

**Philippians 3:1** *Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. For me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but for you it is safe.*

The Greek word for safe is *asphales* and means secure or certain. Paul is saying that it is not tedious or a problem to write to the Philippians some of the things he had previously written. We can stir ourselves up by way of remembrance (2 Peter 1:13, 3:1).

Paul tells us to rejoice in the Lord. True joy comes from Jesus and Him solely. Jesus said it was the joy set before Him that He was able to endure the cross (Heb 12:2). The joy that was set before Him was fulfilling His Father's will and redeeming mankind back to God.

**Philippians 3:2** *Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation!*

This word *beware* in Greek is *blepo* and means to take heed. The term *dogs* was used in the Old Testament to refer to male prostitutes and in the New Testament referring to someone who was outside the covenant. When Paul spoke of *circumcision* which is the Greek word *katatomē* meaning to cut, he was speaking about mutilation and those that would perform the act of circumcision. In the Old Testament the Jews had taken the act of circumcision and thought it would produce justification with God but Paul is referring to those now who were only mutilating themselves.

**Philippians 3:3** *For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,*

Paul is saying that anyone who has put faith in Jesus has now been brought into the covenant and it is not based off natural descent or physical acts. When he speaks of not putting confidence in the flesh, he is referring to his own self effort and works that he once did when trying to earn right standing with God.

Religion is always focused on the outward man and what it has to DO to please an angry God. True Christianity is focused on the new man and what is already been done. We are not doing to become someone; our doing comes out of our being.

An example of this is going to church. Most Christians think if they attend church then God will bless them. God has already blessed every believer (Eph 1:3) and now as a response we go to church because it is our way to fellowship with other believers but God is not basing His relationship with us on how holy we live or how well we perform. If we stop sinning then God will be pleased with us, this is religion. No, God is already pleased with you and that compels you to stop sinning (Rom 2:4).

**Philippians 3:4** *though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so:*

Paul just admonished others to not put trust in their outward works and now says if anyone could boast in the flesh it was him. Paul was a Pharisee of the Pharisees and went to the school of Gamaliel and studied intensive Greek training. Gamaliel was respected by all the Jews and a respected teacher of the law (Acts 5:33-34).

Paul was saying that all of his many attainments meant nothing compared to God's because you either have to be perfect or accept Jesus' perfect payment on our behalf. God's standard is perfection. Jesus said to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect (Mt 5:48). How has that been working for you?

Today someone may say they have never missed a Sunday of church for the past fifty years, they tithe every Sunday, bake pies for the women's group, and serve on the usher team. All of these works mean nothing if you have not accepted Jesus; you will still end up in hell. Works are not bad if they are a response to our new man but not to earn favor with God.

Works of the law are man's efforts independent of God. Works of faith are actions done based off something we believe.

***Philippians 3:5 circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee;***

One aspect Paul trusted in was his natural ancestry. The next few verses are all things Paul **could** have boasted in. At one point, Paul was trusting in the law to be justified by God (Acts 21:20). He once thought if he followed the law in complete perfection then God would accept him but the law was not given to earn right standing with God but given to show how impossible it is to ever be right with God based off our own holiness and as a response cry out for a savior (Gal 3:24).

Paul sat at the feet of Gamaliel who was a premier teacher of the Law (Acts 22:3). Paul learned the law from man but grace from the resurrected Jesus by revelation (Gal 1:12). Likewise, many of us have been heaped in religion by man but it takes the Holy Spirit to reveal grace to us because the natural mind cannot not comprehend a Holy God loving an imperfect person (Ps 23:3).

***Philippians 3:6 concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.***

Paul once persecuted Christians and killed them (Acts 22:3-4, Gal 1:23). He was zealous for the things of God but it was without knowledge (Rom 10:2). There are two kinds of righteousness; ours and God's (Rom 10:3). Only those who forsake their own righteousness and receive God's will be accepted by Him. Paul was not saying he followed the law perfectly when he said blameless (no one can). His efforts to live for God was flawless but it is impossible to ever be right with God outside of Jesus.

The Greek word for persecuting is *diōkō* and means to pursue or to run swiftly in order to catch a person or thing. This should give us an imagery as to how motivated the apostle Paul was to persecute Christians but was headed in the wrong direction.

