

PHILIPPIANS LESSON – 5
THE JOY OF HAVING THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST

PHILIPPIANS 3: 1 – 11

***KEY VERSE PHILIPPIANS 3: 9**

A. INTRODUCTION

***PHILIPPIANS 3: 1**

a. PAUL REALLY EMPHASIZES THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUE OF JOY

***PHILIPPIANS 3: 2**

b. BEGINNING IN THIS VERSE PAUL TAKES ON ABRUPT TURN IN A DIFFERENT DIRECTION

***“BEWARE OF DOGS!”**

c. HIS CHANGE OF TONE IS SO DRAMATIC THAT SOME SCHOLARS FEEL THAT STARTING WITH PHIL. 3: 2 AND CONTINUING TO THE END OF THE EPISTLE WE HAVE A FRAGMENT FROM A DIFFERENT PAULINE LETTER. THE THEORY HERE IS THAT SOME PORTION OF A MORE “COMBATIVE” LETTER OF PAUL HAS BEEN “PASTED INTO” THIS PART OF PHILIPPIANS.

d. IN RESPONSE, WE HAVE ACKNOWLEDGE THAT ALL OF ANCIENT HANDWRITTEN COPIES WE HAVE OF PHILIPPIANS ARE WRITTEN EXACTLY AS IT APPEARS IN YOUR BIBLE TODAY. THAT IS WE DO NOT HAVE ANY FORM OF PHILIPPIANS THAT LEAVES OUT 3: 2 AND THE REST OF THE EPISTLE. SO THE WRITTEN EVIDENCE BEFORE US IS THAT PAUL WROTE PHILIPPIANS EXACTLY AS IT APPEARS IN OUR MODERN – DAY BIBLES.

e. ANOTHER EXPLANATION FOR PAULS STERN WORDS IN PHILIPPIANS 3, HE TRULY LOVES THE PHILIPPIANS AND DOESN'T WANT ANY HARM TO COME THEIR WAY.

***THERE WAS REAL HARM AFOOT IN THE CHURCH**

f. THERE WAS A CLUSTER OF HYPER – CONSERVATIVE JEWS IN THE CHURCH WHO HAD MADE SOME CONFESSION BY FAITH, BUT THEY REFUSED TO CLAIM JESUS AS THE SOLE WAY OF SALVATION. THEY APPEAR TO BE PHARISEES AND PAUL HAD TO FIGHT THEIR INFLUENCE THROUGHOUT THE CHURCHES IN ASIA MINOR.

***ACTS 15: 1 -5**

***GAL 2: 11 – 16**

g. BASCALLY, THEY ARGUED THAT SALVATION IS FOR THE JEWS ONLY, AND IF ONE WANTS TO CLAIM A JEWISH MESSIAH, THEN YOU MUST CONVERT TO JUDAISM FIRST. THIS WOULD MEAN THAT ALL GENTILES WOULD NEED TO BE CIRCUMCISED AND OBEY ALL THE LAW OF MOSES. THESE TROUBLEMAKERS WERE PREACHING A WORK – RIGHTEOUSNESS RELIGION THAT DESTROYED THE GRACE OF GOD IN CHRIST.

***GAL 1: 6 – 9**

h. PAULS LOVE FOR THE PHILIPPINAS LED HIM TO MAKE A “PREEMPTIVE STRIKE” AGAINST THESE AGITATORS BEFORE THEY CAME TO PHILIPPI. MUCH OF CHAPTER 3 IS TAKEN UP WITH WARNING THE PHILIPPIANS ABOUT THIS JEWISH HERECY.

i. PHILIPPIANS 3 IS THE MOST THEOLOGICAL PORTION OF THE WHOLE BOOK. THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE WHOLE BOOK. THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF SALVATION BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH ARE BRILLIANTLY PRESENTED BY PAUL. WE NEED TO APPLY THIS MESSAGE TO OUR LIVES AND PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT GRANT US THE GRACE TO ALWAYS RELY ON GRACE.

