

**Intro** I urge you to follow the example that these young men have put before us today. You need to find and follow gospel partners who boast in Christ alone. The testimonies or stories that you have heard, the obedience that you have seen and the truth enacted through the symbolism of baptism by immersion that you have been exposed to are really quite significant. The story, the act and the symbolism all come together to provide us a clear example to follow.

The importance of having good examples to follow cannot be overstated. This is especially true in the ever glorious task of advancing the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. God intended for his people to have models and examples to both follow and be influenced by. It is our responsibility to both provide good examples and to follow good examples.

In the passage we read earlier (1Thess.1), the Apostle summarizes what we have seen and heard from these young men this morning. God's word, the gospel of Jesus Christ, 'came' to these Thessalonians and they received it with joy by the power of the Holy Spirit. Their changed lives then became examples to others of how a person turns to God from idols to serve the living and true God.

Today we turn to Philippians 3:9-11 to complete our study of the Apostle Paul's compelling personal testimony of how he came to know Christ Jesus as his Lord. Using these words from scripture, let's explain again what these baptized into Christ guys are teaching us.

### **Philippians 3:1-11**

This clear warning (1-3) and compelling personal testimony (4-11) help us to find and follow people who boast in Christ alone.

Finding & following gospel partners who boast in Christ alone begins with a warning about people who may confuse you (v 2). Paul issues a strong, repetitive and biting warning to pay close attention to the kind of people you let yourself be influenced by.

Note what the self righteous look and sound like . . .

- Christians with a strange absence of Christ.
- Christians with a few extra important beliefs.
- Christians who appear harmless, but are not.

With that stern and strong warning, we now proceed to learn the three identifying marks of a person who boasts in Christ alone. These characteristics are listed (3) and then illustrated through the personal testimony of the Apostle 4-11).

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| 1. A genuine change of heart and life direction.   | 'who worship by the Spirit of God' v3 |
| 2. A radical treasuring of Jesus Christ.           | 'glory in Christ Jesus' v3            |
| 3. A deepening detachment from self righteousness. | put no confidence in the flesh 3      |

You want an example to follow so that you gain Christ, are found in Christ and know Christ? Are you driven in any way to know for sure what a Christian is according to the Bible? Have poor examples and unclear thinking caused you to lose any interest in Christ? Let's add the concluding thoughts of Paul's personal story to the stories we have seen and heard to explain what it means to be a Christian in terms of God's word.

From the testimony of scripture in Paul's life . . . to really know Christ and be found in Christ means that you must be rightly related to God in such a way that you value Christ over all things.

Let's break this statement down into its two components:

**1. You must be rightly related to God. 3:9**

Note that Paul connects his objective of being found in Christ to the concept of righteousness. There is a righteousness that he wants to separate from and a righteousness that he wants to connect with or possess. Righteousness is spoken of by Paul here as the status of being right with God. The message of the Bible focuses on this theme of how God and man can be rightly related after the entrance of sin and man's rebellion recorded early in the Bible.

Being rightly related to God assumes what has been taught elsewhere is understood and acknowledged. That man has broken God's law and continues in rebellion against him . . . and that God's just wrath against the sinner must be satisfied.

Read Romans 3:21-26 – p.841

**A. The status of relationship with God you must separate from:**

*Not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law – v.9*

- Your relationship with God depends on your own achievements. 'my own' cmp.v.6
- Your relationship with God depends on your conforming to law. 'from the law' cmp.v.6

**B. The status of relationship with God you must possess:**

*But that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith*

- Your relationship with God originated with God. 'from God'  
Romans 1:17                      3:21-22                      saving, vindicating intervention of God                      Jn3:16
- Your relationship with God is secured by Christ's death. 'in Christ'

*For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 2 Cor.5:21*

*And are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood . . . Rom. 3:24-25*

- Your relationship with God was appropriated by your faith. 'that depends on faith'  
Cmp. Count/consider in v. 7-8                      Romans 4:20-25 Abraham example  
Know/assent/trust

Symbolism of immersion . . . old is gone, united with Christ in death, burial and new life.

## 2. In a way that you value Christ over all things.

3:10-11

Being rightly related to God has 2 aspects, what has happened in status and what continues to happen in experience. Paul and our brothers this morning have referred to both quite clearly. While these aspects cannot be separated, they are quite distinct. To be made right with God means a new standing before God as well as a new life to experience.

Faith in Christ begins and continues as valuing/choosing Christ over all things. The objective of being right with God is not our safety but rather God's glory as it is revealed and seen in his Son Jesus Christ. A genuine Christian has had an exchange begun at every level of their life. Paul's testimony sets an example of how being rightly related to God produces a consistent valuing of Christ in our daily experience:

- Loss is gain. 7-8
- Weakness is strength. 10 power
- Suffering is success. 10
- Change is status quo 10
- Death is life/hope 11

Illus get to know someone must share common values and experiences

Committee room/Ortlund

*"You and I are not integrated, unified, whole persons. Our hearts are multi-divided. There is a board room in every heart. Big table. Leather chairs. Coffee. Bottled water. Whiteboard. A committee sits around the table. There is the social self, the private self, the work self, the sexual self, the recreational self, the religious self, and others. The committee is arguing and debating and voting. Constantly agitated and upset. Rarely can they come to a unanimous, wholehearted decision. We tell ourselves we're this way because we're so busy with so many responsibilities. The truth is, we're just divided, unfocused, hesitant, unfree.*

*That kind of person can 'accept Jesus' in either of two ways. One way is to invite him onto the committee. Give him a vote too. But then he becomes just one more complication. The other way to 'accept Jesus' is to say to him, 'My life isn't working. Please come in and fire my committee, every last one of them. I hand myself over to you. Please run my whole life for me.' That is not complication; that is salvation."*

*'Accepting Jesus' is not just adding Jesus. It is also subtracting idols (1 Thess. 1:9)." ~ Ray Ortlund*

**To really know Christ and be found in Christ means that you must be rightly related to God in such a way that you value Christ over all things.**

## Conclusion

Are you rightly related to God? Is your relationship with God most important to you on certain days, at certain meetings and in the presence of certain people? Please turn today from depending on your achievements, attendance and religious compliance. Trust Jesus . . . fire every committee member . . . trust him for your forgiveness and obey him as your Lord.

## Study Questions

1. What impressions or decisions did you come to as a result of the teaching of God's Word today?
2. Read Philippians 3:1-11; 3:17-18 as a group.
3. Share with the group your observations or impressions of the baptism testimonies this morning. Have you heard the stories of each group member of how they became rightly related to God? Have some share or pester them with questions until they do!
4. What are the three descriptive prepositional qualifiers Paul uses in v9 to describe the righteousness from God (oops. . . gave you one)? What does the word 'but' in the middle of verse 9 do/mean? How do these three descriptions encourage confidence/faith in you?
5. How would you draw the truth of 2Corinthians 5:21 on a napkin or your friends hand to explain one result of Christ's death? What is imputed righteousness? What is propitiation (Rom.3:24-25)? What difference do these truths make in your life, marriage, work?
6. How is valuing or considering the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus your Lord like growing a strong friendship? How well do you know Christ Jesus? What values or measurements do you use to evaluate your relationship with Christ?
7. Review the 5 contrasting values listed in point #2. Explain each one and share an experience from life of how each value is being developed in your friendship with Christ.
8. Focus your prayer time on praying for each other to know Christ in a greater way for his glory. Pray for those on your hearts that yet need to become rightly related to God.