

**New Hope Missionary Baptist Church – Southfield, Michigan**  
**Dr. Aaron L. Chapman, Pastor**  
**#hope in the field**

**Bible Study Series: Philippians**  
**Unified Hope: Loving Christ as we Love One Another**

**“The Priceless Gain of Knowing Christ” Philippians 3:1-11**

**Reflection Questions:**

1. If asked to introduce yourself to a group of people for the first time, what two things would you share about yourself in addition to your name?  

---

---

---
2. As a Christian, what confidence do you have that you are able to refrain from being fooled or deceived and persuaded by those who deny Jesus Christ as Lord?  

---

---

---

**Key Terms:**

- ☐ Believers
- ☐ Beware
- ☐ Blameless
- ☐ Brethren
- ☐ Christ Jesus
- ☐ Circumcision – False
- ☐ Circumcision – True
- ☐ Confidence
- ☐ Conformed
- ☐ Death

- ☐ Faith
- ☐ Flesh
- ☐ Judaizers
- ☐ The Law
- ☐ Fellowship
- ☐ Pharisee
- ☐ Persecutor
- ☐ Rejoice
- ☐ Resurrection

- ☐ Righteousness
- ☐ Rubbish
- ☐ Safeguard
- ☐ Suffering
- ☐ Spirit of God
- ☐ Tribe of Benjamin
- ☐ Value
- ☐ Worthless
- ☐ Zeal

## Introduction

Paul warned the Philippian believers to stay clear of the false teachers who taught that what people did (like being circumcised), rather than the free gift of grace provided through Christ, made them believers. Are you depending on Christian parents or church affiliation, or are you just being good to make yourself right with God?

## Lesson Outline

- I. Knowing Christ is your Protection (3:1-2)
- II. Knowing Christ is your Confidence (3:3-6)
- III. Knowing Christ is your Righteousness (3:7-9)
- IV. Knowing Christ is your Salvation (3:10-11)

## Exploring the Text

### I. Knowing Christ is your Protection (3:1-2)

<sup>1</sup>Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things again is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you. <sup>2</sup>Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision; (NASB 1995)

### ***Rejoice in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour (3:1)***

The tone of Paul's letter to the Philippians is \_\_\_\_\_—and as he prepared his final words to them, he exhorted them to let the Lord give them joy. He would say this again at the actual end of his letter (see 4:4).

### ***Rejoice in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Safeguard (3:1-2)***

Paul was able to rejoice in spite of his suffering because he knew and trusted God. He did not let his circumstances discourage him. To remain joyful, we should remind ourselves daily of God's love for us and our ultimate life with him in heaven. The joy of \_\_\_\_\_ kept Paul levelheaded, no matter how high or low his circumstances (see also 4:12).

Paul never got tired of telling the believers this because it was for their own good. An attitude of joy would help the believers \_\_\_\_\_ against the practices Paul so vehemently warned against--dissension, grumbling, and attitudes of superiority. If we lose the joy of the Lord (**Nehemiah 8:10**), we are weakened and become susceptible to negative attitudes. Joy acts as a barrier against them. It guarantees the safety of our hope which is in the Lord (**Psalms 33:20-22; Colossians 1:17; 1 Peter 1:3**).

Paul warned the believers to watch out for a particular group of people he described using three different derogatory terms. (1) \_\_\_\_\_ were regarded by Jews as despised and unclean creatures; it was common for orthodox Jews to refer to Gentiles as “dogs;” however, here Paul switched the designation to refer not to Gentiles but to an extreme faction of Jews. (2) He also called them \_\_\_\_\_. The Jews regarded themselves as holy, not evil, because they kept the law. But their reliance on the law lessened their reliance on God. (3) Finally, he called them \_\_\_\_\_ \* [mutilators/mutilation (NLT/NKJV)].

Some Jewish Christians wrongly believed that it was essential for Gentiles to follow all the Old Testament Jewish laws, saying that the Gentile believers had to be \_\_\_\_\_ to be saved. Those who taught this wrong doctrine were called \_\_\_\_\_; they were a severe problem for Paul. The Judaizers’ main argument was that Gentiles had to first become Jews before they could become Christians.

Circumcision was an important covenant for the Jews—God had established it with Abraham (**Genesis 17:9-14**). While there was nothing wrong with circumcision itself, Paul maintained that it *was* wrong to teach circumcision as a requirement for salvation. Paul criticized the Judaizers because they looked at Christianity backwards thinking that what they *did* (especially circumcision) made them believers rather than the free gift of grace given by Christ.

What believers do is a result of \_\_\_\_\_, not a \_\_\_\_\_ to faith. The teaching of these Judaizers threatened the new churches and had to be countered. Paul was concerned that nothing get in the way of the simple truth of his message—that salvation, for Jews and Gentiles alike, comes through faith in Jesus Christ alone.