There was a man that went to heaven and stood at the gates excited and ready to get in. An angel approached him and said "there are some things I need to ask you before you can enter". The

angel said, “did you go to church every Sunday”, the man answered “yes”. The angel said “perfect you get 1/2 a point”. The angel then asked him “did you tithe every week”, the man said “every”. The angel said, “great you get another 1/2 point”. The man needed to get to 300 points and after only getting to 5 questions the man realized how impossible it was to get into the gates by his own works.

Another man behind him was asked the same questions but simply answered “Jesus” and was let straight in. It is not our self-effort that God will receive us; it is contingent on if we have received His Son. It may seem logical to work to please God, but there is a way that seems right to man, but in the end leads to destruction (Ps 16:25).

**Philippians 3:7 *But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.***

Paul was saying he forsake all of his efforts and counted it worthless to him. Paul’s trust was in ancestry, the law, and the act of circumcision. When a person moves from religion to relationship it is centered on Jesus finished works and not their own.

Circumcision is not a pre requisite for justification with God. Paul proved this in the book of Galatian’s when he brought Titus, a converted Gentile to Christianity who was born again but had not preformed the act of circumcision (Gal 2:3).

**Philippians 3:8 *Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ***

Paul counted all his works for what they were which was filthy rags (Is 64:6). He substituted his works for the sake of gaining Christ. This should be the lifestyle of believer.

The Greek word for rubbish or dung is skubalon and means the excrement of animals. On our best day God is unimpressed with our performance. It is either you offer Him complete perfection or you are a complete failure.

The law will never bend down and tell you that your trying, good job. No, it will spank you with a metal rod and tell you how unworthy you are so we could stop trusting in our own goodness and put faith in Jesus. The moment we get to the end of ourself we get to the beginning of God.

**Philippians 3:9 *and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;***

The Greek word for found is heuriskō and means to perceive, see, or discover. A born again believer has to discover who they are in Christ and find themselves in Him to experience victory and walk free from working to become but getting a revelation of what is already done.

Righteousness that is from Christ is by faith and faith alone. No man is justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus (Gal 2:26, Gal 3:11). God’s righteousness is perfect, ours is not. The law is not of faith.

**Philippians 3:10 *that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,***

Paul's only aim in life was knowing Christ. Eternal life is not about getting to heaven but having an intimate personal relationship with Jesus (John 17:3). The Greek word used for "know" is ginosko and it is referring to an experimental type of know similar to how a man knows his wife. In order to know the power of His resurrection we must know Him.

The Greek word for power is dunamis and is specifically speaking of miraculous power. The early church did not come with just words but demonstration of the Spirit and of power (1 Cor 2:4, 4:20, 1 Thes 1:5).

The word suffering is speaking of hardships or pain. The suffering that Jesus endured was persecution. We too will suffer persecution if we are walking with the Lord. Religion will always persecute those who are walking in grace because it tells the religious person that all of their efforts and works means nothing. Ismael; a byproduct of the flesh persecuted Issac; a byproduct of the spirit.

To be conformed to His death is to see that when Jesus died, we died (Rom 6:3) which is our old man (nature of this world) and now we should identify with the new man. We need to put on the new man and walk after the spirit to see victory (Eph 4:22-24).

**Philippians 3:11 *if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.***

The word attain in Greek is katantao and means to arrive. Paul was looking forward to a better resurrection.

**Philippians 3:12 *Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.***

The word press in this verse is the same Greek word Paul said in verse six of this chapter. Paul was once pressing in to persecute Christian's but through grace began to press toward preaching the gospel.

Paul says he has not arrived at experiencing all God has offered us through grace but he was progressing forward. No one has arrived fully and will not until they go to be with the Lord but it is those who are pressing forward in knowing Him that are walking victorious.

We must become skillful in walking by faith. When a teacher gives an exam for those that have not prepared or studied the test becomes a burden and we ultimately fail but for the student that has studied, prepared, and knows the solutions the test becomes a piece of cake. Likewise, a believer can only attain victory and press forward by becoming skillful in walking by the word and faith.

**Philippians 3:13** *Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,*

In context, Paul was saying here that he put behind all his works and self-effort. Remembering the past is not always bad. Sometimes seeing where we came from and what the Lord delivered us from can be a powerful tool to keep us pressing forward. We were once children of the devil, controlled by the prince of this air, without God, and without hope (Ephesians 2:1-12). We were once ungodly, sinners, powerless, and God's enemy (Rom 5:6-10).

