

~ Joy In Knowing Christ ~

(Part 2)

Text: Phil 3:1–11

Theme: The joy that can be ours over the things that are ours in Christ ought to make everything else, outside of Christ, seem totally worthless.

Intro:

1. Last week we began looking at chapter three which opens with a warning about false teachers and false doctrine and exhorts the believers to forsake the idea of a works-based salvation in favour of the assurance of total salvation in Jesus Christ.
2. We were able to study the first 7 verses last week and will continue with verses 8-11 tonight.
 - I. Joy in Forsaking a Life of Works (Vs 1-8)
 - II. Joy in Embracing My Life in Christ (Vs 8-11)

Review:

- I. **Joy in Forsaking a Life of Works** (Vs 1-8)
 - A. The warning against works-based sanctification (Vs 1-3)
 1. Paul prefaces his warning with a firm exhortation to rejoicing in the Lord.
 - a. Paul says, “Finally... rejoice in the Lord”. As though everything he has already described to them has not been enough to produce joy in them, Paul finally exhorts them to be joyful in their relationship with Jesus Christ. Along with all those other things, rejoice in the Lord.
 2. Paul gives a warning concerning false teachers.
 - a. Paul thought it worth his time to repeatedly warn against the same things.
 - i. The New Testament is literally filled with warnings about error. Terms like “beware,” “Take heed,” “warn,” “forewarn,” and “be vigilant” are used frequently. Every believer needs such warnings. Every family needs such warnings. Every New Testament church will give such warnings.”¹
 - b. Beware of dogs.
 - c. Beware of evil workers

¹ Paul’s Prison epistles, Pg 356; David W. Cloud 2021; Way of Life Literature

- d. Beware of the concision.
 - i. These were false teachers who insisted that non-Jewish Christians must undergo physical circumcision and keep the Mosaic law to be saved.
 - ii. The warning against false teachers was clearly a warning against works-based salvation.
 - iii. It is interesting to note that, since the early days of Christianity, there have been those who try to add works to salvation and the Apostle Paul had his hands full with trying to combat these heretics.
3. Paul's explanation of the Christian circumcision.
 - a. Circumcision was not the means of salvation for the Jews, but was a sign, or token, of the covenant God had made with Abraham.
 - i. **Genesis 17:11** *"And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you."*
 - b. Paul explains that the circumcision of the flesh is not what brings us near to God under the New Covenant.
 - i. It is our identification with Christ that makes us partakers in the New Covenant. He is the one by whom we draw near unto God and find favour in the eyes of God.
- B. The warning against legalism (Vs 4-8)
 1. Paul explains that if anyone could boast in their own good works it was him.
 - a. If anyone could boast in their keeping of the law, it was Paul. (Vs 4)
 - i. Paul was circumcised the 8th day
 - ii. Of the stock of Israel, a Hebrew of the Hebrews
 - iii. When it came to keeping the law, Paul had been a devout Pharisee.
 - iv. Paul persecuted the church of Jesus Christ, prior to his conversion.
 - v. Concerning the righteousness in the law, blameless.
 - b. Despite all the religious standing he might have had in his own good works, Paul counted all of that as being worthless when compared with Christ.
 - i. Here he gives us his own "Profit and Loss Statement." On one side he lists the above-mentioned items, the things that had been **gain to** him. On the other side he writes

the single word **Christ**. They all amount to nothing when compared with the treasure which he had found in Christ.²

Main:

II. Joy in Embracing My Life in Christ (Vs 8-11)

A. Joy in possessing his righteousness (Vs 8)

1. Paul counted everything else as worthless in order to be identified with Christ and possess his righteousness.
 - a. Paul has just explained all the ways in which he kept the law and in the eyes of the Law he would be considered righteous, but he rejected that righteousness for a better one.
 - i. It isn't just that he rejected those works as a basis for his own righteousness, but he rejected all other forms of self-righteousness.
 - "Not only those things which he had just specified, and which he had himself possessed, he says he would be willing to renounce in order to obtain an interest in the Saviour, but *every thing* which could be imagined."³
 - ii. You can put all the best of everything that world has to offer on one side and salvation through Christ on the other; what the world has to offer will never compare to the salvation that is ours in Christ.
 - **Mark 8:36-37** *"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"*
 - iii. What ever it is that you think you have done or could do to obtain righteousness in your own strength, it is worthless in the eyes of God.
2. The picture here is quite interesting. Paul says that he counts all things as loss when compared to Christ.
 - a. Another way of saying it would be that Paul considered all other means by which he might seek to obtain righteousness as though they actually resulted in a deficit in his account when compared with the righteousness he had gained in Christ.
 - b. In other words, there was no such thing as Paul's righteousness plus the righteousness of Christ. In fact, he thought of his own righteousness as being nothing more than dung. It was

² William MacDonald, [*Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*](#), ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 1972.

