

## Philippians 3:1-11 (ESV)

### Righteousness Through Faith in Christ

1 Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you.

2 Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. 3 For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh— 4 though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; 6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. 7 But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— 10 that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Paul begins this section of his letter with a word of encouragement, “Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord.” (v1) It is of interest to note that this is a command, in the present tense which means, rejoice in the Lord and keep rejoicing.

When can you rejoice? We have little control over our feelings. One moment we are rejoicing and the next we are in despair, feelings change in a moment.

Can't rejoice

- based on feelings
- for what is in you
- for what is around you
- News not a source for rejoicing;

Can rejoice

- based on truth
- God is still on the throne.
- Jesus died and is risen
- the Holy Spirit is working in you

V2. Dogs: scavengers in the middle east, dangerous as they roam in packs. Paul is warning them about those people and things that cause you to forsake rejoicing.

Those who advocate you can't be Christian without circumcision. Circumcision is an outward sign of being in covenant with God. During WW2 the Germans would pull down the pants of men to see if they were Jewish.

For Gentiles, circumcision was not required (Acts 15). It would not make them acceptable to the Jews, nor would it make them acceptable to God. Circumcision binds you to the law, all 613 commandments. This is what makes you acceptable to God,

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

(V3) We are the circumcision. We bear the marks of Christ.

1. “who worship by the Spirit of God,”
2. “glory in Christ Jesus”
3. “put no confidence in the flesh”

(V4) Paul then declare that if anyone should have confidence in the flesh it is he.

What follows is Paul presenting his credentials. I want to take you through each one.

“5 circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee;”

1. “Circumcised on the eighth day” - identifies Paul as from the line of Abraham. He is connected through the covenant.
2. “of the people of Israel” - He is from Jacobs line, remember his name was changed to Israel.
3. “of the tribe of Benjamin” - Benjamin was a very honoured tribe. The first king, Saul was from Benjamin.
4. “a Hebrew of Hebrews” - Danger for the Jews has always been assimilation. Taking on the customs and character of the nations they resided in. Taking on foreign Gods. Paul resisted this.
5. “as to the law, a Pharisee;” - Paul chose to be a Pharisee. It was the strictest

(V6) In this verse, Paul continues his thought declaring that “as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.” He was so committed to the Jewish faith and customs that he wanted to eliminate those who followed Jesus. He is also saying that in under the law he was without fault. This does not mean he did not sin, but that he always did what was required to satisfy that sin. He believed he above all others could have confidence in the flesh, but then he says something amazing.

(V7 &) “But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.” What an amazing statement! Paul is saying that all his heritage, knowledge, training, and character are worthless, they count for nothing. What is most important, valuable and worthy of pursuit, knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. To show how much value he placed in knowing Christ, Paul say, “I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish.” Rubbish is the word most often used in English, but in Greek it refers to human excrement. Paul’s goal is “that I may gain Christ.” If you read to the end of verse 11 you see a picture of why Paul sought to be in Christ. It is a goal we all should have.

