

Philippians 3

Scriptures:

Notes:

Philippians 3:1-11 -

Scriptures:
Nehemiah 8:10b - ...the joy
of the LORD is your
strength.

¹ Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. For me

5463 – VPAM2P –
verb, present
tense, active
voice, imperative,
second person,
plural

Notes:
What does it mean when a preacher
says, 'Finally...'? In Paul's case it
meant he was at the halfway point
of his letter.

'Finally' can also be translated 'And
so' or 'Moreover' as a transition
rather than a conclusion.

'rejoice' – imperative = command

to write the same things to you is not tedious, but

3636 -
bothersome

'rejoice in the Lord' – Jesus is both
the occasion and the source of our
joy.

'to write the same things' =
exhortations to rejoice even in the
midst of affliction.

for you it is safe.

804– 'cautionary
adj. — protecting
against possible
danger or failure.'

'safe' – rejoicing during affliction can
keep you safe from the temptations
to 'escape' your affliction through
your own efforts (Neh. 8:10). That is
what Paul is going to warn them
about next.

"Matthew Henry, the Puritan
expositor, wrote, 'The joy of the Lord
will arm us against the assaults of
our spiritual enemies and out our
mouths out of the taste for those
pleasures with which the tempter
bait his hooks,' The joy of the Lord
is divine armament. Those living in
His joy are resistant to attacks that
take others down.'" (Hughes, 2013)
page 124

Scriptures:
Psalm 22:16-18 -

For dogs have
surrounded Me;
The congregation of the
wicked has enclosed Me.
They pierced My hands
and My feet;
17 I can count all My
bones.

They look and stare at
Me.

18 They divide My
garments among them,
And for My clothing they
cast lots.

² Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware

991 – watch out
for, be vigilant

2965 - dog n. —
any kind of dog;
usually wild,
unclean kinds. —
bad person,
sexually immoral

2556 -
incorrect

2040 – doer, one
who does

of the mutilation!

2699 - cutting of
the flesh;
(pejorative for)
circumcision

Notes:

Paul was regularly contending
against the Judaizers. These were
Jewish Christians (or at least claimed
to be Christian) who insisted that
Gentile (non-Jewish) Christians must
submit to the Mosaic law, including
circumcision in order to be right with
God.

‘dogs’ – First-century Israelites had
no use for dogs. The did not keep
dogs as pets or use them for herding
animals. In their culture dogs were
like coyotes in ours – predators,
scavengers, unclean animals. To
refer to a Jew as a dog was a great
insult. We have to watch out for
spiritual predators – people who
claim to be God’s people but are
seeking to draw His people away
from the simple gospel of Christ.

‘evil workers’ – The Judaizers
claimed to be doing the works of the
Law and therefore were right with
God. Paul is saying that making
Gentiles submit to the Mosaic laws
was evil. We also have to watch for
people who insist on rules and
regulations for a right standing with
God. Very often it is an attempt to
put you into bondage to a religious
system that moves you away from
God rather than toward Him.

‘the mutilation’ – The Judaizers
insisted that Gentiles converts be
circumcised. To the Jews
circumcision had become a legalistic
source of pride. To Paul, to force a
Gentile to get circumcised amounted
to mutilation.

Scriptures:

Deuteronomy 30:6 - And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.

Deuteronomy 10:16 - Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer.

Romans 2:28-29 - For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; 29 but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.

1 Corinthians 3:16 - Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

John 4:23-24 - But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. 24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.

John 16:13-14 - However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. 14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.

Ephesians 2:8-9 - For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Galatians 6:15 - For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.

³ For we are the circumcision, who worship God

2699 -

3000 -

in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and

2744 – glory in

have no confidence in the flesh,

3982 – have trust
in

Notes:

NASB = 'worship in the Spirit of God'
ESV & NLT = 'worship by the Spirit of God'

God commanded the Israelites to be circumcised, but it was always meant to point to a deeper spiritual truth ([Deut. 10:16](#)). When we put our trust in Jesus, we are not putting our trust in the flesh. It is faith that saves us, not any works of the flesh. Spiritual circumcision is cutting away the power of the flesh through faith in Christ.

'we are the circumcision' – Paul is saying that by faith, the Philippians were what the Judaizers were trying to make them through legalistic observance to the Jewish laws. You could say that Paul is saying, 'we are the *real* circumcision' ([Rom. 2:28-29](#)).

'worship God in the Spirit' – When we receive Christ, the Holy Spirit dwells within us ([1 Cor. 3:16](#)). One of His roles in our life is to teach us how to worship God ([John 4:23-24](#)) by faith, not through religious rules and commandments.

"All life becomes worship." (Hughes, 2013) page 127

'rejoice in Christ Jesus' – rejoice in = glory in. Another of the roles of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us is to exalt Jesus through our lives ([John 16:14](#)). Jesus is the focus of our praise and worship.

