

February 22nd, 2023-Wednesday

Safe Harbor Baptist Church

“Remember not to Forget”

Philippians 3:1-14

Introduction:

Within the context of our scripture, we find that Paul begins to shift his thoughts to a slightly different direction.

While the theme of the book is Joy, the only way we will be able to retain our joy is by heeding to the Word of God and the principles and commands found within its pages.

Paul states in Vs 1 that what he is about to write to them is something that he has already told them. But they needed to be reminded of these truths in order to retain their Joy.

“Remember not to Forget”

End of Introduction.

I. The Safe Warning. Vs 1-3

1 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe.

1. The Contradiction to the Faith. Vs 2

2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.

Paul is warning these believers about the Judaizers.

These Judaizers teaching that Grace saved, but you had to add works to grace for your salvation.

Paul uses three terms to describe them.

- *“Dogs”*

This term “dogs” that Paul uses refers to how these Judaizers stayed on Paul’s trail and were always on his back.

They were always following him around “barking” about their false doctrine and doing their best to destroy the ministry of the Apostle Paul.

They were “scavengers”

- *“Evil Workers.”*

“These men taught that the sinner was saved by faith plus good works, especially the works of the Law. But Paul states that their good works are really evil works because they are performed by the flesh (old nature) and not the Spirit, and they glorify the workers and not Jesus Christ.”- Warren Weirsbe

Any works that are attempted to gain salvation are Evil works!

- *“Concision.”*

This refers to the fact that these Judaizers taught that physical circumcision would bring salvation. But in truth all this circumcision of the flesh for salvation was mutilation of the body that brought no regeneration.

This pictures those that try to deal with the flesh, (outside) without never being clean on the inside!

2. The *Confidence* in the *Flesh*. Vs 3

3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

Primary interpretation:

Paul states in Vs 3 that his salvation is based on what God has done on the inside.

Within the context Paul is dealing with those who say that you need Grace plus works.

Paul combats this false doctrine by reminding these believers that salvation is by grace alone and we cannot place confidence in our flesh thinking that our flesh can please God.

In the old Testament Circumcision was commanded by God under both Abraham and the Mosaic law for the Jews.

Circumcision was a symbolic acknowledgement of the totally inability of the flesh to produce spiritual seed or fruit for God. In the New Testament the symbolic rite is abolished. Under the New Covenant we circumcised, not the cutting of the body with a knife, but in the death of Christ as the cutting edge of the cross is brought to bear upon our hearts.

Romans 7:18 *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.*

The Flesh is cut of-put in the place of death- so that our new life in Christ might produce spiritual seed and true fruit for God.- Dr. John Phillips

Point: Salvation is not you taking what Christ offered and what you can do and putting them together. But rather salvation is by grace, through faith, without works!

Another application:

Spiritual circumcision means there has been a separation, a cutting away. Meaning there are two natures now. The Spiritual man, and the Flesh.

But notice what Paul states in the latter part of Vs 3. Even though we are saved and there has been that Spiritual circumcision, of the cutting away of the flesh, we are still not to place confidence in the flesh.

II. The Stated Works. Vs 4-6

4 Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:

As Paul continues with this context of one placing confidence in the flesh in order to attain salvation. He reminds the believers of his past and how that if anyone could have attained salvation by good works, it would have been Paul.

1. The Beginning of his Path. Vs 5a

“5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews”

- He was born into a good family. (The tribe of Benjamin gave Israel their first king, Saul)
- He was taken to the Temple as eight day old baby.
- He had a National claim because he was of the stock of Israel. (Israel was God’s chosen people)
- Hebrews of the Hebrews means he was the best of the best!

2. The Background as a Pharisee. Vs 5b

“as touching the law, a Pharisee;”

Being a Pharisee meant that Paul would have known the Torah (Old Testament).

They knew all 613 laws of Moses by heart. Their problem was that they added interpretation to these laws and expanded the 613 laws of Moses to over 1,500 laws that God never decreed.

The Pharisees were very religious, but lost!

They thought that because they kept the law that they were justified before God.

This was the life that Paul lived.

Acts 26:4-5 *My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews;*

5 Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.

3. The **Brutality** of his **Persecuting**. Vs 6a

“6 Concerning zeal, persecuting the church;”

John Phillips said: *“Paul was a Fundamental Jew and a Fanatical Jew!”*

Paul felt so strongly about his “religion” that he persecuted the Christians that had placed faith in Christ.

“He went on a self-appointed through Sanhedrin-sanctioned mission to root out the church in Damascus”- John Phillips

Acts 8:3 *As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.*

4. The **Blindness** of his **Perception**. Vs 6b

“touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.”