³ Albert Barnes, [*Notes on the New Testament: Ephesians, Philippians & Colossians*](#), ed. Robert Frew (London: Blackie & Son, 1884–1885), 194.

excremental when compared with the pure righteousness of Christ which had been imputed to his account.

- i. To think that you can add to your own salvation is like having the righteousness of Christ filling you and then carrying around an extra bag of dung just in case you needed to make up for some deficit in righteousness.
- ii. Even if the righteousness of Christ was not enough for us it is foolish to think we could make up the difference with our defective, filthy rags, worthless as dung righteousness.

B. Joy in the day of Christ (Vs 9)

1. Paul's desire was that, in the day of judgement, he would be found in Christ.

a. What does it mean "to be found in him."

- i. It means that, when I stand before God and my life is reviewed or investigated, it will be discovered that my standing before God is not based on my own righteousness but on the righteousness of Jesus Christ.
- ii. "The idea is, that when the investigations of the great day should take place in regard to the ground of salvation, it might be found that he was united to the Redeemer and depended solely on his merits for salvation"⁴
- iii. It's almost as though Paul pictures a day when he will stand before God the Father in heaven and the Father will ask, "Why should I let you into heaven?" Upon hearing this question, the Lord Jesus steps forward and says, "This one is with me." And on that basis Paul expects to enter heaven.
 - Many people will have only their own good works to point to and, as we've already discussed, that is like presenting dung.

b. Paul placed no emphasis on his own righteousness at all.

- i. The Judaizers placed emphasis on their identification with Abraham through the token of circumcision, but Paul says, "I would give up all of that to be found, not in Abraham, but in Christ. Not having a self-attained righteousness under the law but having the righteousness which is mine by faith in Jesus Christ."

⁴ Albert Barnes, [*Notes on the New Testament: Ephesians, Philippians & Colossians*](#), ed. Robert Frew (London: Blackie & Son, 1884–1885), 195.

- ii. Again, it is far better to be found in Christ and under grace than to be in Abraham and under the bondage of the law.
- 2. The Law was never able to make a person holy, it only ever showed our sinfulness.
 - a. The Law is perfect, and it demands perfection from those who are under it, but we could never achieve perfection and the law could never help us keep it's holy demands.
 - i. **Romans 8:3-4** *"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: 4) That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."*
 - ii. Again, the Law of God is perfect and, like a mirror, it shows us our imperfections but to try and make yourself holy by applying the law to your life is like trying to clean your face by rubbing your face on the mirror. It will not work. The law cannot make you perfect, it can only show your imperfections for what they truly are.
 - b. Before the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the law acted as a signpost to point people to the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - Paul explains this clearly in the book of Galatians. **Galatians 3:23-26** *"But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. 24) Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25) But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. 26) For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."*
 - In Bible times a schoolmaster was not a teacher but was a trusted slave who would ensure your child went to school. They would act as the escort to make sure your child made it to the teacher.
Paul is effectively saying that the Law was our escort to bring us to the true Master Teacher, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is also our Saviour.
 - c. The amazing thing about obtaining righteousness through faith in Christ is that it isn't dependent upon us.
 - i. The righteousness of Christ has been imputed to our account and it can never be lost.
 - ii. Now that we have the righteousness of Christ under grace we possess the righteousness that meets the high

standards of the Law, not because we earned it, but it is ours by faith in Jesus Christ.

- iii. The law is the perfect standard, but it could not help us keep its demands. In Christ, we have “*been made the righteousness of God in him*” (2 Cor 5:21) and Christ now enables us to live in victory over sin, which is something the law could not do.
- iv. This is why Paul saw the righteousness that is ours in Christ as being far better than any righteousness that could be obtained through works under the Law.
- v. “The idea of Paul is, that he now saw that it was far more desirable to be saved by righteousness obtained from God than by his own. That obtained from God was perfect, and glorious, and sufficient; that which he had attempted to work out was defective, impure, and wholly insufficient to save the soul. It is far more honourable to be saved by God than to save ourselves; it is more glorious to depend on him than to depend on anything that we can do.”⁵

