

Text Outline **Philippians 3:1-14**

- I. ¹Further, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord!**
- A. It is**
1. no trouble for me to write the same things to you again,
 2. and it is a safeguard for you.
- B. ²Watch out for**
1. those dogs,
 2. those evildoers,
 3. those mutilators of the flesh.
- C. ³For it is**
1. we who are the circumcision,
 2. we who serve God by his Spirit,
 3. who boast in Christ Jesus,
 4. and who put no confidence in the flesh— ⁴ though I myself have reasons for such confidence.
- II. If**
- A. someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more:**
1. ⁵ circumcised on the eighth day,
 2. of the people of Israel,
 3. of the tribe of Benjamin,
 4. a Hebrew of Hebrews;
 5. in regard to the law, a Pharisee;
 6. ⁶ as for zeal, persecuting the church;
 7. as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.
- B. ⁷But**
1. whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.
 2. ⁸ What is more, I consider everything a loss
 - a) *because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord,*
 - b) *for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage,*
 3. that I may gain Christ ⁹
 4. and be found in him,

- a) *not having a righteousness of my own*
 - (1) that comes from the law,
 - (2) but that which is through faith in^[a] Christ—
 - b) *the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.*
5. ¹⁰ **I want to know Christ—yes,**
- a) *to know the power of his resurrection*
 - b) *and participation in his sufferings,*
 - c) *becoming like him in his death,*
 - d) ¹¹ *and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.*
- C. ¹² **Not that**
1. **I have**
- a) *already*
 - (1) obtained all this,
 - (2) or have already arrived at my goal,
 - b) *but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.*
2. ¹³ **Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it.**
3. **But one thing I do:**
- a) *Forgetting what is behind*
 - b) *and straining toward what is ahead,*
 - c) ¹⁴ *I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.*

Conceptual Outline

I. Rejoice in the Lord

- A. Rejoicing in the Lord is a safeguard.
- B. Watch out for false teachers who are dangerous & evil, who teach dependence on the flesh.
- C. We are the true circumcision because of our dependence on Christ & His Spirit.

II. Example

- A. Paul before his conversion boast about
 - 1. his religious rite
 - 2. nationality as an Israelite
 - 3. his tribal loyalty as a Benjaminite
 - 4. his purity as a Hebrew, Hellenistic Jew
 - 5. his accomplishment as a Pharisee
 - 6. his zeal as a persecutor of the church, "climbing up the ladder" in his religion
 - 7. his righteousness based on the law
- B. Paul after meeting Christ - For the surpassing worth of Christ
 - 1. he considers all the above a loss
 - 2. he has lost everything & considers them garbage
 - 3. That he may gain Christ & be found with a righteousness that comes from faith in Christ
 - 4. His desire is to know Christ
 - a) *to know the power of his resurrection*
 - b) *to participate in his sufferings,*
 - c) *to become like him in his death,*
 - d) *and to attain to the resurrection from the dead.*
- C. Paul's resolve & aim for the future
 - 1. He does not consider himself as having arrived at his goal
 - 2. But one thing he does:
 - a) *Forgetting what is behind*
 - b) *and straining toward what is ahead,*
 - c) *to win the prize God has for him*

Theme: A believer's joy in the Lord is a safeguard against valuing work & accomplishments. Everything else pales in comparison with knowing Christ which is Paul's aim in life.

Questions:

I. Make a list of 7 things that you take pride and put your confidence in besides God. They can include things that define who you are or what you have accomplished. When/under what circumstances might these things become garbage?

II. Having completed his instruction on unity through humble service, Paul turned to the theme of joy which he alluded to in 1:18 & 2:17. This joy is based on what Jesus has done for us and God's exaltation of him to be above all things and to be worship as Paul mentioned in Ch. 2. Read them & 3:1-4.

