion, discipline, devoted commitment.

3:5 The declaration of Paul’s pedigree by heritage.

- 1) Paul was, “Circumcised eighth day.” vs. 5a
 - a) Abraham was circumcised at age 99, Ishmael at 13. Gen. 17:12, 14; Lev. 12:3
 - b) Prosolytes at conversion.
- 2) Paul was, “of the stock of Israel.” vs. 5b
 - * The pure line by ancestry.
- 3) Paul was, “of the tribe of Benjamin.” vs. 5c
 - a) The Benjamites were fierce warriors.
 - b) Saul was of this tribe and their first king, who he most likely was named after.
 - c) The Benjamites were the only tribe to remain loyal to David.
 - d) Mordecai was Benjamite in Esther.
- 4) Paul was, “a Hebrew of the Hebrews.” vs. 5d
 - a) Both of his parents were Jews.
 - b) Both retained the Hebrew language, not as Grecians Hebrews.
- 5) Paul was, “concerning the law, a Pharisee.” vs. 5e-f

- a) The name Pharisee means a separate one.
- b) The Pharisees developed after the the Babylonian captivity of the Great Synagogue of Ezra the Scribe to protect the Law and teach the people the word to not go back into captivity again.
- c) The sect was of the strictest of Jewish sects. Acts 26:5
- d) Paul told the San Hedrein he was the son of a Pharisee. Acts 23:6
- e) Paul sat under the feet of Gamaliel. Acts 5:34; 22:3

5:6 The declaration of Paul about his accomplishments.

- 1) The passion of Paul, a Pharisee, “concerning zeal, persecuting church.” vs. 6a-b
 - a) Paul identified his zeal “zelos”, his fervent spirit as a dedicated and passionate Pharisee to keep the Law of Moses by persecuting Christians.
 - b) The word persecuting “diolo” means to make to run or flee, put to flight or chase, Paul caused believers to blaspheme, put in prison and death, like Steven, making havack of the church. Acts 7; 8:1-3; 26:10
 - c) Paul was converted on the Damascus road as Jesus appeared to him, as he had obtained letters from the chief priest to

- arrest Christian and bring them back to Jerusalem. Acts 8:3; 9:13- 21; 1Cor. 15:9
- d) Paul declared the specific crimes he committed against the church were done them in ignorance, thinking he was doing God service. 1Tim. 1:13
- 2) The personal discipline of Paul as a Pharisee, “concerning the righteousness of the law, blameless.” vs. 6c-d
 - a) Paul knew he could be called on these words if it were a lie, all knew him, but it was only based on external obedience.
 - * He was not saying he was sinless!
 - b) Paul as a Pharisee believed sins, faults and failures were limited to the outward deeds, not inward thoughts and motives.

3:7 The declaration of Paul about his changed spiritual perspective.

- 1) The past stands of Paul as a Pharisee was in sharp contrast to what he was now in Christ and about to mention by the word “but”.
- 2) The assesment of all his previous credentials and accomplishments had no value for his salvation or justification before God, “what things were gained to me, these I have counted loss for Christ”. vs. 7a-b
 - a) The word gain is plural, literally means “profits”, these gains robbed him and damaged his soul, absolute worthless stock!

* Actually hinderances for they had to be unlearned and abandoned!

b) Paul counted “hegeomai”, which means to account in the past, he balanced his sheet of credits and debits, assets and liabilities and saw his own bankruptcy before God to merit salvation.

1)) “Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”
Matt. 5:3

2)) The word counted is in the perfect middle indicative tense, have counted and keep on counting.

c) The word loss “zemia” for Christ means damaged, insignificant and worthless in comparison and the much better, Christ and His righteousness.

* The word is singular, putting all those things in one bundle, found also in verse 8, one other place for the loss when Paul shipwreck. Acts 27:10, 21

e) All his past righteousness had been bad investments to merit salvation.

1)) There is none righteous, no not one...all have sinned... Rom. 3:10, 23

2)) All his gains were counted as one great loss.

3) There are people who are heathens, moral upright or religious people, all are lost.

* What does a man profited if he gain the whole world... Matt. 16:25-26

3: 8-11 The declaration of Paul that he lived what he believed and taught.