No one could live up to the standard that Saul had lived up to!

He states that when it came to obeying the law, he was blameless. Meaning in his eyes he felt as though he had attained righteousness.

III. The Summary of Worth. Vs 7-9

Paul summarizes his religious attributes in Vs 7-9

1. The **Recognized Loss**. Vs 7

“7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.”

Paul states that all these things that were gained to him, the religious raising, the observing the law, the position as a Pharisee he was counted as loss, as nothing for the sake of Christ!

John Phillips said: *“Paul was looking at his religious balance sheet and counting up his gains. He spread them out in Vs 5-6. The Judaizers would have been delighted with every one of them.*

He picked them up and put them on the scales and then he looked at Christ. He could have one or the other: his carefully accumulated gains as a religious man or Christ. He could not have both. As on the Damascus road, so now as an experienced Christian, he did not hesitate a moment. He picked up his once-treasured gains and threw them away as trash and took Christ”

All his gains that once meant so much to him, was now nothing more than trash when compared to Christ!

2. The *Reason* for *Living*. Vs 8

“8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,”

As he proceeds further in the text, he expands this thought that all things that seemed valuable and meaningful were trash when compared to Christ!

“Paul had given up everything for Christ. His Home in Tarsus, his parents, all hope of a settled home life. His Jewish religion, his ambition to climb the ladder to the top so he could rule the Sanhedrin.

He had given up his health for hardships, beatings, and shipwrecks.

He had given up the smile and favor of the Jerusalem church to minister to the Gospel to the Gentile world”- John Phillips

Was it worth it Paul? Was it worth all the troubles, trials and heartaches?

Was it worth the pain you endured? Was it worth the beatings you suffered?

Paul would state that it was worth it all because he knows Christ on a personal level!

This word “Win” means gain!

He lost it all, but he gained everything because he had Christ!!!

3. The *Righteousness* of the *LORD*. Vs 9

9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:”

Where is Paul? Notice Paul tells you where you can find him.....In Christ!

Righteousness was the goal of Paul’s life. But he could never attain it.

But now that he is in Christ, he now enjoys the righteousness of Jesus Christ that he received by Faith!

“To be found in him is Salvations truth; to have Christ found in us is Sanctification truth!”-

To be found in him means that when God looks at me, he see’s Jesus Christ. To have Christ found in means that when people look at me, they see Christ!- John Phillips

How did I gain this righteousness?

Christ took my sin.- II Corinthians 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.*

He gave me his righteousness! – Romans 3:20-26 *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.*

21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

That's Grace!

IV. The Spiritual Wisdom. Vs 10-14

1. His *Desire* was *Fellowship*. Vs 10-11

“10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

Paul knew who Jesus was. He had written many letters about him, had preached many messages about him, but yet he wanted to know him better!

Warren Wiersbe said: When Paul met Christ it was a:

A. Personal Experience- *“That I may know him”*

B. Powerful Experience- *“and the power of his resurrection”*

C. Painful Experience- *“and the fellowship of his sufferings”*

D. Practical Experience. *“being made conformable unto his death”*

If you want to know Jesus better:

- **Desire-** *“That I may know him”*
- **Deliverance.** *“and the power of his resurrection”*
- **Dedication.** *“and the fellowship of his sufferings”*
- **Die.** *“being made conformable unto his death”*

If we will do these things we will be **Delighted** in Vs 11

The result of Paul's death in Vs 10 was a Spiritual resurrection in Vs 11!

The reason we do not enjoy our Christian lives as we should is because we are still alive.

Romans 6:6-11 *Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*

7 For he that is dead is freed from sin.

8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:

9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

2. His **Direction** was **Forward**. Vs 12-13

12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

Paul states that he is not perfect, and he has not arrived but he is still striving, and to apprehend, what has apprehended him!

He states that He has not apprehended (gotten hold of) perfection, but perfection had apprehended him!

13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

“Paul did not say these many things in dabble with, but rather this one thing I do!”-Paul Chappell

Even though he had not apprehended perfection, he was still pressing one and going forward!

We will never be perfect, but reach forward. We should not go back, but go forward!

3. His **Determination** was **Fixed**. Vs 14

“14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

Press- to press on: figuratively of one who in a race runs swiftly to reach the goal.

Mark- goal.

In other words, Paul wanted to finish well!

I Corinthians 9:24-27 *Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.*

25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:

27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

Conclusion:

Revelation 19:11-12 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

Will any of those crowns on the head of Jesus Christ, be one of the crowns that you cast at his feet?