

# Christ Plus Nothing

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Date: 01 April 2007

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[0:00] Philippians chapter 3, the first nine verses. Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord.! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again,! and it is a safeguard for you.

Watch out for those dogs, those men who do evil, those mutilators of the flesh. For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh.

Though I myself have reasons for such confidence, if anyone thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more. Circumcised on the eighth day of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews, in regard to the law, a Pharisee, as for zeal, persecuting the church, as for legalistic righteousness, faultless.

But whatever was to my prophet, I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss, compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things.

I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ, and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own, that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness that comes from God, and is by faith.

[1:29] It would be good for you to have your Bibles open to Philippians chapter 3, the passage that we're going to be looking at this morning. Some things can be ruined by adding things to it, like perfect chocolate chip cookies, with just the right ingredients, the kind that mom's been making for years, and then one day she gets the idea that she's going to improve the recipe, and so she adds a cup of chopped walnuts.

And the kids come home from school and take one bite and say, you've ruined the whole batch of cookies. They were ruined because of something that was added to them.

And in the same way, the gospel can be ruined, not only by subtracting things from it, but by adding things to it. And it's this latter charge, or this latter danger, that Paul is addressing in our text today. He's talking about gospel additives, Christ plus something else, in order to make us right with God. Now he begins with a few introductory remarks.

Verse 1, Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. Now remember, he's in prison, and it's this note of joy that he sounds throughout this prison epistle.

[3:04] He's already called on us to rejoice, but here he gives us the ground of our joy. Rejoice in the Lord. Don't rejoice in the flesh.

He's going to talk about those who rejoice in the flesh. No, rejoice in the Lord. And so it stands at the outset of this passage, in which he wants us to appreciate and joy in our Lord and in our salvation that's found in him.

So whatever Paul is going to say to us in this text, he's still pursuing our joy. The second introductory remark is that he's going to repeat himself in what he's about to say.

It is no trouble, he says, no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you.

It's nothing new that they're going to hear from him now. They've heard it all before. Perhaps when he was with them. Maybe even what he said earlier in this letter is what he's referring to, of those who would attack the gospel, and they must stand fast together for the gospel and not lose the gospel.

[4:16] Or maybe he's even written it in earlier letters that we don't have. But whatever the case was, what he's writing now is what we call old news.

It's not something new. He's repeating what he said. And he says to do so is no trouble for me, and it's safe for you.

Now, we don't like to hear the same things again. We like to hear new things, don't we? It's one of the reasons I believe why gossip is so popular.

We have this itch for the new. All the Athenians and the foreigners who live there, we read, spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas, the newest teachings that were coming down the pike.

The flesh is titillated by new things. The flesh easily grows bored hearing the same things, familiar things.

[5 : 17] I've heard it before, and so it's switched off. But do you realize that what you need to hear most is usually the same things that you already know?

Now, not always. Sometimes you need to learn new things. But most often, what we need, not what we want to hear, but what we need to hear, is the same things to come in power and to change us and affect us in ways that the truth hasn't.

And so we find the Scriptures loaded with statements like, do you not know? Of course you know it, but you're acting like you don't. Or you know, and then the repetition.

That's the way Jesus taught His disciples over and over again. And the sooner we realize this about ourselves, the better. The sooner we realize that there's a part of me that doesn't like to hear the same things.

And yet, I need to hear the same things. The more armed I will be to crucify the flesh that just wants to hear new things or to shut off the same old things.

[6 : 27] Paul doesn't shrink from repeating himself, does he? He tells them right up front. And in this, he's like Peter, who says, I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are already firmly established in the truth you now have.

I think it is right for me to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body and I will make every effort to see that after my departure, you will always be able to remember these things.

Some things are worth repeating a lot. Those are the kind of things Paul's going to tell us about.

About gospel additives, about Christ plus preaching and teaching.

And so he says to write the same things to you. To me is not troublesome, and to you it is safe.

Now before you go to sleep on me, since this is nothing new, I want to say, watch out!

Watch out! Watch out! That's verse 2. He doesn't want his hearers sleeping. He's just told them, this is the same thing, but don't go to sleep on me.

