

Stand Firm, Dear Friends
Christ-centered Confidence
 Philippians 3:1-9

3:1 Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you.

The gospel is all about what it means to be **in the Lord**.

The gospel is not something we ever outgrow; it's something we ever grow into.

Our ultimate security and significance are never at risk; both are **safe in the Lord**.

Habakkuk 3:17-19 *Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, **yet I will rejoice in Yahweh; I will take joy in the God of my salvation**. Yahweh Adonai is my strength; he makes my feet like the deer's; he makes me tread on my high places.*

Nehemiah 8:10 *The joy of the Lord is your strength!*

1 Chronicles 16:27 *Splendor and majesty are before him. Strength and joy are in his place.*

Matthew Henry - *The joy of the Lord will arm us against the assaults of our enemies and put our mouths out of taste for those pleasures that the tempter baits his hooks.*

The joy of the Lord is a divine armament.

3:2 Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh.

dogs = *kunas*; evildoers = *kakous*; mutilators = *katatome*

Judaizers—Jews who claimed to believe in Jesus as the Christ, the Messiah, but only in the larger context of Judaism. They were willing to accept Jesus as an “add-on” Messianic figure. His death and resurrection were significant, but only within the structures of Judaism. It was Jesus plus keeping the Jewish law that made a sinner right with God. They badly perverted the gospel, and then made things even worse when they insisted that Gentiles must also become Jews before they could be Christians, or even be holy as Christians and members of the Messianic Community of the Church.

Wordplay: The Judaizers had turned *peritome* (circumcision) into *katatome* (mutilation).

Circumcision of the Heart (**Deuteronomy 10:30; 30:6; cp. Jeremiah 4:4**)

Romans 2:28-29 *No one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter.*

Religion based on works-righteousness is the greatest enemy of the gospel.

3:3 For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh.

The Marks of a True Believer

1. They worship by the Spirit of God.
2. They glory in Christ Jesus.
3. They put no confidence in the flesh.

3:4-6 ...though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, a full-blooded Israelite of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

The first four features of Paul's resume of righteousness were inherited as a pure blooded Jew. The last three were his personal religious achievements.

Paul's balance sheet in heaven indicated he was morally bankrupt. All he thought were credits, were in fact debits, because his religion kept him from God's grace in the gospel.

3:7-9 But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith.

Isaiah 64:6 All our righteous deeds are as filthy rags to God

Romans 3:20 By works of the law no human being will be justified in God's sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

Rubbish = refuse; manure

A Fool's Play – cp. **2 Corinthians 11 & 12**

The Surpassing Worth of Gospel Righteousness

1. Knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord
2. Gaining Christ
3. Being found in Christ

"Christianity is the only identity that is received, not achieved." Tim Keller