

MADE FOR MORE
Made for a Divine Purpose
April 18, 2018
Pastor Jän van Oosten

Phil 3:1-11 Further, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you. **2** Watch out for those dogs, those evildoers, those mutilators of the flesh. **3** For it is we who are the circumcision, we who serve God by his Spirit, who boast in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh— **4** though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: **5** circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; **6** as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless. **7** But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. **8** What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ **9** and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. **10** I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, **11** and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

1. **Rejoice in the Lord** (v. 1): This is the sixth time Paul has used the verb rejoice in the letter. For Paul "joy" is primarily a verb, something we do rather than how we feel. The verb itself means to verbalize with praise and singing. This is steeped in the Old Testament world of the Psalms.

2. The BIG difference (from the OT) is that Paul admonishes his readers to rejoice in the "Lord"; namely, in the risen Lord Jesus Christ. Paul's point is that despite any challenges or circumstances, we do not allow our feelings to keep us from joyfully praising the Lord Jesus.

3. **Those dogs, those evildoers, those mutilators of the flesh...we who are the circumcision...becoming like him in his death** (vv. 2-3 and 10): To understand this section we need to see that the 1st century controversy about circumcision was NOT about the individual being justified before God (e.g. faith vs. works). The controversy was whether or not Gentiles needed to become Jews before being followers of the Messiah.

A. It was a people-group issue.

Acts 15:1-2 Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the believers: "Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved." **2** This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them.

B. We need to grasp the depth and meaning of baptism to grasp Paul's unique insight.

Colossians 2:9-12 For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, **10** and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority. **11** In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed by human hands. Your **whole self** ruled by the flesh was put off when you were circumcised by Christ, **12** having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.

C. Paul's point is that both Jew and Gentile die to all things (as represented in baptism) and live united to Christ for their right standing before God. Therefore, there was no need for Gentiles to be circumcised. However, this did not mean that Jews needed to stop being Jews in order to follow Christ.

Galatians 2:19-20 *"For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. 20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

Philippians 3:12-14 *Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. 13 Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.*

1. **Take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me** (v.12): Paul was very much aware that Jesus had taken hold of his life for a divine purpose. Therefore, it was his job to strive with all his might to "work out" that which God had "worked in" his life. In other words, Paul didn't want to be a wicked, lazy servant.

Ephesians 2:8-10 *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

Matthew 25:22-29 *"The man with two bags of gold also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.' 23 "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' 24 "Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 25 So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.' 26 "His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? 27 Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. 28 "'So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. 29 For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them.*

Philippians 2:12-13 *Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.*

Take Away

1. The big point is that believers actually don't have their own life to live. We live out Christ's purpose through our life. Christianity is not a "self-fulfillment" religion.