[7 : 43] Watch out! The NIV tames it down, sadly. It's only found once in the New International Version's translation. But it's in the original three times. Beware! Beware! Beware!

Paul is intense in his tone, and he wants to secure the attention of the congregation to a very real danger. You need to hear this again for your safety, because there's a real danger out there.

So what is he saying? Watch out for those dogs! Watch out for those men who do evil! Watch out for those mutilators of the flesh! Now here we have a graphic, three-fold description of these men, and before we turn to them and unpack them, we need to ask first, who are these men that are so dangerous that Paul is warning them about?

Well, they're not three different groups. They're one group described in three different ways. They're the Judaizers, the Judaizing Christians, the legalists, many Jews who had converted to Christianity, but who held that salvation was believing in Jesus, plus keeping the laws of Moses, and especially being circumcised.

That's the gospel. It's Jesus plus. They added the religious ritual of circumcision to Christ. Paul did battle with these in Acts chapter 15, when he said, some men came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the brothers, unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved.

[9 : 24] And those Antioch and Christians says, but we have Christ. And they said, Christ is not enough. You must also be circumcised.

Christ plus circumcision in order to be right with God. You see why I speak of additions, ruining the gospel, adding something that you must do to what Christ has done.

It's justification, not by faith alone in Christ alone, but justification by faith, plus your works of some kind. That's the age-old problem of legalism.

Salvation by something we do. Now, nothing is more common. We heard of it in the Sunday school hour. Why do other religious people hate the true church?

Because they're teaching a gospel of Christ plus. Christ plus good works. And wherever Christianity has gone, there's always been those who would add something to the gospel.

[10:36] That's the religion of natural man. Man comes from the hand of God with a conscience and knows that there is a God and knows that I've sinned against Him. Well, how do I fix the problem? Well, I need to do good things to offset my bad things.

And all the religions of the world, except biblical Christianity, have this in common, that man's salvation is earned by something that we must do.

Now, precisely what the thing that must be done is differs from religion to religion. The bloody animal sacrifices must be added, say the animus of Africa.

Prayers, pilgrimages, and fasting, and good deeds will put you in right stead with God, say the Muslims. Self-denial, say the Hindus.

Meditation, say the Buddhists. The keeping of the Torah, say the Jews. It's what man does that makes the difference in man being saved, in man being right with his Creator.

[11:45] It's self-help religion, isn't it? And it's by far the most popular religion in the United States today. This natural religion wears many hats.

And it's not just popular in the major religions of the world, it's popular in the major denominations of Christianity as well. The Roman Catholic sacraments by which we can make ourselves right with God.

But good works religion is not just something Roman Catholic, it's in Protestantism. Presbyterian churches, Reformed churches, Baptist churches, Methodist churches, that would bring some good deeds that we must do to make us right with God.

It's Christ plus religion. It's gospel additives. You hear it all the time at funerals, don't you? That the thing that made this person right with God is they were such a good person.

That's the great hope of Christianized man. That they're good enough for God. But when anything is added to Christ and His work in the gospel, you ruin the gospel.

[13:02] You add the walnuts to the recipe and it ruins the recipe. You add anything to Christ in the gospel and it ruins the gospel. It destroys Christianity.

It morphs into something else. It's not biblical Christianity. It's not the saving religion of Jesus. It's another religion. And it comes under the curse and the anathema of God.

And Paul was always having to deal with this element, wasn't he? This Judaizing, legalizing element. And it's seen in his letters to the churches. He writes to these churches, plural, in Galatia. And he has to speak of another gospel that's been brought in. It was the same sort of thing. Yes, you must believe in Christ, but you must also be circumcised in order to be saved.

And Paul labels it for what it is. It's another gospel. That won't save. You can't be saved believing that gospel because you can't add anything to Christ without ruining the gospel.

[14:07] Now, it's possible that there was already a Judaizing element in the church at Philippi. Maybe that was part of the fracturing of the unity there that some were boasting in their circumcision over those who hadn't been circumcised.

