



2016: Week 43

Sunday, October 23rd 2016

"In Whom Are You Trusting?"

Philippians 3:3

³ For we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and **put no confidence in the flesh**" (NASB).

On Sunday John continued our study in the **Book of Philippians**. In this section of our study, Paul warns us to resist the temptation of trusting in ourselves rather than in God. Throughout the New Testament we find some of the greatest oppositions to the Gospel from individuals or groups promoting self-righteousness. A self-righteous mentality perpetuates the idea that a person can earn God's favor by exemplary actions accomplished in their own strength. The only problem with that idea is that a person can never do enough good to solve the problem of their sin. Good deeds are great, but good deeds don't pay for sin. It's only the sinless blood of Jesus that can pay the penalty derived by our sin. The world promotes the idea of "pulling yourself up by your own bootstraps," but the Gospel might say, "trust in God to pull you up... and don't worry about the bootstraps." Let's take a deeper look at Paul's challenge today in **Philippians 3:1-11**.

1. **READ Philippians 3:1-3**

- In **Matthew 5:44**, Jesus instructs His followers: "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." And yet here in **Philippians 3**, Paul identifies those who oppose the message of the Gospel as "dogs," "evil workers," and the "false circumcision." How can you reconcile *loving* an individual and yet identifying that same individual as *false*, or even *evil*?
- Our world likes to present love and truth as being mutually exclusive. Scripture, however, reminds us that love and truth should actually work together.
 - 1 **John 4:8** "God is love."
 - John 14:6** Jesus: "I am...the truth."
 - John 1:14** "And the Word (Jesus) became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."

As followers of Jesus, we are called to love all people. All people, whether we agree with their beliefs or not, are created in the image of God. However, we are not called to love everything that a person chooses to do or believe. We are not called to love sin. There is a difference between loving a person and loving what a person does. Christian apologist Mike Gendron reminds us, "Remain sanctified by the truth. Do not capitulate to the pressures for ungodly unity." Here in Philippians, Paul sought unity with the Philippians, but he did not seek unity at the expense of the truth. As a believer, seek unity and truth. Be full of the love of Christ, and continually be filled with the truth of God's Word.

2. **READ Philippians 3:4-11**

- Paul possessed an incredible heritage and personal accomplishments, which he details in **3:4-6**. However, he says that the greatness of his personal background he actually "counted as loss for the sake of Christ" (**3:7**).
 - How could Paul say this?
- In **3:9** Paul expresses his desire to be found righteous in Christ and not in himself.
 - How is a person considered righteous in Christ?
 - How might a person be considered righteous in himself/herself?
 - What areas of your life dangerously puff up your pride, so that you begin to trust in yourself instead of trusting in God?

FAMILY PRAYER: Lord God, we confess the sin of our own pride. We've entrusted you with our future, and yet we struggle to entrust You with our present. May we not look to our own achievements as the basis of either our salvation or our spiritual growth. We look to You in faith. Continue to guide us by Your Spirit. May we be a people full of truth and love, consistently "speaking the truth in love" (**Eph. 4:15**). Amen.