The Greek word for apprehended is *katalambanō* and means to take eagerly or possess. We have to become aggressive with walking in the inheritance that Jesus purchased for us. The violent take it by force (Mt 11:12). In context, the apostle Paul was stating that he had not fully experienced or known all that God had to offer, but that was not going to cause him to retreat.

**Philippians 3:14** *I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

The goal Paul was pressing toward was knowing Christ better than anyone. He was not simply wanting to participate as many Christians do today, he wanted to win. It is not enough to just go to church on Sunday and read a daily devotional. If we only eat healthy once a week, we would never see results.

The apostle Paul refers to the believer's life throughout his epistles. He said that he did not run his race with uncertainty and that a believer has to be disciplined just like an athlete (1 Cor 9:26, 2 Tim 2:5).

The Greek word for prize is *brabeion* and means the award to a victor in a game. Jesus won the victory for us having spoiled principalities and powers but it is our responsibility to enforce the enemy's defeat (Col 2:15). Christians today are winners; they have won the grammy but many still walk around with the mindset of a nominee. We have access, benefits, and privileges; it is time we show up and act like it.

**Philippians 3:15** *Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you.*

How do we become mature? The Greek word for child is *nepios* and means immature Christian. A child is referring to someone under the law. A person that is unskilled or ignorant in the word or righteousness is an immature Christian. We should have moved from milk and into solid food (Heb 5:13-14).

There is a period of time when we are in the passenger seat and are still depending on our parents to take us around. While that is fine temporarily, at some point we must grow up and experience the liberty that having our license brings and begin to drive. The moment we grow up we are able to assist our parents with running errand for them and are of better use. Likewise, when we mature, God is able to use us more.

This is a beautiful promise that says if there is something we do not know God will reveal it to us but we need to be sensitive and walking with him.

**Philippians 3:16** *Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.*

We should think and walk the same with other believers. We all have the same spirit identical to Jesus in us so we should have more in common than not. Anyone born again is now a new creation and to the degree that they can renew their minds to their new identity is the degree that you will experience victory.

Walking by the same rule is the Greek word *kanōn* and refers to a rod or straight piece of rounded wood to which anything is fastened to keep it straight. We should not be walking disconnected as believers but on one accord fastened together.

A military army understands the importance of staying in line and listening to their general commander. They are all in sync, similar to how Christians should be today.

**Philippians 3:17** *Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.*

This is not the first time Paul said to follow him. In 1 Corinthians 1:11 Paul says "imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ." Paul was saying follow me because I am following Christ. A good leader is someone who follows Jesus.

**Philippians 3:18** *For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:*

The word for enemies is *echthros* and means to oppose. The ones opposing the cross are those who trust in themselves and their own works. The ones opposing the cross offer their own goodness while those accepting Jesus receive the cross.

Was the apostle Paul depressed? I thought this book was about rejoicing? The Greek word for weep is *klaiō* and means to wail out loud. The apostle Paul had such a heart for those bound by religion that his compassion was showing through this letter. Weeping will propel a person to move forward and advance the kingdom while depression and grief will paralyze you and cause you to abort the plan of God and remain stagnant.

**Philippians 3:19** *whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things.*

There is a way that seems right to man but in the end, it leads to destruction (Ps 16:25). The core of fallen man is selfish and does not think it needs Jesus. "Whose God is their belly" is saying that these people have in a sense become their own savior. Those who reject Jesus and think they

are good enough to live without Jesus or to get to heaven without Him because they are holy enough think according to the course of this world because that is their nature at their core.

Anyone who is not born again is spiritually dead which simply means separated from God although they are still a spirit being that is functioning; it is dead. This sin nature can only be led by the flesh and not God (Rom 8:7). The natural man will never think the way God does.

**Philippians 3:20** *For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,*

Anyone who has put faith in Jesus has now been translated into God's kingdom (Col 1:13) and has been raised and seated with Him in heavenly places (Eph 2:6). Because we are in a new kingdom, we should have our minds set on things above not on earthly things (Col 3:2) because that is now our spiritual position.

If we were to move from one country to another, we immediately would have to change the way we think. Something so simple as what side of the road to drive on could differ tremendously.

**Philippians 3:21** *who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.*

We will receive a glorified body in heaven and we will be like Jesus (1 Cor 15:42-53). Our new bodies will no longer be flesh and natural that will die and decay but will be imperishable.