

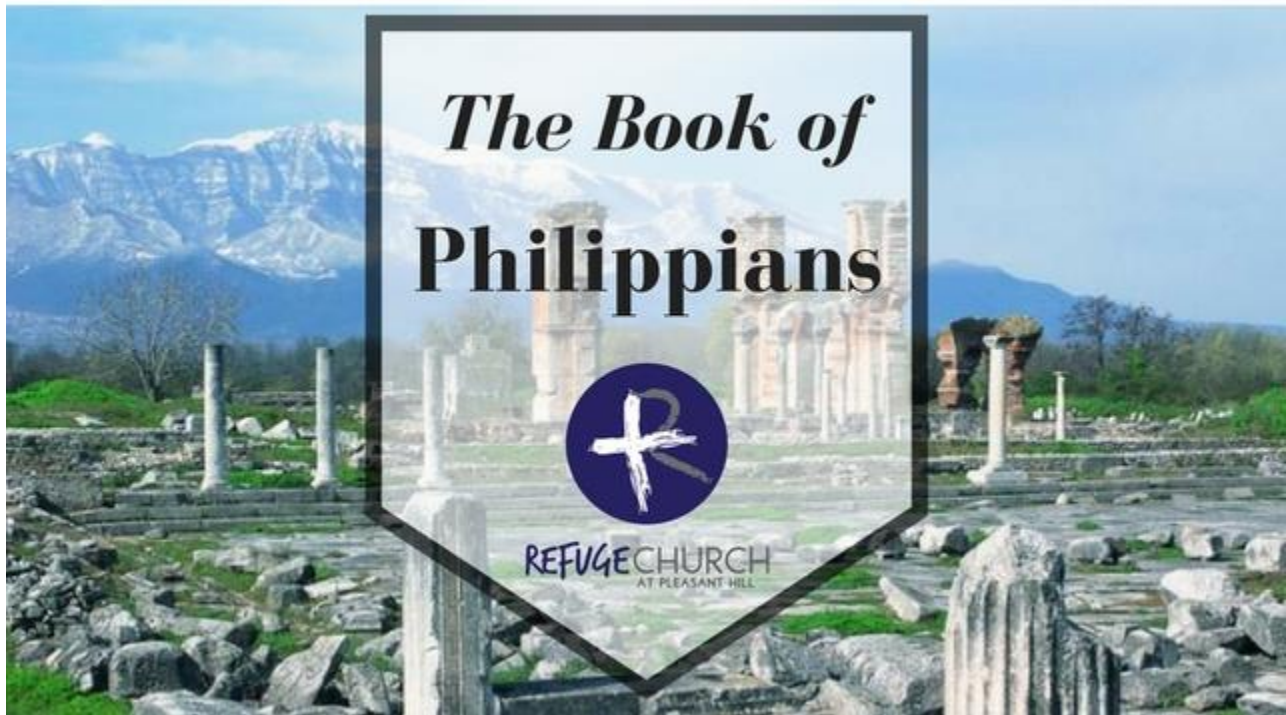
Refuge Church at Pleasant Hill

March 19th Sunday Morning Service

Philippians - Part 9

A verse by verse study through the book of Philippians

Thomas Lee



Philippians 3:1-9 ESV

1 Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you. 2 Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. 3 For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh— 4 though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; 6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as

to righteousness under the law, blameless. ⁷ But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. 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—

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Note the first word in chapter 3, 'Finally'. It is a little strange to see 'Finally', half way through a letter like this that Paul would write. Paul was probably planning to close out his letter here.

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In the rest of verse 1 Paul is saying it is no trouble for him to write the same things to you. Maybe these were things he had told them before, maybe he meant for Epaphroditus to tell them these things also, maybe he had wrote these same things to other churches which they may have read. Whichever it maybe be he is saying these things are important and it is no trouble at all for me to repeat these things. In fact, I want to emphasize the importance of these things for you as a safeguard.

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Paul's purpose, then, is to keep their faith free from the troubles he has seen develop in some of the other churches.

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Philippians 3:2-3 ESV

² Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. ³ For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh—

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Notice the change in tone and language from the first 2 chapters of Philippians to now.

You can hear it in Paul's language. He has the strong desire to tell the Church at Philippi about some doctrinal troubles that he has seen in other Churches and that may face in the future.

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So who were these dogs, evildoers, mutilators of flesh?

Paul was referring to the Judaizers.

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A Judaizer taught that, in order for a Christian to truly be right with God, he must conform to the Mosaic Law. Circumcision, especially, was promoted as necessary for salvation. Gentiles had to become Jewish proselytes first, and then they could come to Christ. The doctrine of the Judaizers was a mixture of grace (through Christ) and works (through the keeping of the Law). This false doctrine was dealt with in Acts 15 and strongly condemned in the book of Galatians.

(<https://www.gotquestions.org/Judaizers.html>)

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The Judaizers were teaching a gospel different from the gospel Paul was teaching. The true gospel, the one that Paul preached is that our salvation lies only in Christ. The Judaizers were teaching that they were things we had to do to be saved in addition to accepting the free gift of salvation that Christ offers.

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Philippians 3:4-6 ESV

⁴ though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵ circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a

Pharisee; ⁶ as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

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Paul tells us that if anyone could claim salvation through privilege and attainment or 'the flesh' it would be him.

He lists two types of advantages: those that were his by birth and those he attained. In both categories, he excelled.

By birth

- Circumcised on the 8th day
- Tribe of Benjamin
- A Hebrew of Hebrews

Attained

- A Pharisee
- Zeal to the point of persecuting the church
- Righteousness under the law, blameless

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Philippians 3:7-9 ESV

⁷ But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. 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—

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Before his encounter with Christ on the road to Damascus, Paul trusted that one day this heritage and his achievements would help save him when he stood before God for judgement. After his conversion he now sees all the things he trusted in and valued as worthless when compared to Christ and the salvation that comes through Christ alone.

He now sees his heritage and his attainments for what they were—fleshly human efforts, tainted with sin and unworthy of God's approval.

Not only does Paul consider all things loss compared to gaining Christ, he considers their value as to that of trash or rubbish when compared to gaining Christ and being found with him.

For Paul being found in Christ means that when he stands before God to be judged, Christ will be found in him. And on that day he does not want to his righteousness to be judged by his heritage and his attainments or any other fleshly human efforts but only by the righteousness that come through faith in Christ.

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Matthew 13:14 ESV

¹⁴ Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says: ""You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive.""

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"The parable of the hidden treasure" by Rembrandt.

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Paul is the man in the field

The treasure represents Jesus Christ and the salvation He offers us.

Once Paul finds that treasure nothing else holds any value to him.

He is not only willing but joyous to give up everything for the treasure of Christ.

Not only does Paul consider all things loss compared to gaining Christ, he considers their value as to that of trash or rubbish when compared to gaining Christ and being found with him.

For Paul being found in Christ means that when he stands before God to be judged, Christ will be found in him. And on that day he does not want his righteousness to be judged by his heritage and his accomplishments or any other fleshly human efforts but only by the righteousness that comes through faith in Christ.