

Philippians 3:1-11 | God's Eternal Economy

Review

- Last May, I began a study on Philippians
- Today, we'll start in Chapter 3, but I want to give a brief synopsis up to this point
 - Paul's Joy Epistle - Written from prison late in his life
 - Great reminder that our joy doesn't depend on our circumstances
 - Paul has a deep connection and love for the people of Philippi
 - They have been faithful partners in Paul's ministry
 - Philosophy for Christian Living
 - God uses our burdens and afflictions for his glory
 - **Philippians 1:12 ESV - (12) I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel,**
 - His aim is Christ
 - **Philippians 1:21 ESV - (21) For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.**
 - He encourages them to consider how they live
 - **Philippians 1:27 ESV - (27) Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel,**
 - Pattern for Christian Living
 - Others
 - **Philippians 2:3 ESV - (3) Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.**
 - Christ demonstrated the ultimate humility
 - **Philippians 2:8 ESV - (8) And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.**
 - God is the one who does the work in us
 - **Philippians 2:13 ESV for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.**

Passage

Philippians 3:1-11 ESV - (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. (2) Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. (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-- (4) 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: (5) 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; (6) as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. (7) But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. (8) 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 (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-- (10) that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, (11) that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Study

Philippians 3:1-2 ESV - (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. (2) Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh.

- Paul writes, “finally my brothers” - but the Holy Spirit obviously wasn’t finished. He’s only half way through his letter to the Philippians
 - He warns them to “look out” for three types of people - all of which are false teachers
 - Dogs
 - **Isaiah 56:10-11 ESV - (10) His watchmen are blind; they are all without knowledge; they are all silent dogs; they cannot bark, dreaming, lying down, loving to slumber. (11) The dogs have a mighty appetite; they never have enough. But they are shepherds who have no understanding; they have all turned to their own way, each to his own gain, one and all.**
 - Teachers who are lazy in their teaching - don’t speak the hard truth
 - Evildoers - those who will lead you astray / have another agenda
 - Those who mutilate the flesh - putting people back under the law
 - We must be vigilant to discern who we listen
 - Test everything against God’s Word
 - **Colossians 2:8 ESV - (8) See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.**
 - Paul’s warning about false teachers is important, because they can influence what people believe
 - What we believe matters
 - **James 3:1 ESV - (1) Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.**
 - There is such a thing as eternal truth
 - There is blessing in helping people find it
 - There will be judgement for leading people away from it
- (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--**
- Circumcision refers to those who are set apart from the world
 - **Galatians 6:15 ESV - (15) For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.**
 - He goes on to call out two attributes of people who are set aside or consecrated to God
 - Their worship is by the Spirit of God
 - **John 4:23-24 ESV - (23) But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. (24) God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."**
 - Their confidence and glory is in Christ

(4) 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:

- Paul names several reasons for having confidence in the flesh.
 - He's not trying to boast.

(5) 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; (6) as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

- Paul's resume is better than anyone's and yet he has no confidence in the flesh
- He knows that NONE of those things can produce a righteousness that is acceptable to God
- He spent the first part of his life storing up everything he had to offer for his salvation, so God would be pleased with him
 - Nobody was going to top Paul in that endeavor

(7) But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

- All of those credits he had saved up are worthless to him in comparison to knowing Jesus.
- When Paul was converted on the road to Damascus, he learned that his economy didn't match God's:
 - Accounting: debits / credits represent changes in account balances
 - Paul: gains and losses
 - Paul was bringing all of the reasons he was good enough for heaven
 - And he learned that those things had no value
 - **Isaiah 64:6 NIV - (6) All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.**
 - Nothing originating from unclean man can be clean
 - The longer he valued his own righteous acts, the more they worked against him
 - Not just a value of zero - they had a negative value