Or whether it was present or not, Paul knows it's out there and they're going to hear it one day or the other. It seems to be a very urgent warning.

It was probably present. If not, he knew it was on the way. And so he warns against these dangerous men, these Judaizers. Now, notice the three descriptions of these men.

They're dogs, they're evil workers, and they're mutilators. Watch out for those dogs. Verse 2. You're walking past a junkyard and there on the chain link fence is a sign that says, Beware of the dogs. Dogs. And that sign keeps you from crawling over the fence to look for another steering wheel for your car. Beware of the dogs. But we're not at the junkyard.

[15:17] We're in church. And it's here that we have the sign. Beware of the dogs. Dogs at church?

I think we had a dog here once in the 24 years that I can remember. But that's not what he's talking about. Paul is calling these Christ plus preachers dogs because of their dogish nature.

And when he speaks of dogs, the dogs of those days were not the pampered poodles of our day. It wasn't old Jed who just lays there at our feet just looking like man's best friend.

No, it was the pack dogs. The scavenger dogs. The bony, contaminated, diseased dogs that went around barking and biting and prowling through the streets of every city.

Carriers of all kinds of diseases. You remember the Jews who prided themselves in being God's people. The circumcised used to call the uncircumcised Gentiles dogs.

[16 : 31] And Paul now turns it right on them and says, Circumcised Jews, you're the dogs. You legalizing Judaizers, you're the dogs.

Barking and biting and contaminating and prowling filthy dogs with the filthiness of their own supposed self-righteousness.

Watch out for the dogs. Watch out for evil workers, he says next. Those men who do evil. And notice, they're not doing good, they're rather doing evil.

It's positive evil. It's positive wickedness that these men are doing. Now the world doesn't view it that way. And I wonder if some of you probably don't have that same view either of these people, that they are wicked.

They are doing evil. You see, they look quite harmless. They even look virtuous.

[17 : 35] They're real religious people. They live very moral lives. They're not murdering, raping, and stealing. They're teaching all about the Ten Commandments and about the Golden Rule.

They're even talking about Jesus and they're collecting food for the needy and all sorts of community projects are being carried out by them. They're not hurting anyone. Surely nothing here to be warned about.

No danger here. Paul's just overreacting. And Paul says, no, they're evil workers. They're teaching a Jesus plus gospel.

Oh, okay, so they're off doctrinally. They're not exactly in line with the Bible. That's all there is. Well, what's so dangerous about that? Well, that's where you're wrong, Paul would say.

They may not think of pulling a gun and robbing your billfold, but by their teaching, they rob men of eternal life. They may never think of pulling a knife from their coat and stabbing you in the heart, but by believing what they say, they'll destroy your soul for eternity.

[18 : 57] No, I meant what I said, Paul would say. They are evil workers. They are working nothing but evil. Because the doctrine of Jesus plus is a gospel that damns people to eternal hell.

They are more dangerous than a murderous thug roaming the streets with his mind blown on drugs. You wouldn't like to have your kids out knowing that that kind of man was out on the streets.

And we immediately say, danger, watch out for that kind of guy. And we teach our children this. But do we teach them how dangerous all Christ plus gospels are?

Do we teach them the dangers to their eternal soul? Satan calls these men Satan's demolition crew. Watch out for these evil workers. They're dogs, they're evil workers, and thirdly, they're mutilators.

Now, these legalists were peddling circumcision as the thing that was needed to add to faith in Christ for salvation.

[20 : 07] Now, in the old covenant, circumcision was required of all the male members of the covenant people of God. And it was a Jewish badge of membership that showed that you were a part of God's covenant people.

But it was never meant to be merely an outward act alone on the flesh. It was to be matched by a spiritual circumcision of the heart.

The cutting away of evil desires in the heart. The cutting away of the flesh. The sinful nature of man. That's what God was after.

And so he's constantly getting after these Jews of the Old Testament who have been circumcised as to the flesh. And he's saying, circumcise your hearts. You need to have your hearts circumcised so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart.

So you'll turn away from your iniquity and no longer be stiff-necked. Well, that Old Covenant sign is now done away with in Christ.