The early church had already confirmed Paul’s teaching at the Jerusalem Council eleven years earlier (see Acts 15). However, this did not stop many of the \_\_\_\_\_, who were motivated by \_\_\_\_\_. Because they had invested so much time and effort in keeping their laws, they could not accept the fact that all their efforts could not bring them a step closer to salvation. And the age-old hatred of Gentile “dogs” did not make it any easier for them to accept Gentiles as brothers in the faith. Whether or not they [the false teachers] had come to Philippi as yet, Paul knew it was only a matter of time, and he wanted the Philippians to be forewarned.

### Understanding the Text

1. What did Paul call on believers to do? (3:1)

---



---

2. Why did Paul repeat essential truths to the Philippians? (3:1)

---



---

3. What did Paul say about certain false teachers? (3:2)

---



---

## II. Knowing Christ is Your Confidence (3:3-6)

<sup>3</sup> ...for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh, <sup>4</sup> although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: <sup>5</sup> circumcised the eighth day of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; <sup>6</sup> as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.

Circumcision had been a requirement under the old covenant God had made with Abraham—a physical sign to God's people of their relationship with him. It also had spiritual application, for the physical mark was to be a sign of a spiritual relationship with God (**Deuteronomy 30:6**). At one time the physical sign of circumcision had set God's people, the Jews, apart from the Gentiles. After Jesus Christ, all people could become part of God's family by believing in Jesus as Savior.

\_\_\_\_\_ are the only ones who are \_\_\_\_\_.  
 \_\_\_\_\_. They have three common characteristics that prove their standing before God:

1. They **worship God in the Spirit**. Believers worship by means of God's Spirit and in God's Spirit. The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, is vital to all aspects of our Christian life. Whatever outward forms may or may not be used, worship is always inspired by the Holy Spirit.
2. They **boast about what Christ Jesus has done**. The word translated "boast" could better be translated "exult." [glory, triumph, rejoice, take pride in] Paul explained that true believers exult, not in their works as if they somehow saved themselves, but in \_\_\_\_\_ alone. Only because of Christ's sacrifice on the

cross are believers saved. Any believer who understands the incredible significance of Christ's death cannot help but respond with exultation.

3. They **put no confidence in human effort**. The Judaizers depended on their obedience to the Jewish law, and especially the covenant of circumcision, to make them acceptable to God. By contrast, true believers did not place their confidence in anything they did or didn't do, but in what God through Jesus Christ had done for them.

### ***Rely Not on Your Accomplishments (3:4-6)***

At first glance, it looks like Paul is boasting about his \_\_\_\_\_. But he is actually doing the opposite, showing that human achievements, no matter how impressive, cannot earn a person \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ with God. Paul had impressive credentials: upbringing, nationality, family background, inheritance, orthodoxy, activity, and morality (see 2 Corinthians 11; Galatians 1:13-24, for more of his credentials).

Despite all that Paul had been and had done, his conversion to faith in Christ (Acts 9) wasn't based on any of that but on God's grace. Paul did not depend on his deeds to please God, because even the most impressive credentials fall short of God's holy standards. Are you depending on Christian parents, church affiliation, or just being good to make you right with God? Credentials, accomplishments, or reputation cannot earn salvation. Salvation comes only through faith in Christ.

### **Understanding the Text**

4. Whom did Paul identify as "true"? (3:3)

---



---

5. What autobiographical facts did Paul give? (3:4-6)

---



---



---



---

### III. Knowing Christ is Your Righteousness (3:7-9)

*<sup>7</sup> But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. <sup>8</sup> More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, <sup>9</sup> and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, ... (NASB 1995)*

#### ***Righteousness through past achievements is worthless (3:7-8)***

When Paul spoke of "things," he was referring to his \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_. After showing that he could beat the Judaizers at their own game (being proud of who they were and what they had done), Paul showed that it was the wrong game. Be careful of considering past achievements so important that they get in the way of your relationship with Christ.

After Paul considered everything he had accomplished in his life, he decided to write it all off as \_\_\_\_\_ [loss (KJV), worthless (NLT), absolutely worthless (AMP)] when compared with the greatness of knowing Christ. We should \_\_\_\_\_ our relationship with Christ as more important than anything else. To know Christ should be our ultimate goal. Yet how do we know him better? (1) Study the life of Christ in the Gospels. See how Christ lived and responded to people (**Matthew 11:29**). (2) Study all the New Testament references to Christ (**Colossians 1:15-2:15**). (3) As you worship and pray, let the Holy Spirit remind you of Christ's words (**John 14:26**). (4) Take up Christ's mission to preach the gospel and learn from his **sufferings** (**Matthew 28:19; Philippians 3:10**).

