

To the church in Philippi

Philippians



Lesson 3—Righteous by Faith and Seeking Real Holiness

Philippians 3:1-21

I. Rejoicing in Christ by Faith (v.1-4)

- a. (v.1) *We are counseled to rejoice in the Lord to be faithful in Him! Paul does not think it a tedious matter to remind the Philippian brethren of such simple, yet practical things. We need to be thankful in Christ always!*
- b. (v.3-4) *The Apostle here warns the Philippian believers to beware of false teachers and those who were going around trying to force circumcision upon everyone. He wanted them to be well prepared to stand fast in Christ, and to not be moved away from the truth of the gospel! The men who were teaching such things as the necessity of circumcision in the flesh had caused quite a stir, much trouble, and division among many of the early believers (See Acts 15:1,5,19,20,22-29); this Jerusalem Counsel had been called to settle the issue once and for all. Simply, we may also look at the words of Christ Jesus and find out whether Jesus required a physical “circumcision” to be saved. What does Jesus say? (Mark 16:16; Matthew 28:18-20). Did Christ say in His great gospel commission that it was necessary? Nope! He says repentance, belief (faith), baptism, and obedience to God’s commandments is what is required of us.*
- c. (v.3,4) *We need not to have any confidence in the flesh, but rather in Christ Jesus by faith. See also Deuteronomy 30:6; Romans 2:29. Circumcision was to be that of the heart, not the flesh (in the New Testament; the idea however comes to us from the Old Testament as well). Paul had said very strongly to the Galatian believers, “If you be circumcised...Christ shall profit you nothing.” **You cannot count upon the flesh, but rather upon Jesus Christ by faith!***

II. Paul had every reason to boast in the flesh, but he would not (v.5-11)

- a. (v.5-7) *Those things that men might have prized, the apostle could only count but a loss for Christ! They did not make the difference to him, but faith did!*
- b. (v.8-11) *Paul counted all things as loss for Christ so that he could trust in the perfect righteousness which is by faith in Christ! He desired even to suffer with Christ so that he might obtain to the resurrection of the dead. **This resurrection** will take place at Christ’s return! (See 1 Corinthians 15:16-23,51-55; 1 Thessalonians 4:16,17; John 11:23-26). This very same resurrection will begin the 1000 year period of Revelation 20:4-6. We want to be sure to be in that blessed and holy resurrection! Some will merely rise to perish (John 5:28,29).*

III. Being of the same mind to grow in holiness through Christ! (v.12-16)

- a. (v.12-14) *We do not claim that we have already attained to the full purity, love, and holiness which Christ has called us to (Matthew 5:48). But, we forget those sinful things which are behind us and we move on to true holiness in Jesus Christ—ever-advancing and not giving up! Christ will forgive and wash away our sins which we have confessed and forsaken through Him (1 John 1:9; Proverbs 28:13; Isaiah 1:16-20; Psalm 103:8-18; Micah 7:18,19). The Lord will lead us in His righteous and blessed path of holiness (Jude 1:24). Onward and upward is the call in Christ Jesus! **Do not let your mistakes or sins of the past keep you from advancing in holiness***

towards the heavenly gates! Do not ever give up in some kind of discouragement because there is YET hope for you. God desires to save us, and not that any should perish! He loves us! (2 Peter 3:9; Ezekiel 33:11). Find Christ's true forgiveness in the Psalm of repentance by King David, Psalm 51. There is yet hope for you and me! Seek Christ! He is our only helper! Do not ever go away from Him. You have nowhere else to go anyway! (John 6:66-69).

- b. (v.15,16) **Never be satisfied to stay where you are in Christ!** That is not right! We must choose to continue advancing and growing in His grace and holiness! Otherwise, we'll surely be going backwards and not forwards. We are not to be static Christians, but growing Christians! "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matthew 5:6).

IV. Following Christ's Heavenly Example (v.17-21)

- a. (v.17-19) Sadly, there are many horrible examples of men and woman who've named the name of Jesus Christ but who've failed to follow and to live by the righteous standard of Christ. They have been "the enemies of the Cross of Christ" and they are "many." Jesus spoke further about this terrible situation in Matthew 7:13,14,19-23. They have minded earthly and sinful things! Not holy things! We need to follow good and righteous examples—not the sinful ones which may be found all around us! Especially, we should be looking unto Christ Jesus "...the author and finisher of our faith..." (Hebrews 12:2). He is our perfect example (1 Peter 2:21; 1 John 2:6).
- b. (v.20,21) "...for our citizenship is in heaven..." Heaven is a pure and holy place and nothing that defiles shall ever enter therein (Revelation 21:27; 22:14,15). Sin and practicing sinners will never enter through the pure and holy gates of heaven. Adam and Eve lost Eden for that. Lucifer and his angels lost heaven for it. None will ever enter in there while practicing such abominable things!
- c. When Christ returns we shall have glorified bodies, even as Christ did after his resurrection (v.20). We'll have a real body even like Christ did (Luke 24:39).

Taking it Home: Will you trust in Christ by faith for your salvation, and seek to be filled with His holiness and righteousness? _____ (that your character may be transformed by Him into the same image as He!)