[21 : 12] It's only the spiritual reality that remains in Christ. Colossians 2, 11, and 12. In Christ, in Him, you were also circumcised in the putting off of the sinful nature.

You see, not the putting off of a piece of flesh, but the putting off of the sinful nature, the body of the flesh, not with the circumcision done by the hands of men, but the circumcision done by Christ, having been buried with Him in baptism and raised with Him through your faith in the power of God who raised Him from the dead.

Well, these Judaizers knew nothing of the reality, the spiritual reality of having their hearts circumcised to the Lord. They just had the outward physical act done, and they said, that's the

important thing, and that's what you must have done, or you cannot be saved.

And so they proudly called themselves the circumcision. You see it in Ephesians 2, 11. They like to call themselves the circumcision, and Paul won't give them that name.

He won't do them the service, the honor, because circumcision as God gave it was to be of the heart as well as the flesh, and they had nothing of that spiritual reality, so he doesn't call them the circumcision, but he calls them the concision, the mutilators, because what they're doing to their bodies is no more pleasing to God than if they were just self-mutilators, doing what was forbidden by the law of Moses in Leviticus 21, 5, cutting themselves, the pagan practice that you see the priests of Baal doing to themselves.

[22 : 46] That's what your circumcision is to God, just plain, outright mutilation, nothing that would win you favor with God. So these Jesus plus teachers are dogs, evil workers, mutilators.

Now that's harsh language, isn't it? And that's coming from the man who just told us that we need to esteem one another better than ourselves, and we need to be low-minded and to be humble.

But you know, there's something more important than unity, and it's the truth. There's something that unity should not be sold out for, or the truth shouldn't be sold out for in order to gain unity.

Paul, you're not going to be unified with these people. He's not after unity with them. They have another gospel. They're taking men and women to hell.

And so he speaks clearly the truth about them. Watch out for them. They'll damn your souls. Well, we come to verse 3, and it answers the question, who are the real circumcised?

[23 : 55] Who are the real people of God? Who is the Israel of God today? And rather than acknowledging them, these legalizers, as the circumcision, Paul says, no, it's we.

It is we who are the circumcision. They claim to be it, but he says, it's not so. It's we. We Christians. We who are in Christ, united by faith to Jesus Christ.

Jews, Gentiles, circumcised, uncircumcised, we are the circumcision. We are the ones who belong to the covenant community of God. For Paul says in Romans 2, verse 28 and 29, a man is not a Jew if he is one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical.

No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly, and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the spirit, not by the written code, and such a man's praise is not from men, but from God.

That's who the true circumcised are. That's who the true people of God are. And he gives a threefold description of them in verse 3, just as he gave a threefold description of those dangerous men.

[25 : 10] See if it describes you this morning. See if this is you. Can you put your name on this? Because this is a description, threefold description. These things are true of all the people of God.

First of all, we are the circumcision. We who worship by the spirit of God. The Bible everywhere teaches that true worship is of the heart.

It's not just a matter of outward physical acts. It's not having our body in the right place at the right time doing the right things. No, that's the worship of the world.

That's the worship of these Judaizers. The important question to these Judaizers was have you had your flesh circumcised? The important question for true worshipers is have you had your heart circumcised by the spirit of God?

Have you had your heart changed because you can't worship God unless the spirit has circumcised your heart and given you new desires and purified your heart by faith.

[26 : 21] And everyone who belongs to God is one who has who worships God by the spirit. The spirit has come and given us that inward reality.

Otherwise, what you have is just going through the outward motions. Oh, we need the spirit if ever we're to worship. And every true child of God worships by the spirit of God.

Secondly, here's the other mark of the second mark. We who glory in Christ Jesus. We rejoice in him. We boast in him. We exalt in him. We talk about him.

We sing about him. We pray to him. It's all about Jesus Christ. We exalt in Jesus. We glory in Jesus. And in Christ alone. Nothing that I am or that I have done, we don't exalt in man.

We exalt in Christ Jesus. Not so these Judaizers. Glorifying in their own deeds of circumcision. And so the flip side of glorying in Christ Jesus is that we put no confidence in the flesh.