A. What are Paul's instructions in vs. 1-4?

- 1. What does it mean to rejoice in the Lord? How is it different from being happy?**
- 2. What does it mean to rejoice in the Lord? Do you recall from previous chapters how Paul demonstrated this joy?**

B. The 2nd instruction is to watch out.

- 1. Whom are we to watch out of? Why does Paul use such harsh words to describe them when he just finished talking about unity? What have they done that made Paul so angry? (V. 3 might give us some hints.)**
- 2. Before considering what's wrong with this teaching, let's see what is Paul's argument against this false teaching? What are the four things Paul mentions that define us?**
- 3. Circumcision is a Jewish religious rite that symbolizes God's covenant promises to the Israelites that they are God's chosen people. They are to obey God's Law. Why do you think Paul says that we are the circumcision? What does putting confidence in the flesh mean? Why don't we put confidence in the flesh?**
- 4. What is so wrong with the teaching of circumcision? In our generation, do we have similar teachings? Have you at times felt the need to add good work to your faith or to do more so that you can really be saved?**

References re: circumcision: Acts 15:1-21; Gal 2:21-3:7, 5:2-3, 5:11, 6:12-13; Eph 2:10-12; Col 2:10-12; Heb 9:15

C. How is rejoicing in the Lord a safeguard? What is being guarded?

III. As a example of reliance on self vs. on Christ, Paul offers us 2 portraits - one of himself before he met Christ and another after. Read 4-14.

A. vs. 4-6 Before Saul met Christ, what were some of the things he placed his confidence in?

- 1. What are the significance of these things?**
- 2. What is your evaluation of someone like Saul? Is there anything wrong with these things?**
- 3. How does Saul's list compare with your list?**

B. Vs. 7-11 How did Paul's value shift after he met Christ?

- 1. Was there a progression in his value shift?**
- 2. Why was it necessary to consider everything a loss or garbage in order to gain Christ?**
- 3. How does your list compare with Christ? What is knowing Christ worth to you? What have you lost since knowing Christ? What will you need to consider as garbage in order to gain Christ?**

C. What are some of the things Paul is doing to gain Christ? What does Paul mean "to know Christ" since he has already been saved and was an apostle in prison for Christ? What kind of knowing is it?

D. Vs. 12-14 What is Paul doing in order to know Christ more and more?

- 1. What does he not do?**
- 2. What does he do instead?**
- 3. How does being self-satisfied & not forgetting affect pressing on?**
- 4. How well do you know Christ? Is He worth your pursuit? If so, what do you need to forget and how might you move forward?**

Questions with Potential Answers:

I. Make a list of 7 things that you take pride and put your confidence in besides God. They can include things that define who you are or what you have accomplished. When/under what circumstances might these things become garbage?

II. Having completed his instruction on unity through humble service, Paul turned to the theme of joy which he alluded to in 1:18 & 2:17. This joy is based on what Jesus has done for us and God's exaltation of him to be above all things and to be worship as Paul mentioned in Ch. 2. Read them & 3:1-4.

A. What are Paul's instructions in vs. 1-4?

v. 1 to "Rejoice in the Lord"

v.2 to "Watch out"

1. What does it mean to rejoice? How is it different from being happy?

to be joyful or to be delighted; it has an element of making a choice & therefore, we can be instructed to rejoice. Happy is more of a spontaneous, automatic response to something.

2. What does it mean to rejoice in the Lord? Do you recall from previous chapters how Paul demonstrated this joy?

The Lord is the reason & source for our joy. We depend on Him for our joy.

^{1:18} But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.

^{2:17} But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you.

2:9-11 Talked about God's exaltation of Jesus to the highest place & the day when all will worship Christ. This is reason for our joy.

B. The 2nd instruction is to watch out.

1. Whom are we to watch out of? Why does Paul use such harsh words to describe them when he just finished talking about unity? What have they done that made Paul so angry? (V. 3 might give us some hints.)

- People who are "dogs", "evildoers", & "mutilators of the flesh." They are the Judaizers who teach that in addition to believing in Christ, believers need to be circumcised and follow the Law and Jewish customs.
- Because what they're teaching is a false gospel that adds to salvation by grace through faith in Christ, not by our own work that fulfill the Law.

2. Before considering what's wrong with this teaching, let's see what is Paul's argument against this false teaching? What are the four things Paul mentions that define us?

- We are the circumcision
- We are the ones who worship/serve God by his Spirit
- We are the ones who boast/glory in Christ Jesus
- We are the ones who put no confidence in the flesh
- In other words, we are the real and only Jews. The people who are true believers/worshippers of God through Christ's work.

3. Circumcision is a Jewish religious rite that symbolizes God's covenant promises to the Israelites that they are God's chosen people. They are to obey God's Law. Why do you think Paul says that we are the circumcision? What does putting confidence in the flesh mean? Why don't we put confidence in the flesh?