***ISAIAH 6: 1 – 8**

j. THOSE WHO TRUST IN THEIR OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR SALVATION HAVE NEVER REALLY SEE GOD. IF THEY EVER DID, AS ISAIAH SURELY DID, THEY WOULD REALIZE HOW MISERABLE AND WRETCHED THEY ARE BEFORE THE INFINITE AND HOLY ONE. BY FAITH THEY WOULD ALSO REALIZE THAT GOD, IN HIS MERCY, HAS MADE PROVISION IN CHRIST TO CLEANSE US FROM ALL SIN AND MAKE US FIT FOR SERVICE IN HIS KINGDOM. PAUL WANTS THE PHILIPPIANS TO HAVE A HOLY VISION OF GOD IN CHRIST. HE WANTS US TO RECEIVE THIS VISION AS WELL.

B. DISCOVER

***PHILIPPIANS 3: 1 – 11**

***PARKED WITH THEOLOGICAL TRUTH**

a. IT CONTAINS THE BEGINNING AND END OF WHAT IT TAKES TO BE SAVED – SALVATION IS BY GRACE ALONG, NOT BY WORKS OF THE LAW.

***PHILIPPIANS 3: 2**

***QUESTIONS: WHO ARE THE DOGS?**

***GAL 2: 11 – 16**

***WHY DO YOU THINK PAUL PUTS, “WE ARE THE CIRCUMCISION AND THE PHARISES WHO SERVE GOD BY HIS “SPIRIT” SIDE BY SIDE?**

***ROMANS 2: 29**

***HOW DO YOU THINK PAULS “BOASTING” IN PHILIPPIANS 3: 4 – 6 IN HIS JEWISH HERITAGE FITS HERE?
2 CORINTHIANS 11: 20 – 31**

b. PAULS THOUGHTS IN PHILIPPIANS 3 ARE FOCUSED ON PROPER AND IMPROPER BELIEF AND PRACTICE.

***QUESTION: HOW IS THE RIGHTEOUSNESS THAT COMES FROM GOD SUPERIOR TO A RIGHTEOUSNESS OF MY OWN THAT COMES FROM THE LAW?**

***PHILIPPIANS 3: 9**

C. DISCERN

a. PAUL IS HIGHLY DOCTRINAL IN THIS SECTION, & EQUALLY COLORFUL IN HIS WRITINGS

b. THE COMBINATION OF DOGS, DUNG, and MULTILATION CAN MAKE FOR SOME VERY CREATIVE SYMBOL – MAKING FOR THIS PASSAGE!

c. PAUL GIVES SERIOUS EFFECT ON YOUR ABILITY TO BE INFUSED WITH PAULS THOUGHT AS HE WRITES THE BIBLE.

d. THE SHAPE OF PAULS THOUGHT AND THAT, IN TURN BEGINS TO SHAPE THE WAY WE THINK ABOUT GOD AND THE BIBLE.

e. ONCE OUR MINDS IS SHAPED LIKE JESUS (PHILIPPIANS 2: 5 – 11 IT IS A SHORT STEP UNTIL WE BEGIN TO ACT LIKE JESUS. THE GOAL OF DISCIPLESHIP IS TO SHAPE THE THOUGHTS AND ACTIONS OF THE BELIEVER TO BE MORE LIKE JESUS.

***THIS SHOULD BE OUR GOAL IN LIFE**

***PSALM 119: 18**

f. THE WORD LAW HERE MEANS THE WHOLE REVELATION OF GOD IN THE BIBLE, NOT JUST THE LAW OF MOSES.

***GENESIS 15: 6**

***ROMANS 4: 3**

g. PAUL TEACHES JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ALONE, APART FROM WORKS OF THE LAW.

h. DAVID KNOWS WE CAN READ WITH THE “NATURAL” EYE BUT NEVER REALLY PERCEIVE THE “WONDERFUL THINGS” CONTAINED IN THE WORD.

***WE NEED TO ALWAYS PRAY THAT GOD MIGHT OPEN OUR EYES TO THE WONDERFUL THINGS IN THIS STUDY.**

***LETS LOOK AT SOME IMPORTANT PARTS OF THIS STUDY!**

***PHILIPPIANS 3: 2**

1. N.I.V. MULTILATORS / K.J.V CONCISION MEANS “SHRED TO LITTLE PIECES” – IN GREEK, IT IS A PLAY ON WORDS WITH CIRCUMCISION.

***QUESTION: WHAT KIND OF MESSAGE DO YOU THINK PAUL IS CONVEYING ABOUT THOSE WHO SEE CIRCUMCISION AS A REQUIREMENT FOR SALVATION?**

2. NOTE NUMBER OF TIMES PAUL USES THE WORD CONFIDENCE IN V. 2 – 3 – “3”. WE MAY WANT TO DEVELOP A SYMBOL FOR CONFIDENCE IN THE RIGHT THINGS AND AN OPPOSING SYMBOL TO REPRESENT TRUSTING, OR CONFIDENCE IN THE WRONG THING.

3. PAUL IS REFLECTING UPON A DRAMATIC CHANGE IN HIS LIFE. – HE IS THINKING OF HIS DAMASCUS ROAD EXPERIENCE WHEREBY THE RISEN LORD CALLED HIM OUT OF JUDASIM AND INTO THE WONDERFUL FREEDOM OF GRACE IN CHRIST.

***ACTS 9: 1 – 20 – A LOT OF “LOSS” / GAIN LANGUAGE IN THIS SECTION.**

D. PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER

***PHILIPPIANS 3: 8**

***THE GREEK WORD FOR GARBAGE (N.I.V.) RUBBISH (N.K.J.) AND DUNG (K.J.V.) AT THAT TIME TO REFER TO HUMAN AND ANIMAL.**

***QUESTION: WHAT KIND OF MESSAGE DO YOU FEEL PAUL IS SENDING ABOUT HIS PAST SUCCESSES IN JUDAISM COMPARED TO THE FREEDOM HE NOW HAS IN CHRIST?**

***PHILIPPIANS 2: 5 THE CORE OF THIS WORD RELATES TO THE FORM USED IN PHILIPPIANS 2: 5 WHICH SAYS JESUS WAS IN THE FORM OF GOD.**

***WHAT DO YOU FEEL THIS SAYS ABOUT PAULS UNDERSTANDING OF SPIRITUAL FORMATION?**

E. DEVOTE

a. IN PHILIPPIANS 3: 1 – 11 PAUL IS EXHORTING US TO MOVE AWAY FROM RELYING ON THE FLESH FOR OUR SALVATION AND TO COMPLETELY MOVE IN THE DIRECTION OF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST.

***THIS KIND OF SPIRITUAL MOVEMENT IS THE ESSENCE OF DEVOTION.**

b. ON THE OTHER HAND, TO THE DEGREE WHICH WE LOOK TO OURSELVES FOR SALVATION, TO THE SAME DEGREE WE TURN AWAY FROM GOD'S PROVISION IN CHRIST.

c. HEREIN LIES THE MAIN DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A SELF – PROMOTING FORM OF RELIGION THAT LEADS TO DEATH, AND A DYNAMIC, PERSONAL FAITH IN GOD THAT LEADS TO LIFE. PRIOR TO HIS CONVERSION, PAUL HAD BEEN COMPLETELY GIVEN OVER TO THE FORM AND IT LED HIM TO BE A MURDEROUS PERSECUTOR OF THE CHURCH.

***PHILIPPIANS 3: 6**

d. BUT, THE PURE GRACE OF GOD RESCUED PAUL FROM HIMSELF AND GAVE HIM SOMEONE INFINITELY RIGHTEOUS AND HOLY – JESUS! FROM THAT POINT ON, THE APOSTLE FORSOOK ALL SELF – CLAIM AND EXCLUSIVELY CLUNG TO THE CROSS OF CHRIST IN LOVE.

***PHILIPPIANS 3: 8 – 9**

e. THIS KIND OF RADICAL DEVOTION NOT ONLY EMBRACES THE GLORY OF THE RESURRECTION, BUT ALSO WELCOMES THE “FELLOWSHIP” OF CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS.

f. IS CALLING EACH OF US TO THIS KIND OF DEVOTION TO GOD IN CHRIST. WE NEED TO PRAY THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL EMPOWER US TO RELY COMPLETELY ON THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD, AND NEVER LOOK TO OURSELVES FOR SALVATION.

g. PAUL'S RADICAL VISION OF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD DID NOT ORIGINATE WITH HIM. AS WE HAVE ALREADY SEEN, THE ANCIENT PROPHET ISAIAH BECAME FULLY AWARE OF HIS OWN SIN WHEN HE RECEIVED A GLIMPSE OF THE HOLINESS OF GOD.

***ISAIAH 6: 1 – 8**

h. ISAIAH PROCLAIMS, “ALL OF US HAVE BECOME LIKE ONE WHO IS UNCLEAN, AND ALL OUR RIGHTEOUS ACTS ARE LIKE RAGS”: WE ALL SHRIVEL UP LIKE A LEAF AND LIKE THE WIND OUR SINS SWEEP US AWAY.

***ISAIAH 64: 6**

***ISAIAH'S WORDS ARE BEAUTIFUL AND TERRIFYING AT THE SAME TIME**

***QUESTION: TO WHAT EXTEND DO I HAVE AN "ACHIEVEMENT" MIND – SET WHEN SERVING GOD?**

***QUESTION: HAVE I ACCEPTED THE GRACE OF GOD, OR DO I DEPEND ON MY OWN ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO MERIT THE GOOD THINGS OF GOD?**

***QUESTION: IF I HAVE FAILED GOD IN THE PAST, CAN I FORGET THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE BEHIND, AND MOVE FORWARD IN THE LORD?**

***QUESTION: AM I ABLE TO SEE SUFFERING FOR CHRIST AS A VITAL PART OF MY DISCIPLESHIP IN THE LORD?**

F. DISCIPLESHIP

***PHILIPPIANS 3: 1 – 11**

a. PAUL'S WORDS FORSAKING OURSELVES IN FAVOR OF THE DIVINE PERFECTION OF JESUS IS WHAT MAKES US HIS DISCIPLES. WE MUST HAVE A DETERMINED EFFORT ON OUR PART TO TURN FROM SELF – RIGHTEOUSNESS AND TURN TO THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN CHRIST.

b. THIS "TURNING" IS NOT AN ACHIEVEMENT ON OUR PART, BUT RATHER AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT THAT WE CAN'T DO ANYTHING BUT RELY ON CHRIST.

c. THIS "TURNING" IS NOT A "WORK" BUT RATHER A SURRENDER TO THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT SO HE CAN MAKE US LIKE JESUS.

d. WHEN THIS WONDERFUL TRANSFORMATION REALLY HAPPENS, WE CAN EXPLAIN WITH THE APOSTLE PAUL.

***2 CORINTHIANS 9: 15**

***THINGS TO COMMIT TO**

1. EXAMINE YOUR MOTIVES FOR LIVING A GODLY LIFE

2. AM I ACTING OUT OF LOVE AND GRATITUDE FOR GOD, OR AM I SEEKING TO ESTABLISH MY OWN BASIS FOR ACCEPTANCE AND SALVATION?

3. IS MY SUCCESS IN OBEDIENCE A MATTER OF DIVINE PRIVILEGE AND SPIRIT ENABLEMENT, OR HAS IT BECOME A MATTER OF PRIDE AND RELIGIOUS ACHIEVEMENT?

4. ARE WE WILLING TO TURN AWAY FROM SELF AND UNRESERVEDLY TURN TOWARD GOD?

5. IS MY CONSTANT ASPIRATION TO BE LOST IN HIM SO THAT I CAN BE FOUND IN HIS GRACE?

e. SOME OF THE MOST MISERABLE PEOPLE IN THE GOSPELS WERE THE PHARISEES. PAUL SHOULD KNOW, HE WAS ONE OF THEM

***THE SELF – RIGHTEOUS PERSON IS AN UNHAPPY PERSON**

f. THEY ALWAYS THINK THEY NEED TO “MEASURE UP” AND AS MIGHT BE EXPECTED, ALWAYS SENSE THAT THEY ARE FALLING SHORT.

g. IN SOME CASES, THIS LETHAL MIX OF STRIVING AND FAILING CAN LEAD TO A BITTER AND VENGEFUL SPIRIT AS IT DID WITH PAUL BEFORE HIS CONVERSION.

h. AN IMPORTANT ROLE OF DISCIPLESHIP IS, WITH THE HELP OF GOD, TO LEAD A PERSON OUT OF THE PAST OF SELF – JUSTIFICATION AND INTO THE LIBERTY THAT COMES FROM SOLE RELIANCE ON CHRIST.

***GALATIANS 5: 1**

WHEN WE CAN DISCIPLE OTHERS IN THE TRUE FREEDOM THAT COMES FROM THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST, THEN BOTH WE AND THEY ARE ON THE PATH TO JOY!

**NEXT WEEK
PHILIPPIANS 3: 12 – 21
THE JOY OF WALKING IN FAITH**