[27 : 24] That's the third mark. We put no confidence in the flesh. No trust. In the flesh, Hendrickson says of the flesh, it's anything apart from Christ on which you base your hopes for salvation.

Anything apart from Christ that you lean on to make you right with God. We have no confidence in the flesh. We don't lean on anything to make us right with God.

Nothing outside of Jesus. We glory in him and have no confidence. Not some, a little. No, we have no confidence anywhere else. Because any confidence on self destroys confidence in Jesus Christ alone.

And that's what saving faith is. It's confidence in Christ alone to save me. And so all the children of God have no confidence in self. But confidence in the Lord Jesus.

Now Paul gets personal. He switches from we to I. He's going to speak in the first person. He's going to give us a bit of his own personal testimony on this whole business about having confidence in the flesh.

[28:40] something that we do or something that we are. And he's speaking from the viewpoint of Paul before he was converted to Christ. He's going to take us back to his pre-conversion days and how he thought and what he valued and what he put his weight on.

What he put his confidence in to make him right with God. And what we learn is that he was once one of these dogs. He was once one of these who put confidence in the flesh.

And he was not behind any of these Judaizers and reasons to have confidence in the flesh. And he's challenging them to compare their credentials. And he starts out by the things that telling us the things that he leaned on things that he inherited.

And then he goes on to speak of things that he has accomplished. First, the things he inherited from his parents. Verse 5. Circumcised on the eighth day.

I'm sorry, I didn't read verse 4 for you where he says concerning himself, Although I myself have reasons for such confidence in the flesh, if anyone else thinks he has reason to put confidence in the flesh, I have more.

[29:54] Now he starts to list them. Here's the reason why I was so confident that I was right with God. I was circumcised the eighth day. You circumcised group. You don't have a thing up on me.

I'm of the people of Israel. I have the right pedigree. I'm no proselyte that's been brought in later and believed later. No. The eighth day circumcised by Jewish parents.

I'm of the tribe of Israel, of the tribe, or the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin. He could trace back his lineage. He's a true Jew. A Hebrew of Hebrews, he says.

A Hebrew son of Hebrew parents. A true Hebrew if there ever was one. This guy's got all the credentials going for him. Just when he was born into the world, into this Jewish family.

And he turns to the things that he's accomplished by his own efforts. Verse 5, he says, in regard to the law, I was a Pharisee. Now that was the strictest religious sect as for obeying the law of God.

[31:00] They were the ones that were most scrupulous about everything and they even added their own laws to make sure that they didn't break God's laws and you know all about the Pharisees from reading the Gospels.

Paul was a member of the Pharisees. You want to talk about law keeping? He's saying to them, I was a Pharisee. I was brought up by Gamaliel in the law.

And he goes on to zeal. These are things I've accomplished. As for zeal, persecuting the church. He measured his zeal for God by how hard he persecuted the church because he viewed the church as anti-God.

He viewed the church of Jesus Christ as a bunch of heretics, as enemies of God. And so he says, I persecuted the followers of this way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison.

And when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. Many times I went from one synagogue to another to have them punished. And I tried to force them to blaspheme.

[32:04] In my obsession against them, I even went to foreign cities to persecute them. And as he did it, he did it all thinking he was serving God.

You think you're serving God this morning by being here and worshiping him? And you are if you're truly worshiping in spirit. Paul thought he was worshiping when he was drawing the blood from Christians, holding the coats of those who stone Peter.

He's serving God. You talk about zeal. I can outshine any of you Judaizers, he's saying, as for zeal, persecuting the church.

And as for legalistic righteousness, faultless. As for the righteousness that comes from obeying God's commandments, I was blameless. Now this is his own view of himself when he was a

non-Christian.

He later had his eyes opened to see that he hadn't obeyed God's law. And he saw what a sinner he was. But at the time, his view of himself, and as for a Pharisee's legalistic obedience to the law, spotless.

[33:14] This guy had it going for him. And these are his credentials. Now they may bore you. You may not see anything in this to say, yeah, wow, I would present these things to God and expect God to accept me as righteous because of these things.