'have no confidence in the flesh' – If you are glorying in or boasting in Christ, than you cannot be trusting in your own flesh at the same time. The Judaizers were telling people they could be right with God through adherence to the Jews religious rules and regulations. Paul said it is faith that saves us ([Eph. 2:8](#)).

If your flesh cannot save you – it also cannot keep you right with God. Only faith makes you and keeps you right with God. Put no confidence in your flesh – it is only capable of evil.

A modern version of this is Prosperity Theology. It takes something good – giving to God and adds a fleshly component – give to God and he will be obligated to bring you prosperity.

Scriptures:

⁴ though **I** also might have confidence in the

Notes:

flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have

confidence in the flesh, **I** more so:

Scriptures:

⁵ circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of

Notes:

Israel, **of** the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the

Hebrews; concerning the law, **a** Pharisee;

5330 -

Scriptures:

⁶ concerning zeal, persecuting the church;

Notes:

2205 - zeal n. —
excessive fervor
to do something
or accomplish
some end.

1377 - to
systematically
oppress and
harass

1577 -

concerning the righteousness which is in the law,

2596 -

1343 - be put
right with, be in a
right relationship
with - religious
observances, act
of righteousness,
i.e., practices
required by a
religion

3551 - Mosaic law system n. —
the Torah understood as the
system of laws, civil statutes,
and priestly ordinances
comprising the Mosaic
covenant; especially
understood as the means of
earning God's favor.

blameless.

273 - blameless
adj. — free of
guilt; not subject
to blame.

⁷ But what things were gain to me, these

2771 - profit

I have counted loss for Christ.

2233 - reckoned

2209 -

Scriptures:

⁸ Yet indeed **I** also count all things loss for the

Notes:

excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus **my**

5242 – surpassing
greatness

1108 -
understanding

Lord, for whom **I** have suffered the loss of all

2210 - forfeited

things, and count them as rubbish, that

4657 - waste n. —
any materials
unused and
rejected as
worthless or
unwanted;
especially solid
animal waste.

I may gain Christ

2770 -

Scriptures:

Romans 10:1-4 - Brethren,
my heart's desire and
prayer to God for Israel is
that they may be saved.
2 For I bear them witness
that they have a zeal for
God, but not according to
knowledge. 3 For they
being ignorant of God's
righteousness, and seeking
to establish their own
righteousness, have not
submitted to the
righteousness of God. 4 For
Christ is the end of the law
for righteousness to
everyone who believes.

⁹ and be found in Him, not having my own

2147 -

Notes:

righteousness, which is from the law, but that

2147 -

Rom. 10:3

which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness

which is from God by faith;

Scriptures:

John 14:9 - Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

Ephesians 1:15-21 -

15 Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, 16 do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, 18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power 20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.

¹⁰ that ^I may know ^{Him} and the power

1097 -
experientially

1411 - "dynamis"
Eph. 1:19-20

of His resurrection, and the fellowship

386 -

2842 -
participation
fellowship

of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

3804 -

4833 - have the
same likeness, to
share the form of

2288 -

Notes:

Paul did not trust in his pedigree or in his achievements – he trusted God by faith in Christ. There three things Paul wanted to know better and better.

First - 'that I may know Him' – God, sovereign ruler over all of creation wants to be known by His creation. He has revealed Himself in many ways over the millennia, but the chief way was through His Son Jesus. Jesus was the physical manifestation of God the Father (John 14:9). The fruit of knowing Christ better is joy, and peace, and hope.

Second – 'that I may know...the power of His resurrection'. There is nothing more tragic than a powerless Christian. We have God the Holy Spirit dwelling in us and Christ, who was raised from the dead by God's infinite power is our Lord and Savior. There is no limit to what God can do through the life of a man or a woman who puts their trust in Him. The power that raised Jesus from the dead is living within each of us. It is infinite and able to do what we might call impossible. We can wake up every morning to a fresh start with God.

Third – 'that I may know...the fellowship of His sufferings'. – One of the more difficult and less desirable aspect of Christianity is that we cannot know Christ apart from His sufferings. And we cannot know His sufferings if we have not suffered ourselves.

'the fellowship of His sufferings' – Fellowship has the idea of sharing life together. It speaks of community. Jesus meets us in our suffering and if we are humbled before God He will show us Christ's suffering in our sufferings and we will be comforted by the knowledge that Jesus understands what we are going through. But to truly know the fellowship of Christ's suffering, we need to meet Him in the suffering of others. We do that by ministering to the needs of those who are suffering and through intercessory prayer.

'being conformed to His death. -

Scriptures:

¹¹ if, by any means, **I** may attain to the

Notes:

2658 - achieve

resurrection from the dead.

1815 – live again
after physical
death

3498 -