

Philippians 3

Philippians 3.1-11

V1 – Other references to joy and rejoicing in *Philippians*: 1.4, 1.25, 2.18 (2 times), 4.4 (about 14 references to joy in this book)

-**Why did he go over this material again?** A safeguard (we need to be reminded of things)

V2 – **The danger lurking for church at Philippi?** Dogs

-**Real dogs?** No, symbolic for people without morals

-Dogs were dangerous in the First Century (like "dingoes" in Australia today)

-Two Greek words for *dog*: family pet and wild animal (Paul used the second word here)

-**Nature of false teachers?** Jewish converts who were still clinging to the Old Testament

-**Did other congregations face this problem?** Yes, the church at Antioch (*Acts 15*)

-Remember the letter from Jerusalem: to abstain from blood, things strangled, fornication, food offered to idols (the answer to the Judaizing teachers at Antioch)

-Also the churches of Galatia (a severe problem) and the congregations in the book of *Hebrews*, and the church at Colossae

V3 – **Who are the true "Jews" today?** Christians

-**What makes us "Jews"?** Not outward circumcision, but worshiping God and Jesus Christ

-**Explain: "putting no confidence in the flesh":** The Jews claimed salvation based on the outward act of circumcision

V4 – **Did Paul know how Jews thought?** Yes...

-In other words, Paul was saying, "I know where they are coming from..."

V5-6 – **What could Paul boast about as a Jew? (7)**

1. Circumcised on the eighth day

2. From the nation of Israel (not a Gentile)

3. Tribe of Benjamin (along with King Saul)

-**Why was this special?** It was a very small tribe, almost wiped out in *Judges 20-21*; there were only 600 men left in Benjamin (*Judges 20.47*)

-A special provision had to be made to find wives for them

4. Hebrew of Hebrews (as Jewish as you could get)

5. A Pharisee (according to the Old Law) – better than being a Sadducee

6. Persecutor of the New Testament church

7. Found blameless (no charges against him)

-Remember the country song: "*It is hard to be humble when you are perfect in every way*"

-In other words, Paul was perfect in the Jewish way of thinking

-Paul: "Look, if you want to talk about being a Jew, let me tell you about myself"

V7 – **What did Paul lose when he obeyed the gospel?** Everything

-**List?** Respect of fellow Jews, position of a rabbi, honor, and status, everything a Jew holds dear (especially the Pharisees)

-He was now considered a traitor and a disgrace, according to his former friends and fellow

scholars

V 8 – How can we read v 8 and not be affected? (thought question)

- What power! "*count*" = Paul had thought about it
- How did Paul describe these things in comparison to knowing Christ?** Rubbish
- Two possibilities: either Paul was crazy (a madman), or he had made the greatest bargain in human existence
- Problem with some Christians: they want to hold onto both worlds
- What did it mean to Paul to gain Christ?** Everything in his life

V 9 – Upon what was his righteousness now based? Not the Old Testament law, but on faith in Christ

V 10 – How did Paul know Christ? He knew the power of the resurrection and his sufferings
-"*Conformed to his death*"? = baptism (*Romans 6.5-6*)

V 11 – Paul's goal? The resurrection of the dead
-The intensity of Paul is missing with some Christians today
With some, it is a Sunday morning only religion – just one hour a week, with no other commitment

Philippians 3.12-16

V 12 – Was Paul perfect (sinless) yet? No

- His goal? To try to keep getting better
- "*It*" = perfect faith and grace, etc.
- When did Christ lay hold of Paul?** On the road to Damascus

V 13 – Should we worry about our past mistakes? No, Paul had no desire to look backward

- What did Paul have to forget?** The persecution of the church and the death of Stephen
- Read 1 Timothy 1.12-15**
- See 2 *TM* 4.6-8 – His goal? The crown of righteousness
- Paul's "*modus operandi*"? Reaching forward

V 14 – He was seeking the prize

- His one supreme goal in life: eternal life
- Remember what our Lord said: He who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is not fit for the kingdom (*Luke 9.62*)

V 15 – Perfect = mature (RSV, NIV, NAS footnote: mature) – *Matt. 5.48*

V 16 – Encouragement to keep striving, not to fall away

Philippians 3.17-21

V 17 – **What example?** Having one goal in life
-The importance of influence is seen here
-The Philippians were to follow Paul's example

V 18 – A lot of people "*walk*," but "*living*" and being a Christian are two different things
-What does it mean just to "*walk*"? It refers to enemies of the cross

V 19 – **How do such people live?** Their end is destruction, and their god is their belly (KJV)
-Their "*glory*" is shameful, and their minds are set on earthly things
-In some cases, their only goal in life is to get the autograph of some famous person or to find a certain baseball card, etc.

V 20 – **Where is our citizenship?** In heaven
-In what sense do we hold American citizenship? By our place of birth (for most of us)
-But our heavenly citizenship is far greater
-When had Paul relied on his Roman citizenship? At Philippi when he was about to be beaten

V 21 – **How does Paul describe our bodies?** Humble
-What will happen to these "*humble*" bodies? *1 Cor. 15.42-53* – they will be changed

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