But I assure you, these are the kinds of things that would cause the Judaizers to salivate. Boy, to have all this going for you, your heredity, a true Jew, to be so zealous for God, to be a Pharisee, to be such a law keeper.

That's what he was. And he was leaning on it. That's what he was counting on to make himself right with God. Now a present day list may be, well, I've been brought up in a Christian home all my life. My mom and dad are saved. We have devotions every day. I'm always in church. We always come to church. I read my Bible. I pray. I try to do what's best.

I'm not a wild kid. I keep the house rules. Those are the kinds of things that some of you maybe grew up putting confidence in.

[34:25] But for all of this, Paul was as lost as Judas Iscariot because he was seeking righteousness apart from Jesus Christ. He was adding his own good works, his own rituals to earn his way to heaven and it destroyed any hope of salvation.

You can't be saved by adding anything to Christ. But then something happened to Paul. He met Christ, didn't he? On the road to Damascus. He's going to persecute some more out of zeal for God.

And it's there that he meets the risen, glorified Jesus Christ. And everything's changed from that point on for this Paul. One of the things that changed is the whole way that he evaluates life.

He has a whole new way of thinking. A whole new way of judging things. Haven't you found it to be so? That the things that before you thought were so important, things that you live for, after you were saved, you said, I live for that?

What was I thinking? Well, you have a new mind, you see. You were thinking with the old mind. And so, Paul's now going to share with us that he got a new way of thinking, a new way to count.

[35:44] And it's all together different from the way he counted before he was saved. Verse 7, he tells us, but whatever was to my profit, I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.

Whatever was gained to me, I now consider loss. He's talking in accounting terms. You've got two columns. You've got gains and losses.

You've got assets and liabilities. And Paul is lining them up. And before he was saved, over here on the gains, these are the things that will get me into heaven.

He had, well, I was circumcised the eighth day. I had the right parents. I can trace my lineage back to Abraham, the father of the faithful. I'm part of the people of God. And look at my zeal for the law and my obedience.

And that's all in the gain column. This is what I hope to get into heaven with. I've got all this going for me. These are my gains. And then he was met by Christ.

[36:46] And he took every one of those things from the gain column. and he put them all over here on the loss column. What would cause a man to take what he thought was gain before God to put it all on the loss side before God?

Jesus Christ is what makes the difference. Seeing the righteous one and that righteousness that I must have to get into heaven, I see that what I counted on is really loss.

He doesn't say it's just worthless, empty. It's not just saying, well, all that was just spinning my wheels going, no, it's an actual liability.

It's loss. It's worse than just a zero. It's a liability that kept me from the greatest gain that a man can have and that's to have Christ.

What kept him? Leaning on all these other things to make himself right with God. So what was to my gain I now consider loss.

[38:00] And what is more, he says in verse 8, he's saying, let me say it even more strongly. I consider everything a loss compared to the all-surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.

Not only these seven things that I've just listed, but anything that a man can lean on to try to make himself right with God. Anything that will keep us from coming to Christ. I consider it all one great big loss compared to knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.

Lord. You see, Paul's got the scales, the balance out, and he's got knowing Christ Jesus the Lord on one side as his.

And he says, compare to him whatever you put over here instead of Christ. It's all a loss. It's keeping you from the greatest gain. Now, knowing Christ cost him something, and he tells us that next.

He not only considers these things lost, he says, but he has actually lost things. For whose sake I have lost all things.

[39:14] That popularity, that reputation, that position in Judaism, he was excelling others his own age, climbing to the top of the ladder. He lost it all when he came to Christ.

The promising future, the favored son of the Pharisees, they had great plans for Saul of Tarsus. Gone. Lost it when he was converted to Christ.

Safety, being over here with the circumcised group, and the Israelites, talk about safety being gone. And he's now a hunted man by these same people.

I've lost all things. The very things that he had once made an idol and lived for, he now has lost.

And he's not biting his nails and singing the blues, oh, I've lost these valuable things. No, he compares, he calls them rubbish. You see that? I consider them rubbish.

