

True Joy - The Wisdom of Philippians
Rejoice in the Lord! - Righteousness from God (Phil 3:7-9)
5-23-10
Scripture Reading - Philippians 3:7-11

Last week...

- We began to look at the most loved chapter in the book.
- We talked about the importance of the little four word phrase in 3:1.
- Key to Paul's amazing attitude, ministry, and entire life.
- Key to the first half of the letter...
- Key to the second half of the letter as well...
- First reason to rejoice in the Lord (3:2-6) - *We should rejoice in the Lord because in Him we are set free from having to put our confidence in the flesh.* (explain from verse 2)

This week...

- Begin looking at heart of the chapter (3:7-11) in which Paul gives us two more reasons to rejoice in the Lord, the first of which is this...
 - *We should rejoice in the Lord because in Him we've been given a superior righteousness from God.*

Paul begins to paint a picture of this righteousness in verse 7 using the "language of the marketplace."

- The marketplace was one of the hubs of Greco-Roman culture, especially in larger cities like Philippi, thus the Philippians would have been very familiar with language Paul uses in verse 7.
- In the marketplace vendors would keep a ledger in which they recorded their gains and losses. At the end of the day balance their ledger to determine their profit. (Begin illustration)
- Many viewed their relationship with God this way, including Paul.
- In verses 7-9 Paul paints a picture of the ledger of his life both before and after he met Christ.
- Read text and illustrate in red and black marker.

One of the things Paul had to suffer the loss of in order to gain the righteousness of God was his former righteousness.

- **Philippians 3:8-9 (ESV)**

...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—*

- This is why Paul put no confidence in the flesh even though he had reason to do so (3:3-4) and why he considered his Jewish Heritage and Law Keeping not only to be no longer gain, but loss (3:7). *He knew that any attempt to earn his own righteousness would stand in the way of him receiving the free gift of true righteousness that could only come through faith in Christ.*

- o This is why Paul *so strongly* opposed the Judaizers.

- It's important to note that Paul didn't see his Jewish Heritage or Law Keeping as bad things in and of themselves. In fact, he highly valued them both.

- o **Romans 9:1-5 (ESV) - Jewish Heritage**

¹ I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit—² that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. ³ For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh. ⁴ They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. ⁵ To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.

- o **Romans 3:31 (ESV) - The Law**

³¹ Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law.

- o **Romans 7:7 (ESV)**

⁷ What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin.

- o **Romans 7:16 (ESV)**
¹⁶ Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good.
- o **Romans 7:22 (ESV)**
²² For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being,
- *It was counting on them for righteousness before God that Paul considered loss.*

What exactly was this righteousness from God that Paul was willing to suffer the loss of all things to gain, and what made it so superior?

- Paul answers the “what was it” question pretty well in verse 9.
 - o **Philippians 3:9 (ESV)**
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—
 - It’s actually Christ’s righteousness imputed to us (“and be found in him”)
- But Paul answers the “why was it so superior” question *really* well in Rom 3.
 - o **Romans 3:9-28 (NIV)**
⁹ What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. ¹⁰ As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; ¹¹ there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. ¹² All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." ¹³ "Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit." "The poison of vipers is on their lips." ¹⁴ "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness." ¹⁵ "Their feet are swift to shed blood; ¹⁶ ruin and misery mark their ways, ¹⁷ and the way of peace they do not know." ¹⁸ "There is no fear of God before their eyes." ¹⁹ Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the

whole world held accountable to God. ²⁰ *Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.*

²¹ *But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify.* ²² This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. ²⁵ God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished-- ²⁶ he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

²⁷ Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith. ²⁸ For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.

- So in summary, why is the free gift of righteousness from God through faith in Christ superior to trying to earn our own righteousness before God by keeping the Law?
 - o Because it actually works!
 - o Because it brings maximum glory to God!

**In conclusion, what does the ledger of your life look like?
Are you counting on Christ and His righteousness for
salvation or your own?**

I know what my ledger used to look like...

- Nice guy
- Tried to make it a point to be kind to all
- Rarely swore
- Rarely lied
- Tried to turn the other cheek

- Worked hard
- Did my best
- Prayed occasionally
- Was somewhat open to the existence of God
- Even attended church on occasion
- Ex. My conversation with John Malone yesterday “If God sends me to hell something is seriously wrong.”

But then I met Christ...

Now my ledger looks better but there are still things that creep in...

- Bible reading
- Prayer
- Loving my wife and kids
- Being a good steward of my money and property
- Boldness in witnessing
- Working hard enough to reach my neighbors
- Self-control in eating, sleeping, and TV and movies
- Lack of faith
- Ex. Conversation with a struggling brother this past week.

If there's anything other than Christ in our gain column we need to put it in the loss column today.

If we don't, we'll become either:

- prideful and deceived like I used to be
- or defeated and depressed like my struggling brother
- and God won't get the glory