

Philippians 3: 1-11  
Losing the World and Gaining Christ

Summary: Paul warns the Philippians to stand fast against Judaizers who would lead them away from the true Gospel. He encourages them with his own testimony of conversion from pursuing a life of righteousness based in the Law to receiving the righteousness which comes from God by grace through faith in Christ Jesus.

1. Dogs on Your Heels, Watch Out for the False Circumcision (1-3)
    - a. Saying it again – rejoicing in the Lord guards you
      - i. Why does rejoicing in the Lord guard you?
        1. Placing our confidence and hope in Him
      - ii. Warnings again about problems which concern Paul
        1. It is no trouble for him to warn them again
    - b. The warning – “Look out for those Judaizers”
      - i. Dogs – considered impure, outside the people of God (Matt 7:6)
      - ii. Evil workers – Judaizing “missionaries”
      - iii. False circumcision - “the mutilation” (Rom 2:28,29)
    - c. The “true” circumcision – “we” meaning all Christians, believing Jew and Gentile alike are the true people of God
      - i. Gentiles are grafted as part of the people of God (Rom 11:11-16, Gal 3:7-9;27-29, Gal 6:12-18, Eph 2:11-22, Col 3:9-11)
      - ii. Characteristics of the true people of God- how they should act
        1. “worship in the Spirit” service to God (John 4:24, Rom 8:9-17)
        2. “glory (boast) in Christ Jesus” – confidence in Him (1 Cor 1:27-31, Gal 6:13,14)
        3. “put no confidence in the flesh” – all human achievements (Gal. 5:16-26)
- Contrast on all 3 points to the Judaizers
2. Listen to Me Boast About the Flesh (as Though it Meant Anything!) (4-6)
    - a. Paul’s response to Judaizers – “If confidence in the flesh meant anything before God, I have you beat on all counts” (4)
    - b. Paul’s **birthright privileges** (5)
      - i. Circumcised eighth day (not a proselyte)
      - ii. Nation of Israel, a Benjamite (Saul, first king of Israel from same tribe)
      - iii. Hebrew of Hebrews (spoke Hebrew, not Hellenized Jew)
      - iv. A Pharisee (“set apart ones”, strictest sect, zealous to maintain Law) Acts 23:6
    - c. Pauls’ **personal accomplishments** (6)
      - i. Zeal to the point of persecuting the church
        1. Why did Paul **persecute** the church?
          - a. Against Gamaliel’s counsel (Acts 5:33-40)
          - b. The growth of the church and Stephen (Acts 6:7-15; 7)

- c. Saul's (Paul's) role with Stephen, "ravages" the church (Acts 7:58-8:3, Acts 26: 9-11, Gal 1:13-16)
- d. His zeal for God and devotion to the Law (Acts 22:3-5)
- ii. Blameless in the righteousness of the Law
  - 1. "blameless" – scrupulous in his adherence to the Law and oral traditions as a Pharisee
  - 2. What righteousness is in the Law? (Rom 7:12, 8:3)
  - 3. The rich young ruler (Luke 18:18-22)

3. Assessing His loss and Glorifying in the Gain of Christ (7-8)

a. Counting all these fleshly privileges and achievements loss to gain Christ (7)

Referring back to vss. 5,6

- i. "whatever things were gain to me" – all that he had centered his life on was of no value before God
- ii. "Those things I have counted as loss" – the things he had counted on to give him righteous standing before God were loss
- iii. "for the sake of Christ" (Phil. 1:21)

b. EVEN MORE, **Everything is loss** to me in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ (8)

Since the Damascus road he lost all to gain Christ as his LORD

- i. Losing "all" (they are personal liabilities now to Paul)
- ii. Knowing Christ is the greatest gain – far exceeds the "loss" of worldly things for he now knows him as Christ Jesus "my Lord" (Matt 16:25,26)
- iii. Paul's sufferings and loss for the sake of Christ (Acts 9:15,16)
- iv. Comparatively the world is as valuable as dung compared to gaining Christ (Isa 64:6). The great contrast – "for the sake of Christ" (7) >> "for the sake of the incomparable value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord" (8). (Silva)
- v. For the prize of "gaining Christ"

4. The Benefits that Come from Christ When We Gain Him (9-11)

a. **Justified** and United with Christ (9)

- i. Found in Him – united with Him and now identified in Christ in contrast to his former identification (Matt 16:24-26)
- ii. Without "outward" righteousness of his past life (Rom 3:20)
- iii. But now, the righteousness which comes from Christ through faith (Luther's "alien" righteousness, not our own, but His) (Rom 3:21-26)

b. **Sanctified** in Christ (10)

Paul's heart to press forward and know Christ (3:12)

- i. To know Him (2 Cor 4:6, the Damascus road)
- ii. To know the power of the resurrection – we are raised to new life in Christ (Rom 6:3-11)
- iii. To participate in the fellowship of His sufferings and death. Those united with Him will suffer with Him, conformed to His death. (2 Cor 4:6-12) "we suffer with Him that we may also be glorified with Him" (Rom 8:17)

c. **Glorified** with Christ (11)

“If by any means I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.” NKJV, KJV  
“that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.”

ESV

- i. The resurrection of the body (glorification) is the full and final goal of our salvation. (Romans 8:30)
- ii. Paul, by his example of great humility, is emphasizing the need for perseverance and being faithful to the end. He has full confidence in the persevering work of God. (Phil 1:6, 2:12,13) He wants to stress to the Philippians the need to persevere in the daily fight and not be presumptuous. ( 1 Cor: 9:27, Col 1:21-23, Heb 3:6)
- iii. This verse also clearly anticipates vss. 12-14, “Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.” Paul strives to know Christ now and the eventual prize of eternal life with Him.

**Questions for discussion:**

What does it mean to “worship (serve) in the Spirit”? Why is this an important mark of a believer?

How do we live our lives “boasting in Christ Jesus”?

How do we safeguard our lives from the dangers of fleshly legalism?

How does God shape our lives when we “suffer with Christ” in this life?