

Ministry of The Holy Spirit
Prison Letters
Philippians 3:1-11

Last time...

- But I trust in the Lord Jesus...whereby we are encouraged and can be encouraging to others by pointing them to Jesus
- I am the Lord that heals you...the mercy of God's healing encourages us and increases our faith

This time...have no confidence in the flesh and count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, a major shift in our focus and in what we value

v1a Says a man in a Roman prison: "Rejoice in the Lord!"

This is not his first imprisonment (his first was in Philippi)

Acts 15:25 And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.

"In prisons more frequent," (2 Cor 11:23)

Paul would be imprisoned 7 times during his ministry

Paul walked what he talked, he lived what he taught regardless of his temporary circumstances and problems

1 Thes 5:16-18 Rejoice evermore...God reigns supreme always
Pray without ceasing....looking "beyond" and listening
"up"

In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in
Christ Jesus concerning you...there is a sovereign
plan in play using all things

This is not a mere platitude of hypocrite, a lifestyle with a next-worldly focus of a sold-out follower of Jesus Christ

v1b Now, Paul is going to "repeat himself" i.e. write things he taught them while he was with them

The flesh reacts to repetition and continual reminders with an annoyed "yada, yada, yada"!

But repetition and continual reminders are necessary food for the spirit!

2 Peter 1:12-15

By the written Word of God and by our Teacher, the Holy Spirit

We must be continually reminded of even the basic things of salvation;

it is for our good to be reminded of what we already know.

The eternal truths of God and His Good News are "health food", sweet to our souls

To safeguard that truth...

v2 Remember: The world is not our friend, the world is a hostile place for the Family of God
Beware of

1. dogs: a term referring to wild and dangerous scavengers that ran in packs, not domesticated household pooches

Predators that are neither friends of God nor man's best friend

Is 56:9-11 All ye beasts of the field, come to devour, *yea*, all ye beasts in the forest. His watchmen *are* blind: they are all ignorant, they *are* all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, *they are* greedy dogs which can never have enough

Matt 7:6 Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

2. evil workers...false prophets, false teachers with false gospels, deceivers and dividers

Rom 16:17-18 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

3. the concision...the self-righteous "mutilators" ala Judaizers following Paul (Gentiles must be circumcised and keep the Law to be saved)

v3 For we, the followers of Jesus Christ, are the true circumcision...of the heart

Deut 10:16 Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked.

Jer 4:4 Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your heart

Deut 30:6 And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart (the inner change worked in by God), and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.

Rom 2:28-29 For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he *is* a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter; whose praise *is* not of men, but of God.

Col 2:11 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ (the inner change worked in by God)

The circumcised of the heart

1. worship God in spirit

John 4:24 *God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*

Not according to self-righteous religious rituals and rote prayers (Matt 6:7)

2. rejoice in Christ Jesus

We rejoice in being in a right relationship with our Maker!

1 Cor 1:30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

2 Cor 5:17-18 Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ

We rejoice to be alive and to be in the Light!

John 1:4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

John 3:36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

1 John 5:10-12 He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; *and* he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

3. have no confidence in the flesh

Rom 7:18-19 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

Rom 7:24-25 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Gal 5:17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

Gal 5:19-21 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Cor 15:50)

The flesh, the sin nature (wrong-being and wrong-doing), is a dangerous and raging criminal that must be bound

Jer 17:9

James 3:16 For where envying and strife *is*, there *is* confusion and every evil work.

Eph 3:3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

1 Cor 9:27 But I keep under (subdue) my body, and bring *it* into subjection (to the Spirit)

Gal 5:16 Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

We must be continually reminded of the no-goodness of the flesh

The Book of Nehemiah

- encouragement to do the work of God thru a sold-out servant
- relentless discouragement from the world dispelled by God's encouraging Word
- instruction in righteousness
- Neh 10:28-33...wall was built and all things in order
 - separated from the nations and unto the Word of God
 - having knowledge and understanding
 - entered into an oath to observe and do the Word
 - no unequally yoked marriages
 - honored the Sabbath
 - tithes to the Levites and house of God
- Nehemiah goes back to Babylon
- he returns to Jerusalem and finds all those things are undone, contends with the people, and sets things right again (Neh 13)
 - the flesh's unwillingness and inability to be holy, good
 - the task of correction and instruction in righteousness is unending in these bodies of death with a sin nature

That which God has worked in (salvation, an inner change) must be worked out (sanctification) by God because the flesh cannot and will not (Spirit willing but the flesh is weak)

We must be continually reminded to subdue our body (flesh) and bring *it* into subjection of the Spirit

Confidence in the flesh, Self-righteousness, which is fueled by pride,
is the sin that so easily besets us (Heb 12:1), the delusion that God
can be pleased with us based on our merit/performance in the flesh

“I am a good person.”

(“I am a better person than you!”)

“I go to church, I am good enough to get into heaven.”

“I don’t drink or smoke or chew or go with girls that do.”

Self-righteousness (religious pride) is a stench and a great offense to God
God hates pride

Prov 6:16-19 These six *things* doth the LORD hate: yea,
seven *are* an abomination unto him: A proud
look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed
innocent blood, An heart that deviseth
wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in
running to mischief, A false witness *that*
speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord
among brethren.