[40:19] rubbish. Like the garbage you haul out to the end of the curb once a week and it stinks. And that's what Paul says of all these things he once thought would get him entrance into heaven.

It's rubbish. Why, Paul? To gain Christ. To get Jesus Christ.

to have him before he had counted Christ as rubbish. Not worth having.

Just discard it. Some of you this morning are considering Christ rubbish. rubbish. And now he calls all things rubbish that he might gain Christ.

What a different heart Paul has. What a different way of thinking and evaluating is his. Do you have Christ in the gain column or in the loss column this morning?

[41:24] How do you view Jesus? Is he gain to you or is he loss? Some of you still have him on the loss side. You've got all the things that you think make life worth living.

Oh, you need to see Christ. You need to see him for who he is. His glory. His wonder. You need to see how stinking is your own self-righteousness before God.

Paul tells us why gaining Christ is worth losing everything else for. and it's verse 9. Why Paul is gaining Christ worth losing everything else?

What is so precious about gaining Christ that makes everything else rubbish in comparison? because in having Christ I have everything.

And especially I have righteousness before God. That's what he's going to say here in verse 9.

Because gaining Christ I have righteousness in the courtroom of heaven.

[42:30] that I may gain Christ and be found in him not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law but that which is through faith in Christ the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.

Now listen to me. When you come to stand before your maker in the final day of judgment there's one thing you're going to need in order to get into heaven and it is righteousness. You're going to need righteousness.

It's a big word. It's an important word. You need to learn it. You're going to need righteousness in that day. And not just any kind of righteousness but perfect righteousness.

The very righteousness of God. His own righteousness. That's the standard of judgment in that day.

Not what men think is right and wrong but what God says is right and wrong.

Righteousness. The standard of the day. His own righteousness. You're going to need a righteousness that matches his if you're to be left if you're to enter into heaven.

[43:37] So that's what you must measure yourself up to. You must measure up to in the day of judgment in order to be lost forever. Perfect righteousness. Now notice this is what Paul gets when he gains Christ.

To gain Christ is to have this righteousness. To be found in him with this righteousness. Notice the two things that he tells us about this righteousness. He says it's not my own it's his.



That's the first thing. Not my own but his. Not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law. That comes from trying to obey God's commandments a little better. That would be my righteousness and that would come from obeying the law. Not that. I'm not talking about that kind of righteousness. Because that won't do me any good in the day when his righteousness is the standard of judgment. No. Not a self-made righteousness. The Bible says all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. As Augustine says, our righteousness is just splendid sins. [44 : 40] Nothing more. It's imaginary righteousness. It doesn't exist. It does not stand the test. It won't cut it with God. But in Christ, I have a righteousness that's not my own, but is the righteousness that comes from God.

He's the source of it. It's his. It's what Luther called an alien righteousness. It's alien to me. It's not in me. It's not found in me. It's found outside of me. It's found in Christ.

We're reading our Gospels and we're seeing the Lord Jesus Christ in the wilderness being tempted to sin. And we find him tempted in all points and yet being without sin.

What's he doing? Why is he doing this? Why is he here? Why is he living? Why is he being tempted? Why? Because he's working out a righteousness by his perfect spotless life. He has a righteousness now to give to every trusting sinner.

It's his righteousness. He worked it out with his own perfect life. He never broke a commandment. He obeyed in life and in death. He was obedient and so he has a perfect righteousness.

[45 : 51] That's the righteousness I need. How do I get it? That's the question. And that's the second thing that Paul teaches us. It's not mine, it's his, and now he tells us how we get it.

Not by law keeping, but by faith in Christ alone. Only by faith. Not by law keeping, but by believing. It doesn't come to me by my own Christ by some ritual, but it comes from God as a gift and it's received through faith in Christ.

This righteousness that I need, this righteousness of God in Christ becomes mine through faith. Now what is faith? Faith is someone said is the empty hands that receives Christ and his righteousness.

