

Day 174, Philippians 3

by David Servant

David Servant explains the importance of true circumcision, the benefits of salvation, and the dangers of straying from the path of sanctification in Philippians 3.

Scripture: Philippians 3:2-18, Colossians 3:2

Topics: "Sanctification", "Faith In Christ"

Description

David Servant preaches on Paul's warning to the believers in Philippi about the Jewish legalists who sought to impose circumcision and the Mosaic Law on Gentile believers. Paul distinguishes between those who trust in physical circumcision and lineage for righteousness versus those who have faith in Christ's substitutionary death and heart circumcision. He emphasizes the incomparable gain of knowing Christ and identifies with His sufferings, death, and resurrection, urging believers to press on towards perfection and obedience to God, following the upward call. Paul warns against straying from the path of sanctification, as some who were once followers of Christ became enemies of the cross by pursuing earthly desires, highlighting the importance of setting our minds on heavenly things.

Transcript

Philippi was not off the radar for Paul's old nemeses, the Jewish legalists, who wanted to line up Gentile believers for circumcision and put them under the Mosaic Law. Thus Paul admonished believers in Philippi to "beware of false circumcision," and reminded them that they were the "true circumcision" (3:2-3). The difference between the two groups is that the former had been physically circumcised and trusted in that, along with their physical lineage and limited law-keeping, to make them right before God. They were hopeless, condemned sinners who were making a pathetic attempt to save themselves. The latter, however, had their confidence in Christ, who made them righteous by means of His substitutionary death and a circumcision of their hearts. They had been saved by faith in Him.

Paul was a perfect example of the former who had become the latter. He had all the credentials that the Jewish legalists could boast of and more, yet he considered it all rubbish, or literally "dung," in comparison to what he had gained in Christ (3:7-8). He had tossed aside his reputation, his career, and his social standing within Judaism, all with no regrets. What he had gained compared to what he lost was of no comparison, and the same is true for anything that we have given up to gain Christ. We have found "the treasure hidden in the field" (Matt. 13:44)! Anytime anyone moans about what they have forsaken or lost to become a Christian, it reveals a glaring lack of understanding. They insult Christ by their

grumbings---as if what they've gained in Him is hardly worth what they have lost---which is no doubt why God is so offended when His people grumble.

It was not just being made righteous and the hope of heaven that Paul counted as a benefit of salvation by grace through faith. Just as importantly, he recognized the wonderful benefit of knowing Christ, and of identifying with Him in His sufferings, death and resurrection. Believers in Christ are rejected by the world just as Jesus was. They, just like Christ, die to the world and all that previously captivated and held them. And they are reborn, resurrected like Christ, to walk a new path in obedience to God.

This resurrection is an on-going experience. Speaking of it, Paul wrote, "Not that I have already obtained it [the resurrection from the dead] or have already become perfect" (3:12). Figuratively speaking, we are progressively becoming more and more resurrected, as we walk a new life and grow closer to perfection, fully obedient to God. This requires that we, like Paul, "press on," in order that we "may lay hold of that for which [we were] laid hold of by Jesus" (3:12). That is, Jesus laid hold of us to make us holy, and we must cooperate with Him on our journey to that goal. All true believers are following an "upward call" with their eyes on a prize (3:14). (I wrote a song about that once that you can listen to here: www.heavensfamily.org/ss/songs/lead_me_higher.)

Tragically, some who begin on this journey don't finish it, straying from the path of sanctification. Paul sadly mentions some of them who, having followed Christ at one time, had ultimately become "enemies of the cross...whose end is destruction" (3:18-19). Here we see again that the idea of unconditional eternal security is only a man-made doctrine that contradicts Scripture.

Those who had strayed had allowed the desires of the flesh to dominate their lives once again, and they began to seek after "earthly things" rather than remaining dead to the world. Thus we are well warned to be diligent to seek continually that which is spiritual and heavenly, remembering that we are citizens, not of this world, but of heaven, where our Lord Jesus Christ lives. He will soon return and finish the good work He began in us, giving us glorified bodies and transforming us fully into His image (3:18-21).

The allure of the world and the flesh can be deadly! Don't allow either to pull you away from the path of righteousness! "Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth" (Col. 3:2).

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/david-servant/day-174-philippians-3/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net