Pride comes before a fall, before destruction (Prov 16:18)

Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you
up. (James 4:10)

v4-6 If we could please God in our flesh with our righteousness and not in Christ Jesus with
His righteousness, Paul certainly could boast

- circumcised the 8th day...in keeping with the Law
- of the stock of Israel...100% Jewish (both parents), 100% “chosen people”
- of the tribe of Benjamin...”son of my right hand”
- a Hebrew of the Hebrews...top drawer Jew
- a Pharisee...strictest sect, conservative, proud, judgmental (Luke 18:10-14)
- most zealous, lead persecutor of the church
- righteous in keeping the Law...in his own self-deceived mind, self-righteous
to the max

But he would be lost!

Rom 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be
justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.

Rom 10:2 For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not
according to knowledge.

Rom 10:4 For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every
one that believeth.

2 Cor 3:6 the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

Paul was enlightened and enlivened in a personal encounter with the risen Lord

v7-8 But...

the things that were gain to me

- my “pedigree”
- my religious zeal
- my self-righteousness

I counted, considered, I now know to be loss (a detriment) for Christ

- His “pedigree”
- His relational zeal
- His righteousness

Mine were worthless and meaningless, leaving me guilty before God, dead in sin
His are worthy and all-meaningful, being made justified before God, alive to God

2 Cor 5:21 For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin;
that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Indeed, without a shadow of doubt, I now know that all things (of the world and the flesh) are a detriment hindering me from the personal, experiential knowledge of the excellency of Christ Jesus my Lord, who gave Himself for our sins that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father (Gal 1:4)

To win/know/gain Jesus, I have thrown all things of the world onto the trash heap...
cast away lest I be a cast away (1 Cor 9:27, Jer 9:23-24)

I can see clearly now!

In my right mind I now know that all things of the world and the flesh are refuse/dung
keeping me from knowing Jesus.

Why would I cling to dung when I can cling to Jesus?

I cannot cling to dung AND cling to Jesus!

This is a renewing of our mind, a major shift in our focus and in what we value

No value: to have reputation of the world (v4-6)

Valuable: to be of no reputation (Ch 2:7, 1 Cor 4:9-13)

No value: full of the things of the world and empty of Christ (Matt 19:16-24),
uncircumcised of the heart

Valuable: full of Christ and empty of the things of the world (Matt 4:18-22),
circumcised of the heart

No value: this world and the pride of life (James 4:14 with Heb 9:27)

Valuable: The Substance of eternal life (1 John 2:15-17)

Moses had the very same renewal of mind, focus, values

Heb 11:23-27

Thinking rationally and wisely (to the end of the matter), the choice is binary

A. Everything of value (Christ)

B. Everything of no value (flesh, the world)

And there is no fence to straddle

“Having it both ways” is a deception

James 4:4 Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

Soil #3: cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches = unfruitful

Matt 6:24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

1 Tim 6:9 But they that will be rich (filled with the things of this world that appeal to the lust of our flesh) fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

v9 Indeed, without a shadow of doubt, I now know that all things (of the world and the flesh) are a detriment hindering me from being found in Jesus

found in Christ

not having my own righteousness...self-righteousness, a filthy rag (Is 64:6)

not of the Law...that declares the whole world guilty (Rom 3:19)

but the righteousness of faith, the righteousness of God by faith...

the faith **of** Christ

Heb 12:2 Author and Finisher of faith

Heb 11:6 without which it is impossible to please God

Gen 15:6 Abraham believed and it was accounted unto him as righteousness

Eph 2:8-9

Gal 2:16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith **of** Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

Hab 2:4 the just(ified) shall live (eternal) by faith

Rom 1:16-17 the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

Gal 3:11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, *it is* evident: for, The just shall live by faith.

How valuable it is to be “found in Him” before God!

Rom 14:12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

1 Peter 4:5 Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.

Does that appointment terrify you?

Healthy fear for sure

But perfect loves casts out fear

The Mediator of a better covenant will “shield” me – when the Father looks at me He will see

- Jesus
- Jesus in me
- Jesus’ righteousness in me

v10 Indeed, without a shadow of doubt, I now know that all things (of the world and the flesh) are a detriment hindering me from knowing Jesus

- Him Personally and experientially...His presence
- His power, His resurrection
- His sufferings

- Personally for my eternal good (Ch1:29)
- to conform me unto His death (of Self) and life

Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith **of** the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

v11 Indeed, without a shadow of doubt, I now know that all things (of the world and the flesh) are a detriment hindering me from glory

that by any means...whatever it takes, whatever it costs me in this world

I might attain...not earn but come to that which I desire (Ch 1:21)

the resurrection of the dead...the power of God to make eternally alive

At the end of the day, the only thing of value in this world is...knowing Jesus Christ!

When we truly meet Jesus

- we see His absolute Goodness and our absolute no goodness
- the inner change worked in by God results in a renewed mind, a major shift in our focus and in what we value takes place
 - that which up to that point had been so important to us suddenly becomes very unimportant
 - He becomes most important and knowing Him becomes paramount, knowing Jesus is the very meaning of life
- we see clearly: everything of this world goes the way of this world – death – and is of absolute no value

Let God work out that which He has worked in –

- the inner change
- the circumcision of the heart, the cutting away of our Self-righteousness
- the mind of Christ
- having no confidence in the flesh
- count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, a major shift in our focus and in what we value