

Session 5: "Joy in Our Confidence"
Philippians 3

God offers us a new kind of confidence: a confidence that's not found by looking out over my ACCOMPLISHMENTS or searching WITHIN, but instead looking UP.

Philippians 3:1-11

The Reminder: REJOICE! (v. 1)

The Warning: Beware of those who promise ACCEPTANCE based on following the Old Testament Law (v. 2)

- Did Gentile believers need to convert to Judaism in order to become Christians? NO!
- Peter, "God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them [the Gentiles] by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us, and he made no distinction between us and them, having cleansed their hearts by faith. Now, therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will." (Acts 15:8-11)

The Irony: Paul turns the former "badges of honor" into "signs of DESTRUCTION" (v. 2, 4-6)

- Paul isn't saying that circumcision or the law itself is EVIL (Romans 7:12)
- The old covenant pertained to an age before the giving of the SPIRIT, and so it inevitably brought curse rather than blessing since human beings were unable to keep it.
- If anyone could call himself "blameless" in following the law, it was Paul. BUT, before God, it was no righteousness at all (1 Timothy 1:15)

The Contrast: (v. 3, 7-8)

- Everything Paul had once put in the “GAIN” column—his power, prestige, and ‘obedience’ to the law—now go in the “LOSS” column. And now, the crucified Messiah, whom he had once seen as a “loss,” stands alone in the “gain” column!

Our Connection

- The Flesh = “Anything OUTSIDE of Christ”
- Just as the law fails to offer true righteousness, our good deeds FAIL too.
- This truth shouldn't bring disappointment, but FREEDOM!

“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me — watch how I do it. Learn the unforced *rhythms of grace*. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly.” (Matthew 11:28-30 MSG)

“God isn't looking for workers who measure up; he's looking for rest-ers who will trust Him.” –Jennie Allen

- Instead of being our way to “measure up,” our service, obedience to Jesus, and our acts of righteousness are the FRUITS of Jesus' righteousness, not our MEANS of earning our own righteousness. (John 15)

Our Hope: (v. 9-11)

Three elements of our salvation:

- JUSTIFICATION (v.9): God “imputes” Jesus' lifelong record of perfect obedience to the person trusting Him for salvation (moving Jesus' righteousness into the “gain” column)
- SANCTIFICATION (v. 10): The goal of trusting Christ is to know him, and when we do, we grow to be like Him. How does this happen? Through sharing in His sufferings.

- **GLORIFICATION** (v.11): We attain resurrection from the dead and live with God forever!

The power of Christ's resurrection is our enabling **STRENGTH** and our **HOPE** that whatever suffering we face will have meaning and purpose in eternity, because Christ has overcome it all by defeating death and giving us victory.

Our Upward Call (v. 12-16)

We can **REST** knowing that our prize is secure. We can **WORK** knowing God is working in us.

Our Citizenship (v. 17-21)

Apart from Christ:

- People are **ENEMIES** of the cross (v. 18)
- Their desires are never **SATISFIED**, and what they believe brings pleasure will ultimately bring **PAIN** and **PUNISHMENT** (v. 19)
- By His grace alone, God pulled us out of this mindset and promises us future glory (v.20-21)

Our reaction to the lost world:

- **GRIEF** for the present (“...I now tell you with tears” v. 18)
- **HOPE** for the future (“...we await a Savior...” v. 20-21)

This way of life, resting in Jesus while working hard to honor Him, is completely foreign to a world that is perishing; a world that is pursuing momentary pleasure while hurtling toward eternal punishment. That's why Paul says our citizenship is in heaven—in God's economy, this paradox of resting in Jesus' righteousness while we strain toward our guaranteed prize makes perfect sense. In that confidence, we find our joy to live a radically different life.

Topics for Discussion:

1. Paul writes, "I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord." How would you describe this concept in your own words?
2. "The flesh," is anything "outside of Christ." What are some things outside of Christ that you've relied on in the past as a credit to your righteousness or as a way to assure your heart? How does counting those things as a "loss" change the way you look at those things?
3. Why is it so challenging to consider ourselves "rest-ers who trust Him, rather than workers who measure up?"
4. Share a time when Christ's resurrection was an enabling strength for you in a time of suffering (v. 10)
5. In our study of chapter 2, we talked about "working out our salvation," and in chapter 3, Paul calls this "straining toward the goal." We discussed implementing A-N-T-H-E-M as we dealt with our sin, and specifically in curbing our complaining. Did you put any of those tips to practice? How did it go?
6. Share any insights you gained on Philippians 3 during your personal time of study throughout the week.

This Week:

1. Memorize Philippians 4:4-7 OR Philippians 4:8-9
2. Commit to praying Philippians 1:9-11 for one person in your life, 3 times a week throughout this study.
3. Read and study Philippians 4. Choose a few verses each day. Journal: What do I observe? What does it mean? How does it apply to my circumstances?