To do these things, however, may mean that you must make major changes in your thinking and in your lifestyle. Are you willing to change your \_\_\_\_\_ in order to know Christ better? Will you fix or rearrange your crowded schedule in order to set aside a few minutes each day for prayer and Bible study? Will you change some of your plans, goals, and desires in order to \_\_\_\_\_ with what you learn about Christ? Whatever you must change or give up, having Christ and becoming one with him will be more than worth the \_\_\_\_\_.

#### ***Righteousness through faith in Christ is Priceless (3:9)***

No amount of law keeping, self-improvement, discipline, or \_\_\_\_\_ can make us right with God. \_\_\_\_\_ comes only from God, and we are made righteous (receive right standing with him) by trusting in Christ. He

exchanges our sin and shortcomings for his complete righteousness which is \_\_\_\_\_ **(2 Corinthians 5:21).**

## Understanding the Text

6. In what sense was Paul not boasting, even though he was calling attention to his accomplishments? (3:7-9)

---

---

7. Why did Paul view his former accomplishments as "rubbish"? (3:8)

---

---

8. What was Paul's status in Christ? (3:9)

---

---

## IV. Knowing Christ is Your Salvation (3:10-11)

*<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> in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead (NASB 1995) (3:10-11).*

### ***Resurrection Power is in Christ's suffering and dying (3:10)***

The word for \_\_\_\_\_ here is the same form used in 3:8, referring to personal, experiential knowledge. To know \_\_\_\_\_ is more than merely to know facts or doctrine about him. It should be the goal of every believer to know Christ more fully and personally, and that can be a lifelong process.

Paul also wanted to experience the mighty power that raised him [Christ] from the dead. The power of the Holy Spirit that brought Jesus back from the dead is available to all believers to raise them from spiritual death now (**Ephesians 1:19-20**) and from their physical death in the future (**Romans 8:11**). Paul wanted to know this power, personally and experientially, for that power assures Christians of their justification (**Romans 4:25; 1 Corinthians 15:17**) and of their regeneration as they identify with Christ in resurrection (**Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12; 3:1, 10**).

Paul also wanted to learn what it means to \_\_\_\_\_ with him, sharing his death. Paul was not referring to sharing Christ's death on the cross; that suffering could not be shared because it was Christ's alone. But Paul wanted to participate with Christ, as a believer, in suffering for the gospel (1:29). Even as Paul had already suffered greatly for the gospel and was suffering in prison at the writing of this letter, he still wanted to know, firsthand, what it meant to suffer for Christ. He was willing to experience more in order to serve Christ, who had suffered so much for him (**Colossians 1:24**).

Believers share his [Christ's] \_\_\_\_\_ as they "die" to sin and to the old nature. In a transaction we cannot completely understand, when Jesus died on the cross, we died to our former life. Christ took our punishment on himself, so God looks at us as though we have died to sin and then have been raised, along with Christ, to newness of life.

***Resurrection Power is ours through fellowship with Christ (3:11)***

When we are \_\_\_\_\_ with Christ by trusting in him, we experience the power that raised him from the dead (**Galatians 3:26-28**). That same mighty power will help us live morally renewed and regenerated lives. But before we can walk in newness of life, we must also \_\_\_\_\_ to sin. Just as Christ's resurrection gives us his power to live for him, his crucifixion marks the death of our old sinful nature. We can't know the victory of the Resurrection without personally applying the Crucifixion.

When Paul wrote, "so that, somehow, I can experience the resurrection," he was not implying uncertainty or doubt that he would be resurrected. Rather, this was a way of humbly stating that he trusted in God for his complete salvation—from \_\_\_\_\_ (**Titus 3:5**) to \_\_\_\_\_. Paul did not doubt the fact that he would be raised, but how he would experience the resurrection was within God's plan and power and not his own.

Confident of God's care and blessing, Paul runs toward \_\_\_\_\_ as if he is in a marathon. He wanted to attain the finish line without quitting. Paul was not making a point about eternal security in his wording; rather, he was announcing his dramatic and full commitment to \_\_\_\_\_ in the footrace of spirituality, never giving up until the finish line, where Jesus stands ready with a crown (**Matthew 24:13-14**).



**Understanding the Text**

9. What longings did Paul admit to the Philippians? (3:10-11)

---

---

---

10. What hope did Paul express? (3:11)

---

---

**Life Application Questions**

- What do you need to start counting as “rubbish” for the sake of Christ?

---

---

- When you face struggles this week, how can you remember to rejoice rather than complain?

---

---

**[Resources:** Life Application New Testament Commentary, Barnes Notes, Believer's Bible Commentary, Moody Handbook of Theology, and Adult LessonMaker Questions]