Faith always looks away from self. Faith does not look at self and lean! I look in and I don't have this righteousness and so faith directs my attention to another to the Lord Jesus who does and I look and live I look on him faith is taking any confidence off of myself no confidence in the flesh in what I do and instead putting full confidence in Christ there's a chair and I am not putting my full confidence in that chair as long as faith is taking all the weight not leaning anything on myself and putting my whole weight on another on Christ that's confidence not in the flesh but in Christ and that's how we receive this gift of righteousness as he says at least twice in verse 9 it is through faith in

Jesus Christ it comes to us by faith so to be found in Christ to gain Christ is to have this righteousness that I'm going to need as God evaluates me and my life then perish any of these gospel additives circumcision group you can have your circumcision I have Christ righteousness why do I need your sacraments church why do I need your good works as meritorious before God I have Christ righteousness I have him to represent me in that day as God looks on me he sees me in Christ as perfectly righteous now what's that worth what's that worth come on let's start out enough the gains in law what's it worth to have the righteousness of Christ well nothing is worth anything compared to that it's all rubbish compared to having Christ as my righteousness righteousness and so we're back to where we started

[48 : 47] Christian here's a reason to always be rejoicing in the Lord because you have this righteousness if you have Christ you have this righteousness can you see why Paul starts out with this note of a call to rejoice in the Lord rejoice in him knowing that having him you have this righteousness you're going to need in the day of judgment I delight greatly in the Lord Isaiah 61 10 my soul rejoices in my God for he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness you're ready to appear before him here's the thing to rejoice in not your flesh not what you have done not who you are but Christ Christ alone so the kids are sick and fussy and so I am having a bad day and so nothing is going my way Christ is my righteousness and I will rejoice so my health is breaking and my future finances are shaky at best and my calendar squeezed and pressures are mounting and emotions are up and down and all over the chart but God has arrayed me in a robe of righteousness a righteousness by God himself approved can you think of any better thing to have in life than

Christ and his righteousness than live for it Paul says I once did but I found it was a loss and I have found Christ to be gain and it has got me righteousness before God lost friend still trying to earn your righteousness in heaven something you do there is saving righteousness in Jesus Christ alone then gather up all of your bad works as one Puritan said and gather up all your good works too and throw them in the lost column and come and gain Christ and find in him a righteousness that will put you in good standing we're going to sing number 582 that I think was written for Philippians chapter 3 verses 1 through 9 582 and here the writer says my hope is built on nothing less than Jesus blood and righteousness my hope is built on nothing less and I might add nothing more nothing more than Jesus blood and righteousness I dare not trust the sweetest emotional frame but wholly lean entirely lean on Jesus name you see we're talking about where a person has their where are they leaning what are they leaning on to get them into heaven verse 4 when I shall launch in worlds unseen now folks you're going to launch one day you're going to launch one day into worlds unseen you've not been to the afterlife yet but one day you're going to launch just as much as a rocket leaves this earth and goes somewhere else you're going to launch away from this body and you're going to enter into worlds unseen worlds that this book talks about that are believed by faith when I shall launch in worlds unseen oh may I then be found in him dressed in his righteousness alone faultless to stand before the throne how are you going to be found in that day when you launch into eternity are you going to be found in Christ with a righteousness that will make you faultless in God's eyes are you going to launch away and find that you are outside of Christ and standing in your own righteousness that is filthy rags in God's sight here's the gospel come to Christ Christ plus nothing he is your all he is all you need righteousness before God father in heaven forgive us that we ever treated Christ as loss and this world and all of our doings religiously and otherwise as gain thank you that you've given many of us eyes to see and to count Christ's gain and all things but loss thank you that we are in him and in him we have a righteousness and we're right with you we're ready to stand before you if this should be the day that we would meet our maker there's others here who still are counting Christ's loss and we pray Lord give them no rest till they see their need for him show them that this day is soon to come that even if we live to be 80 years these days quickly pass and we are gone but we'll be found somewhere and oh may it be that we might be found in Christ bring someone to him this day and bring us all to rejoice in him because when we're rejoicing in him and his righteousness we're less prone to be affected by all these Christ plus preachers make Christ so much our joy that everything else is viewed as lost we ask it in [54:44] Jesus name amen may may