

ALL THINGS NEW - "Where is your Hope?" - Philippians 3:1-11

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1. Rejoice Always and Reject Legalism (vv. 1–3)

"Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you. Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh—"

"Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I will say rejoice..." Philippians 4:4

Verse 1 - Paul transitions with "Finally" (meaning from this point onward), calling them to rejoice in the Lord. Notice He does not tell them to "rejoice in your circumstances". Knowing that true joy is a choice whose opportunity only comes from the Lord and repeating this truth protects the proclaimer - inoculating one against complacency or despondency. Ultimately this truth is unassailable - Only God's judgment matters.

Verse 2 - Sharp warnings to "look out" for false teachers, specifically Judaizers who taught that Gentile Christians must follow Jewish laws (like circumcision) to be saved. He labels them harshly ("dogs," "evildoers," "mutilators of the flesh") to emphasize the spiritual danger of a counterfeit gospel. The simplicity of the Gospel is revealing - the slightest addition or subtraction to the essential truth is indicative of evil and should be easy to spot!

Verse 3 - True believers are the "true circumcision"—marked internally by the Spirit, glorying in Christ, and putting zero confidence in human effort or the flesh. There will always be those who want to measure their virtue and righteousness by human effort, so God through Paul calls out the condition of the heart as central. It is only conviction to the truth of who Jesus is and what He did for us that justifies the human soul.

2. Paul's (and our) "Resume" (vv. 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, of the people of Israel, 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."

Verse 4 - Paul states that if anyone could boast in human heritage or self-effort, it is him - pointing out of course the futility of human effort to justify self before a holy God. He makes it clear with points of reference in verse 5.

Verse 5 - Bona-Fides:

- Circumcised on the eighth day (strict covenant adherence).
- Of the people of Israel (born into God's chosen people - of the blood of Abraham).
- Of the tribe of Benjamin (the royal/elite tribe alongside Judah).
- A Hebrew of Hebrews (culturally and linguistically pure).
- A Pharisee (a member of the strictest sect dedicated to law-keeping - not some liberal Sadducee!).

Verse 6 - The performance: Zealous enough to persecute the church, and "blameless" regarding legalistic, external righteousness - and that external righteousness is useless as Paul states it - for it is mere human effort. So if it cannot be done by Paul, nor anyone else in all creation - then who can be righteous in this way without God? So what is Christian righteousness but a gift of God? Only the judgment of God matters!

3. The Great Exchange: Gain vs. Loss (damaging) (vv. 7-8)

"But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of 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."

Verse 7 - Paul flips his perspective. Everything he once considered a "gain" or an asset for salvation, he now counts as a complete "loss" because of Christ. Christ's sacrifice is only necessary because of the complete inability of man to accomplish on its own. If not, if man was capable of simply being "better" on its own - then Jesus' death would be unnecessary! So if restored status is only a gift granted - then what is the opinion of man? Especially unredeemed man! Silence the criticism of the world!

Verse 8 - He takes it a step further: Paul counts everything as loss compared to the "surpassing worth" of knowing Jesus. He calls his former religious achievements "rubbish" (or skubalon, meaning dung or refuse) to show their total inability to save him. His ultimate goal is simply to "gain Christ". Not to "be better" but to grow closer to His God as revealed in the person, teaching and sacrifice of Jesus the Christ.

4. Righteousness by Faith Alone (v. 9)

“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”

Verse 9 - He desires to be "found in him"—not having his own righteousness built on obeying the law, but possessing the "alien righteousness" that comes directly from God through faith in Christ. This righteousness is based completely on faith and hope build by trust - not achievement.

5. The Goal of Knowing Christ (vv. 10–11)

“that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.”

Verse 10 - Paul outlines the deep intimacy of the Christian life. He wants to know three things:

- Christ Himself: Experiencing a personal relationship.
- The Power of His Resurrection: The transforming power of the Spirit actively working in the believer right now.
- The Fellowship of His Sufferings: Becoming like Him in His death, identifying with Christ even when it means facing hardship or rejection for the gospel.

Verse 11 - The ultimate hope: attaining the "resurrection from the dead", looking forward to eternal, perfected life with God. That is the only hope and justifier of joy we should ever need.