

Philippians 3:1-9 | 9/11/16

- Boast in Christ and not in the flesh | Philippians 3:1-6
 - **Read Philippians 3:1-3**
 - Paul opens Chapter 3 with a warning to the Christians about the dangers of those who boast in the flesh and why they should refrain from this themselves.
 - In chapter 2 we discussed how God has worked within the Christian to have the desire and the abilities to do His good works.
 - That to work out one's salvation was not an act of works to obtain righteousness but it was to put into action our changed hearts, to fulfill the calling that Christ has called us to.
 - Here Paul warns the Christians of those (Judaizers) who give themselves glory for their good works. Not only did they give themselves glory, but they saw their actions as the means for their salvation.
 - These Judaizers (those who felt it mandatory to follow the law of Moses and their traditions) that Paul refers to as "dogs" and "evil workers" sought to glorify themselves and boast of their own human accomplishments.
 - They saw salvation as a reward for their work, through the physical act of circumcision and obedience to the law.
 - Obedience to these things was important for the Israelites, but salvation was not rewarded because of it.
 - Circumcision was a covenant marking, but it didn't guarantee or provide salvation.
 - Genesis 17:11
 - Acts 15:1
 - "Some men came down from Judea and began to teach the brothers: "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom prescribed by Moses, you cannot be saved!"
 - Acts 15:5
 - "But some of the believers from the part of the Pharisees stood up and said, "it is necessary to circumcise them and to command them to keep the law of Moses!"
 - **Works based righteousness was what they leaned upon for salvation, not putting their faith, trust and confidence in Jesus Christ. It was their works that they put their confidence.**
 - In fact, many of them believed that the circumcision was ALL that was required, **that they could live their lives anyway they wanted.** It didn't matter they had the mark.
 - **But Paul looked upon their circumcision not as a mark of the covenant but as mutilators of the flesh.**
 - This mark of salvation through a work can be seen in baptism throughout Christianity in the later years after the apostles and even today.
 - Emperor Constantine, who is considered to be the first Christian emperor, in early 4th century waited until his death bed to be baptized.
 - Infants were baptized by nursemaids if there was any sign of problems with the newborn child.
 - Today there are many Christians who put their confidence in this as proof of their salvation and not faith in Christ.

- Their response to the question of how do you know you are saved is “I was baptized as a child”.
- **What problems do you see if we rely upon a “work” or “action” as the means of our salvation? Does it put confidence in ourselves or Christ?**
- **Are there other things besides baptism that people rely upon today as a means for salvation?**
 - **Church membership, lineage**
- Not only did they see salvation as a reward for their actions, but they glorified themselves because of the “good things” that they did.
 - **They didn’t give the glory to God, they sought for it themselves.**
 - Matthew 6:16
 - “Whenever you fast, don’t be sad-faced like the hypocrites. For they make their faces unattractive so their fasting is obvious to people. I assure you: They’ve got their reward!”
 - Matthew 6:5
 - “Whenever you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites, because they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by people. I assure you: They’ve got their reward!”
 - These Jews may have tried to look the Christian part on the outside, but on the inside their **works were to bring themselves glory.**
 - **They sought confidence in themselves for their actions and their works, they did not boast in Christ Jesus.**
 - **They defined themselves and other people based on their human merit, status and achievements.**
 - 2 Corinthians 10:17-18
 - “So the one who boasts must boast in the Lord. **For it is not the one commending himself who is approved**, but the one the Lord commends.”
 - Paul had great reason for confidence in himself. | Philippians 3:4-6
 - **Read Philippians 3:4-6**
 - Paul’s description of these “dogs” and “evil workers” that he placed on some of the Jews could have easily applied to him previously before he came to know Christ.
 - **They couldn’t say “oh Paul you don’t really know them”**
 - If there was anyone who could uplift themselves because of the things they have done through their own works it was Paul.
 - He was circumcised on the 8th day in accordance to Scripture
 - From the tribe of Benjamin showing his pure heritage of being a Jew and descendant of Abraham.
 - He was a Pharisee so he strived for complete obedience to Scriptures (Torah) and also the Jewish traditions.
 - His zeal for being a Jew was shown in his persecution of the church, which he thought was the right thing to do.
 - Love and hate were intertwined, he hated anything that might threaten it.
 - He had legalistic righteousness, on the outside he appeared to obey the law perfectly.

- **Paul understood what it looked like to see himself as the source of his piety.**
- Christians today can also get caught up in commending themselves for their approval and piety.
 - We look at the good works that we have done as a sign of our approval before God.
 - **We can uplift ourselves in our acts of service and think “wow I am such a good person”.**
 - We may find ourselves seeking charity work so that we can be uplifted by others, instead of boasting the Lord and giving Him the glory.
 - Jesus gave a prime example of this:
 - **Luke 18:9-14**
 - **“He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and looked down on everyone else:...”**
- **What are reasons that Christians find themselves boasting in their accomplishments or (religious self-confidence) instead of giving the glory to Christ? I’m a Christian because “I have done...”**
- True Christians boast in Christ and not ourselves.
 - Paul contrasts those who live for themselves, who glorify their works and activities with the true Christians who give the glory to God for everything that they accomplish.
 - Those of the circumcision – True Christians
 - The true Christian isn’t known by a physical mark, but by an inward one made by the Spirit.
 - Romans 2:28-29
 - **“For a person is not a Jew who is one outwardly, and true circumcision is not something visible in the flesh. On the contrary, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is of the heart—by the Spirit, not the letter. That man’s praise is not from men but from God.”**
 - Deuteronomy 30:6
 - **“the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the hearts of your descendants, and you will love Him with all your heart and all your soul so that you will live.”**
 - **Our salvation is not given to us because of how we look, a special mark, the church we attend or the family we group in.**
 - **It is an inward change of the heart by the Holy Spirit.**
 - **This is so that man cannot praise himself for what he has done, but can only praise God for what He has done.**
- This is the righteousness that comes through faith.
 - Romans 4:13
 - **“For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would inherit the world was not through the law, but through the righteousness that come by faith.”**
 - Romans 4:16

- Nothing in his life could compare to the worth of knowing Christ Jesus as his Lord and Savior.
 - Paul truly saw how a relationship with Jesus Christ was greater than anything this world could offer.
 - Matthew 13:44
 - “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure, buried in a field, that a man found and reburied. Then in his joy he goes and sells everything he has and buys that field.”
 - Everything in Paul’s life he gladly gave up for the treasure of Christ.
- Christians also must see the treasures of the world as rubbish to that of knowing Christ.
 - When we truly know Christ through faith we too will see the world with a different perspective.
 - No longer are we concerned with what happens to us when we die, we know where we are going.
 - We also have a different perspective on the things in this world.
 - That doesn’t mean that we don’t become selfish and sin by desire the things in the world, but our hearts have certainly been changed.
 - It is also very likely that there are things we will give up and lose because of Christ.
 - It could be friends or lifestyle choices that are sinful to God.
- **Can you relate to Paul’s statement? “...I also consider everything to be a loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord...”**