

## Faith Understood Philippians 3:1-15

**vs. 1,** Rejoice brothers and sisters

Focus on Jesus and look beyond yourself.

- 1:18, Christ is proclaimed and in that I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice.
- 2:2, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.
- 2:17-18, Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. 18 Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.

No trouble to me and is safe for you.

I am warning you, because of my deep love for you.

Galatians 2:4-5 Yet because of false brothers secretly brought in—who slipped in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery— 5 to them we did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.

Judiazers were a segment of Jewish Christians who regarded the Levitical laws of the OT as still binding on all Christians. They easily mixed grace and works (especially circumcision).

They were hesitant to understand the full impact of Jesus' words on the cross, "it is finished."

The cross removes distinctions within the people of God.

Let's make our faith about what our faith is about. Our faith is about Jesus!

**vs. 2,** Look out (beware)

Dogs - By trying to make the Gentiles "clean" through circumcision, the Judiazers are the ones who are "unclean dogs".

Evildoers - They do evil because they are trying to place unnecessary burdens on the Gentiles (specific to the Mosaic law). They are legalists who question the completeness of grace.

In our setting -> Fundamentalists - Jesus plus / there is no plus!

Jesus is ENOUGH!

Mutilate the flesh - Paul again is using his skill of rhetoric.

peritemnó - circumcise / to cut around

katatomē - mutilate / to cut into pieces

Paul's point - their actions are the same as that of pagan priests.

1 Kings 18:28 And they cried aloud and cut themselves after their custom with swords and lances, until the blood gushed out upon them.

**vs. 3,** Contrast - We are the circumcision

Worship by the Spirit.

Glory (boast) in Christ.

Put no confidence in the flesh

We have been set apart. Jesus is our example.

We have been filled with the Holy Spirit.

We serve sacrificially through the love and mind of Christ. Our boasting is in Jesus, not ourselves.

To live is Christ (1:21)                      not                      to live is the law

The Judaizers have rejected boasting in the Lord in favor of confidence (boasting) in the flesh. Christ has fulfilled the law.

Remember: Joy is an action, it isn't a feeling.  
Knowing Christ is so beyond and far superior than "law keeping".

In suffering (current circumstances) don't fall victim to substituting law for Christ. Christ is our source of joy.

**vs. 4-6**, I know the game they are playing and it is empty. According to their rules, I excelled!

**vs. 7-9**, But...Jesus is everything!

Romans 2:29 But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.

My heart was changed. My heart was transformed. My life was turned upside down.

My worldview used to be, "I can attain".

The ultimate expression of a self-centered life is boasting before God of your human achievement.

But now, I have lost my goal of selfishness.  
I count everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.

Jesus is so much better! My religiosity is trash (rubbish).  
My values are completely changed.

Matthew 16:26 For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?

Righteousness is given it is not achieved.  
My righteousness is in Christ, from God, that depends on faith.

Live and serve in a way that reflects God's likeness and character.

**vs. 10**,  
The suffering of Jesus has put to death Paul's sin.  
The suffering of Jesus has put to death my sin.  
My faith and my hope is in Jesus. I fully trust in Christ and not myself.

vs. 4-6, rejecting his religious past  
vs. 7-11, knowing Christ now  
vs. 12-14, knowing Christ in the end (perseverance) Jesus is the prize!

**vs. 15**, Maturity  
If we truly understand the content and character of our faith, Paul says, we will stop being intimidated by the noise (distractions) of our opponents (a twisted and fallen world).

**Questions:**

How is my joy in Christ action oriented? How in action (not sentiment) is Jesus your joy?

How many add on's do you pile onto your faith?

What are your natural (fleshly) tendencies that you engage to feel better about yourself? How are these things harmful to you and to others (cutting into pieces)?

How do you deal with your sin? Is your answer to work harder? What does it mean to be saved because of the righteousness of Christ? Is your faith about Jesus or is it about a long "to do" list?

Does your life demonstrate a lived out understanding of faith in Jesus? Why do you have hope? How do you talk to others about your hope in Christ?

Do I see the upward call of God in Christ Jesus as the prize? It is a goal worth pursuing? Is Jesus everything?