(8) 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

- Let's start at the end:
 - *"...For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ (9) and be found in him"*
 - This isn't about salvation
 - This is about God's eternal economy.
 - Debits / Credits, Deposits / Withdrawals, Paul uses Gains / Losses
 - The thing Paul is **gaining** is an incredible eternal depth of relationship with Christ, that results in Paul being found in him.
 - Not only does he consider his righteous acts a loss, but Paul goes on in v8 to say "Everything" is a loss
 - There is nothing in this world worth holding on to with a closed hand
 - Money / job / good deeds / skills / fame / health / family
 - They aren't bad in themselves, but in the ledger of eternity, they can drive you into debt if you glory in them
 - Some believers will get to eternity spiritually bankrupt because they did not understand the economy of heaven
- I remember the first time that God really brought his eternal economy home for me:
 - *"All I need is Jesus" Story*

- **Hebrews 13:5-6 ESV - (5) Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." (6) So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"**
 - We looked at this last week:
 - Focused on the promise that Jesus would never leave nor forsake us
 - We have no need to fear
 - Man can do nothing of eternal significance to us
 - This passage of scripture is what the Lord taught me in a season of scarcity
 - God loved me enough to bring me to a place with nowhere else to turn
 - I know Jesus better
 - I have deeper fellowship with him
 - My eternal quality of life will be elevated:
 - **James 1:12 ESV - (12) Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.**
 - Many crowns available to believers in heaven
 - Crown of Life, Crown of Righteousness, Incorruptible Crown, Crown of Glory, Crown of Rejoicing
 - Degrees of punishment for the lost
 - Degrees of rewards for the believers
 - Crown of Life for those who remain steadfast under trial
- **(8) 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**
 - We've discussed the inverse nature of God's economy
 - What the world values is of no value in heaven
 - In fact, the word "rubbish" is literally "dung" in the Greek
 - Jesus illustrates this same inverse nature of God's economy for us:
 - **Matthew 19:24-26 ESV - (24) Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God." (25) When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished, saying, "Who then can be saved?" (26) But Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."**
 - Right after Rich Young Ruler put faith in riches instead of Jesus
 - The rich were elevated
 - Disciples: If it was that hard for the "GREAT" among them to go to heaven, then nobody could!
 - Jesus calmed them by reminding that it is a work of God and not a work of Man
 - Rich = Camels | Rest of us = Sheep
 - Neither one of them are squeezing through the eye of the needle if God doesn't do it
 - Peter asks Jesus a question about this eternal economy
 - **Matthew 19:27-29 ESV - (27) Then Peter said in reply, "See, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?" (28) Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (29) And everyone who has left**

houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life.

- This is a peek into eternity
 - Those 12 thrones that Jesus described are very real and are for the apostles
- Heaven won't be about strumming harps on clouds
 - Those different degrees of life in heaven are conditional upon the life that we live RIGHT NOW
 - The passion that Paul has, is to teach the distinction that:
 - Eternal life is a completely free gift
 - But eternal rewards are completely earned, and they don't have anything to do with the world's economy
- Jesus continues...
- **Matthew 19:30 ESV - (30) But many who are first will be last, and the last first.**
 - God's eternal economy is inverted
 - Different degrees of rewards for believers
- What does that look like?
 - **1 Corinthians 3:11-15 ESV - (11) For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. (12) Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw-- (13) each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. (14) If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. (15) If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.**
 - You get to heaven by trusting Jesus as your foundation
 - When this short life is over, only eternal things will remain on your foundation
 - Many who are rich on earth will turn up in heaven with nothing but their lives, like those who escape a house fire.

(8) 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 (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--

- In vs. 9, Paul is continuing to unpack that which is a credit (or gain) in the eternal economy
 - It is what he is willing to consider EVERYTHING a loss for:
 - Gaining Christ
 - Be Found in Him
 - Not having a righteousness that comes from his own works
 - Having an ETERNAL righteousness through faith in Christ
 - The righteousness that Paul tried to produce on his own did nothing to affect his standing before God.
 - Only the righteousness that belonged to Christ, which was applied to Paul by faith alone satisfied the debt that was owed because of his sin.
 - This is POSITIONAL righteousness before God
 - Listen to the reality of what Paul is describing:

