

# Nothing to Boast About

## July 30, 2023

### Philippians 3:1-11

#### Where we have been:

**June 11th** – He Will Finish the Work – Philippians 1:1-11; **June 18th** – God’s Will Prevails – Philippians 1:12-18; **June 25th** – Stand Firm and Rejoice – Philippians 1:19-30; **July 2nd** – Imitate Christ – Philippians 2:1-11; **July 9th** – Don’t Complain – Philippians 2:12-18; **July 16th** – Chris Reynolds – Security- Jude; **July 23rd** – Work Thru It – (2 examples).

**This morning we are going to look at four warnings/instructions that Paul gives to the Church at Philippi and these still remain true for us today:**

**Our rejoicing is the be in the Lord.**

*Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. For me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but for you it is safe.*

**Philippians 3:1**

The exhortation (vv. 1–3). “Finally” at this point does not mean Paul is about to close the letter, because he keeps on going. The word means “For the rest,” and introduces the new section. Paul’s “finally” at Philippians 4:18 is the one that means “I am about to close.” Paul has warned the believers at Philippi before, but now he warns them again.<sup>1</sup>

Paul had given a warning to the Church at Philippi already, but he is doing it again. Anytime we see repetition in Scripture, as we will see in our next verses, we need to take heed. In verse 1 Paul tells the people to rejoice in the Lord. In the rest of our passage this morning he is going to tell them what that doesn’t look like and what it does look like, he will give real life examples!

#### **Lookout for the fakes.**

*<sup>2</sup> Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation (refers to circumcision)!*

**Philippians 3:2**

The word “beware” is used three times in this one verse, talk about repetition!

Beware means to look, perceive or to take heed and to physically or metaphorically see with the mind’s eye. Paul was telling them to beware of “religious people.” Paul refers to the religious people as dogs, evil workers and mutilators!

Judaziers – They were Jesus teaching and preaching Jesus + .....

Mutilation- “*The mutilation.*” Here Paul uses a pun on the word “circumcision.” The word translated “circumcision” literally means “a mutilation.” The Judaizers taught that circumcision was essential to salvation (Acts 15:1; Gal. 6:12–18); but Paul states that circumcision of *itself* is only a mutilation! The true Christian has experienced a spiritual circumcision in Christ (Col. 2:11), and does not need any fleshly operations. Circumcision, baptism, the Lord’s Supper, tithing, or any other religious practice cannot save a person from his sins. Only faith in Jesus Christ can do that.<sup>2</sup>

*But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: <sup>2</sup> For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, <sup>3</sup> unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, <sup>4</sup> traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, <sup>5</sup> having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!*

**2 Timothy 3:1-5**

It's often times harder to reach “religious people” for Jesus than it is an out and out sinner.

**~ Adrian Rogers**

#### **Walk with Jesus.**

**Know the authentic – be authentic**

**The Pharisees looked the part, put on a show and yet were empty inside. We are reminded in Scripture that man looks at the outward appearance but the Lord looks in the heart.**

*<sup>3</sup> For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.*

**Philippians 3:3**

The word *circumcise* literally means “to cut around.” As a religious rite, circumcision was required of all of Abraham’s descendants as a sign of the covenant God made with him (Genesis 17:9–14; Acts 7:8). The Mosaic Law repeated the requirement (Leviticus 12:2–3), and Jews throughout the centuries have continued to practice circumcision (Joshua 5:2–3; Luke 1:59; Acts 16:3; Philippians 3:5). New Testament Christians are no longer under the Old Testament Law, and circumcision is no longer required. This is brought out in a number of New Testament passages, among which are Acts 15; Galatians 2:1–3; 5:1–11; 6:11–16; 1 Corinthians 7:17–20; Colossians

<sup>1</sup> Warren Wiersbe

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

2:8–12; and Philippians 3:1–3. As these passages proclaim, being delivered from our sins is the result of faith in Christ; it is Christ's finished work on the cross that saves, not the observance of an external rite. Even the Law acknowledged that circumcision alone was insufficient to please God, who specified the need to "circumcise your hearts" (Deuteronomy 10:16; cf. Romans 2:29). In salvation, the works of the flesh accomplish nothing (see Galatians 2:16). In Acts 16:3.<sup>3</sup>

Romans 2:25-29

Paul is discussing the role of the Old Testament Law as it relates to Christianity. He argues that Jewish circumcision is only an outward sign of being set apart to God. However, if the heart is sinful, then physical circumcision is of no avail. A circumcised body and a sinful heart are at odds with each other. Rather than focus on external rites, Paul focuses on the condition of the heart. Using circumcision as a metaphor, he says that only the Holy Spirit can purify a heart and set us apart to God. Ultimately, circumcision cannot make a person right with God; the Law is not enough. A person's heart must change. Paul calls this change "circumcision of the heart." This concept was not original with the apostle Paul. As a Jew trained in the Law of Moses, he was certainly aware of this discussion from Deuteronomy 30. There, the Lord used the same metaphor to communicate His desire for a holy people: "And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live" (Deuteronomy 30:6). Physical circumcision was a sign of Israel's covenant with God; circumcision of the heart, therefore, would indicate Israel's being set apart to love God fully, inside and out.<sup>4</sup>

How are we to be authentic and walk with Jesus?

**Worship God.**

**Rejoice in Christ Jesus and His gift of salvation.**

**Only be confident in Christ, never in self.**

**Our religion, zealotry, law keeping, status, or name, in and of itself means nothing!**

*<sup>4</sup> though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: <sup>5</sup> circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; <sup>6</sup> concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.*

**Philippians 3:4-6**

Paul was religious, God's Chosen, from the tribe of Benjamin (Israel's first king came from here), kept the law and were zealous.

**In Paul's case, the "things" he was living for before he knew Christ seemed to be very commendable: a righteous life, obedience to the Law, the defense of the religion of his fathers. But none of these things satisfied him or gave him acceptance with God. Like most "religious" people today, Paul had enough morality to keep him out of trouble, but not enough righteousness to get him into heaven! It was not bad things that kept Paul away from Jesus—it was good things! He had to lose his "religion" to find salvation.**

Paul wanted the Church at Philippi and even the "law keepers" to know that if anyone could boast, if you will, it would be him, but even he had nothing in which he could boast in. Why?

*<sup>7</sup> But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. --- (the bad and the good) --- <sup>8</sup> Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup> and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; <sup>10</sup> that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, <sup>11</sup> if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.*

**Philippians 3:7-11**

**He worships God in the Spirit. He does not depend on his own good works which are only of the flesh (see John 4:19–24).**

**He boasts in Jesus Christ.**

**He has no confidence in the flesh.**

**Prayer Focus:**

- Who or what am I rejoicing in? Is it Jesus?
- Am I a "fake" or a true follower of Jesus Christ?
- Am I walking with Jesus?
- Am I depending on who I am or who HE IS?

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gotquestions.org/circumcision.html>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gotquestions.org/circumcision-of-the-heart.html>