C. Joy in knowing and identifying with him (Vs 10-11)

1. Paul's standing before God was his relationship with Jesus Christ.

- a. To know him is to come into a relationship with and understanding of him.
 - i. For example, I know of Donald Trump but I don't know Donald Trump. To get to know someone requires developing a relationship with that individual.
 - ii. To know the Lord Jesus Christ requires that we seek a relationship with him that goes beyond simple head knowledge.
 - It isn't enough to say “I believe Jesus existed” or “I believe that Jesus really was crucified by the Romans.” Believing he is a real person and choosing to enter into a relationship with him by faith are two different things.
- b. Paul's desire was to be identified with Christ, to be brought into close relationship and fellowship with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection power and in the living out of His life through Paul. It was to be “Christ living in me.”
 - i. “That I may be fully acquainted with his nature, his character, his work, and with the salvation which he has

⁵ Albert Barnes, [*Notes on the New Testament: Ephesians, Philippians & Colossians*](#), ed. Robert Frew (London: Blackie & Son, 1884–1885), 196.

wrought out. It is one of the highest objects of desire in the mind of the Christian to *know Christ*.⁶

2. Paul wanted to know the power of Christ's resurrection
 - a. The resurrection of Jesus Christ guarantees our future resurrection to eternal life.
 - i. **Romans 6:5** *"For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection."*
 - ii. When God the Father raised Jesus Christ from the dead he provided proof that the atonement for sin had been accepted and that eternal life was now available to anyone who would accept it as a gift from God.
 - iii. **Revelation 22:17** *"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."*
 - b. The resurrection of Jesus Christ gives us power for holy living.
 - i. The same power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead is the power by which we are commanded to walk in newness of life.
 - **Romans 6:4** *"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."*
 - ii. The Lord Jesus Christ rose victorious over sin, death, and judgement and he provides the same to all who are united with him by faith.
3. Paul wanted to be identified with Christ in everything.
 - a. "All that Christ did and suffered was glorious in his view, and he wished in all things to resemble him. He did not desire merely to share his honours and triumphs in heaven, but, regarding his *whole* work as glorious, he wished to be wholly conformed to that, and, as far as possible, to be *just like Christ*."⁷
 - i. Many who desire to reign with Christ are not willing to suffer with Christ first. They want the glory of the resurrection without the shame of suffering reproach for the Saviours name.

⁶ Albert Barnes, [*Notes on the New Testament: Ephesians, Philippians & Colossians*](#), ed. Robert Frew (London: Blackie & Son, 1884–1885), 196.

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- ii. As the hymn *Am I a Soldier of the Cross?* says, “Must I be carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease while others fought to win the prize and sailed through bloody seas? Are there no foes for me to face, must I not stem the flood? Is this vile world a friend to grace to help me on to God? Sure, I must fight if I would reign, increase my courage, Lord. I’ll bear the toil, endure the pain supported by Thy Word.”
 - b. Paul desired to be conformed to the image of Christ in every way, even if it meant suffering.
 - i. To be made conformable unto his death is to be changed into the same pattern or mold as Christ in his death.
 - The idea here is not just that I would be willing to die like Christ but that I would be willing to live my life in with the same godly character which Christ displayed for us in his death for us.
 - ii. In other words, I am willing to spend and be spent for the Saviour, giving myself entirely over to his cause, just as he was willing to give himself for me.
 - **Have I Done My Best for Jesus:**
 “I wonder have I done my best for Jesus who died upon the cruel tree. To think of his great sacrifice at Calvary, I know my Lord expects the best from me.”

 “The hours that I have wasted are so many, the hours I’ve spent for Christ so few. Because of all my lack of love for Jesus, I wonder if his heart is breaking too”

 “How many are the lost that I have lifted? How many are the chained I’ve help to free? I wonder have I done my best for Jesus when he has done so much for me?”
4. The goal of all this was to attain to the resurrection of the dead.
- a. “Attain to” means to come to or secure the object.
 - i. The goal of Paul’s total identification with Christ in all things was his confidence of the resurrection unto eternal life that Christ promises to all who trust in him.
 - ii. It isn’t that he was hoping to reach this goal in his own strength or earn it in his own efforts but that, by his full identification with Christ, he expected to reach the goal of resurrection unto eternal life.
 - b. The Christian life requires a lot of leaving and cleaving.

- i. The Christian is called to forsake anything that would hinder us from coming to Christ and then leave behind anything that would hinder us from serving Christ as we ought to.
 - **Hebrews 12:1** *"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,"*
- ii. And we are to cling to the Saviour and desire to be conformed to his image.
 - **Romans 12:1-2** *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."*
 - Leave the world behind and cleave unto the Saviour with this goal in mind that we will one day be raised from the dead to live with Him eternally.

Conclusion:

1. So, Paul had joy in knowing Christ and in being identified with Christ in his life and in his death, in his resurrection life and reigning in heaven as well as in his suffering and humility.
2. **Philippians 1:29** *"For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;"*