

- What do you think Paul means when he says, about Christians, “we are the circumcision”?

Paul considers all the things in which he had previously put his confidence as now being ‘rubbish.’

- Does Paul consider these things to be absolutely valueless? (You may eat to check out Romans 2:25, 3:1-2, 9:4, 5)
- What makes Paul now hold those things in such apparently low regard?

DISCUSSION AND APPLICATION

How highly do you regard Christ? Is he everything to you, in comparison to whom all other things are ‘rubbish?’

Where do you seek your ‘righteousness’? Is it God’s righteousness, or is it a righteousness born out of self-effort or religious duty? On whom do you rely? It is your desire to join with Christ, in his suffering and death, as well as his resurrection?

Christ is the greatest treasure that can be had. To know him and be known by him is the greatest benefit we can enjoy. Let us pray that God would allow us see him in this way, and make him the true aim and purpose of our lives.

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A Short Study of PHILIPPIANS 3:1-11

In the third chapter of Paul’s letter to the Philippians, Paul casts doubt upon confidence based on circumcision, and argues that Christ, and Christ alone, is the only true source of confidence before God.

PHILIPPIANS 3:1-11

- 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—*
- 10 *that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,*
- 11 *that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.*

OBSERVATION

In chapter two Paul had encouraged the Philippian church to stand together in the face of persecution, taking Christ as their perfect example.

Mark the word 'rejoice.'

- In what does Paul want the Philippians to rejoice?

Mark the words "look out for."

- For what does Paul want the Philippians to look out?

When Paul talks about those who "mutilate the flesh," he is talking about the Jewish practice of circumcision. Mark the word 'circumcision,' 'circumcised,' and 'flesh.'

- What attitude does Paul imply that circumcision gives to the Jews?

Paul mentions seven reasons that he had to be "confident in the flesh." What are they?

Mark the words 'count' and 'loss.'

- How does Paul now regard all those things that previously gave him confidence?
- What does Paul consider to be truly valuable?

INTERPRETATION

Paul says it is no problem for him to repeat himself, and that it is 'safe' for the Philippians.

- What do you think Paul is trying to protect the church from?