- Gal 3:6-7 Teaches that by faith, we are the real children of Abraham
- Col 2:10-12 Teaches that real circumcision is not performed by human but by Christ
- Putting confidence in the flesh means depending on what we can do in our human efforts by our self - our heritage, achievement, wealth, good works, etc. (flesh - drop h & spell backwards.)

- Gal 5:2-3 tells us that we can't do it by ourselves. We can fulfill the whole law. Christ is our only Savior.

4. What is so wrong with the teaching of circumcision? In our generation, do we have similar teachings? Have you at times felt the need to add good work to your faith or to do more so that you can really be saved?

- It is basically saying that Jesus is not enough. We have to depend on our good works by obeying the law to save ourselves.
- Most religions in our days teach similar things. If we are good, then we don't need Christ. We can save ourselves by good deeds.

References re: circumcision: Acts 15:1-21; Gal 2:21-3:7, 5:2-3, 5:11, 6:12-13; Eph 2:10-12; Col 2:10-12; Heb 9:15

C. How is rejoicing in the Lord a safeguard? What is being guarded?

- Rejoicing in the Lord means that we don't depend on ourselves. He is our source of help and strength. Our joy & freedom is in Him. It is a safeguard against becoming enslaved by the Law and working so hard to do the impossible, i.e., self-salvation.
- Our joy, freedom, and security in Christ are being guarded.

III. As an example of reliance on self vs. on Christ, Paul offers us 2 portraits - one of himself before he met Christ and another after. Read 4-14.

A. vs. 4-6 Before Saul met Christ, what were some of the things he placed his confidence in? What are the significance of these things?

- his religious rite
- nationality as an Israelite
- his tribal loyalty as a Benjaminite
- his purity as a Hebrew, Hellenistic Jew
- his accomplishment as a Pharisee
- his zeal as a persecutor of the church, "climbing up the ladder" in his religion
- his perfect righteousness based on the law

The first 5 has to do with his heritage as a recipient of God's covenant promise. The last 3 are his personal achievements in career, opportunity to make a name of himself, and his own perception of being perfect as a good person.

1. What is your evaluation of someone like Saul? Is there anything wrong with these things?

- There's probably nothing "wrong" with what he accomplished. He'd probably be esteemed in our generation. However, his dependence on himself would cause him to be quite prideful and maybe hard to get along with. I wonder what would happen to him if any of these things fail him as in persecution of the Jews or in aging when his achievements matter anymore.

2. How does Saul's list compare with your list?

B. Vs. 7-11 How did Paul's value shift after he met Christ?

- They become garbage, loss.

1. Was there a progression in his value shift?

- They were initial gains. Then, he considers them loss for the sake of Christ. Then, he considers "everything" a loss. Then, he actually lost all things.

2. Why was it necessary to consider everything a loss or garbage in order to gain Christ?

- This is pretty black & white. We either trust in ourselves or in Christ. We can't serve two masters.

3. How does your list compare with Christ? What is knowing Christ worth to you? What have you lost since knowing Christ? What will you need to consider as garbage in order to gain Christ?

C. What are some of the things Paul is doing to gain Christ?

- Lost all things.
- Be found in Him with a righteousness that comes from God by faith
- To know Him
- Continue to pursue Him

What does Paul mean "to know Christ" since he has already been saved and was an apostle in prison for Christ? What kind of knowing is it?

- Not just knowing about Christ. But a personal relationship that is ever deepening. Knowing so much as to share in His pain, suffering, and death and to experience His power. It is to identify with Christ in His death by dying to my old self and to experience His power to live a new life.

D. Vs. 12-14 What is Paul doing in order to know Christ more and more?

1. What does he not do?

- Not consider that he's got it already (obtained/arrived.) This is a very different mindset than his old self where he consider himself as perfect.

2. What does he do instead?

- Forgetting what's behind, straining & press on, to take hold

3. How does being self-satisfied & not forgetting affect pressing on?

- Being self-satisfied makes us complacent & unmotivated to deepen our relationship with Christ.
- Not forgetting bad things might cause us pain, regrets, & sadness that immobilize us.
- Not forgetting good might make us live in the past & not live in the present & lose focus of the future.

4. How well do you know Christ? Is He worth your pursuit? If so, what do you need to forget and how might you move forward?