3:8 The assured confidence of Paul in the superiority of Christ.

1) Paul confirmed his present assesment to be the same as at his conversion, “Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.”
vs. 8a

a) He had counted not only such things mentioned in verse 4-7 of no profit on the Damascus road in comparison to the excellence of the knowledge of Jesus Christ “my Lord”, indicating a personal and living relationship.

b) But all things in the present, Paul considered loss, being of no profit, gain or benefit for his superior standing justified and the righteous of Christ.

1)) The word excellence “huperecho” means what is superior in quality and authority.

2)) Not just those things he mentioned in the previous verses, but all others that might be used by men as credentials or righteousness before God to be saved.

c) The knowledge “gnosis” is about His person, authority, power and

preeminence as the Godman, the Redeemer of the world.

* This being the righteousness God provided for sinners to be saved is by and through Christ. Rom. 1:16-17

- 2) Paul affirmed faith and complete trust in Jesus, “for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ.”
 - a) The phrase “count them as rubbish” is a business term meaning “to punish by exacting a forfeit” and could be rendered “I have been caused to forfeit”.
 - b) The things mentioned that men hold so dear to them in the eyes of man to be thought of as righteous or spiritual before others.
- 3) Paul still continued to count all things, ongoing present, all of them were as rubbish that he might gain Christ.
 - a) The word for rubbish “skubalon” means manure, used for escrament a decayed corps.
 - b) Remember this included his Univerity of Tarsus education and by Gamaliel, this is 30 years after the Damascus experience!
 - c) Isaiah says that man’s righteousness is as filthy rags, a menstrour garment. Is. 64:6
 - d) All are guilty before God, Jew and Gentile and world. Rom. 3:19-20

3:9 The confessed righteousness of Paul was nothing, except the righeousness of Christ.

- 1) Paul first stated the negative, “and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law.” vs. 9a-c
 - a) Not having his own righteousness by the works of the Law that was deception, for the Law was spiritual, not merely external.

* Jesus made this clear on the Sermon on the Mount. Matt. 5-7
 - b) The Law accused and condemned man, it could not enable a man to keep the law.
 - 1)) None was righteous.
 - 2)) None could keep the entire law.
 - 3)) All were condemned.
 - c) Israel being ignorant of God’s righteousness was going about establishing their own righteousness and had not submitted to the righteousness of God. Rom. 10:3
- 2) Paul second stated the positive, “but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith.” vs. 9e
 - a) Through faith in Christ Jesus, through repentance and the new birth, not a national birth.

* Paul declared Himself to be the chief of sinners. 1Tim. 1:15

b) The righteousness which is from God by faith.

1)) This faith is revealed from faith to faith. Rom. 1:17; 3:21; 4:3-7

2)) This faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. Rom. 10:17

3:10 The motive behind his desire for the righteousness of Christ.

1) Paul's desire, "that I may know Him", implies a personal, intimate experience, not mere intellectual ascent or areligious experience. vs. 10a

2) Paul's desire was to know, "the power of His resurrection", in order to live the life of Christ. vs. 10a

* Gal. 5:16-17; Eph. 5:18

3) Paul's desire was to know, "and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death." vs 10b

a) Paul is referring to the death of his former life. Phil. 2:4-8

b) Paul is describing his goal to live the resurrected life here and now, living up to his full potential in Christ! Gal. 2:20; Rom. 6:1-4; Phil. 1: 21

c) Paul is talking about reckoning the Old Man dead daily in order to experience Christ living through him by walking in

the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Rom. 5:12-8-39; Phil. 4:13

d) Paul said, "I die daily." 1Cor. 15:31

e) Peter says we are not to think it strange when we fall into fiery trial. 1Pet. 4:12

g) Paul was called to suffer many things for the name of Jesus Christ. Acts 9:16; Phil. 1:29; Col. 1:24

3:11 The assured expectation of Paul.

1) Paul expressed his final goal in the future, "if, by any means." vs. 11a-b

a) He is not expressing doubt.

b) He is instead affirming his sure hope.

2) Paul expressed his longing for the rapture of the church, "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 believers will receive their glorified bodies and be just like his Savior! 1Cor. 15:35-58; 1Thess. 4:16-17

c) 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

- c) 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