

The Book of Philippians
“Distinctive Qualities of a True Christian”
8/14/2016 Sunday AM

Scripture Verses: Philippians 3:1-3

Sermon Notes

- Last week we spoke about “Examples of Spiritual Servants”.
- We seen Paul’s example as someone that lived for a period of time against God and then God turned his life around and his remaining years were spent serving God.
- Timothy was the young man that studied under Paul and devoted his life to God’s service early on.
- Epaphroditus was not well known, but devoted himself to Christ and to the ministry, risking everything.
- It doesn’t matter what walk of life you are in right now, God still can use you to minister to his people.
- This morning we will look at “Distinctive Qualities of a True Christian”.

Philippians 3:1-3

¹Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you. ²Watch out for those dogs, those men who do evil, those mutilators of the flesh. ³For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh.

- Before we dive really into these three verses it may be best to look at some Deceptive Qualities that people sometimes use as evidence of salvation:
 1. **A Past Event.** – Certainty in salvation is not based solely off of a past event of a time you prayed a prayer and maybe got baptized. As James 2:17 says, “In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.” You must be continuously “working out your salvation” as we learned in Philippians 2:12.
 2. **A Good Life** – A good and moral life also cannot be used as a basis of salvation because simply have good deeds without and faith is also dead. Action Fruit that is not coupled with Attitude Fruit is worthless. If your heart is not in what you are doing and your motives aren’t for the right reasons, even doing the right things isn’t enough. The Rich Young Ruler is an example of this Matt. 19:16-22
 3. **A Mere Knowledge of the Gospel** – Knowing all the right answers in a trivia type of way is not evidence of salvation. How we are living out that knowledge in a way that brings glory and honor to Christ is evidence of salvation.
 4. **Acting Religious** – Just because someone has outward signs of being religious does not mean they are saved. Church attendance, teaching, praying, singing, preaching, evangelizing...none of these things in and of themselves are evidence that someone is saved. 2 Timothy 3:5 tells us that there will be a time where people will “have a form of godliness, but deny its power.” Matthew 7:21-23 also.
- Looking at our verses for today in Philippians 3:1-3, Paul in v.2 tells the people to watch out for “those dog, those men who do evil, those mutilators of the flesh.”
- To give you some insight into what is going on, this was time where Christianity was in its infant stage.
- We were breaking away from the Jews as they rejected Christ and were not adhering to all of their teachings because Christ had given us a New Covenant.
- Many people at that time wanted the Christians to continue to follow the letter of the law and to follow all of the rules that the Jewish Rabbis had come up with as well.
- Paul was warning the Philippian people to watch out for those folks that were going to come to them and try to add conditions to their salvation outside of Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection.
- One of the major issues at the time was whether or not circumcision was a requirement for salvation.
- Under the Abrahamic Covenant circumcision was required and was an outward sign of being a part of that covenant.

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- The New Covenant that Jesus made with us set us free from the letter of the law and all of these rituals and laws were not required for salvation. We are saved by grace through faith.
- Some people were insisting however, that Christians be circumcised and that is where the “mutilators of the flesh” came from in v.2.
- V.3 however shows us the Distinctive Qualities of a True Christian as those that:
 1. **Worship God by the Spirit** – This is not simply singing songs. Worship in this verse means to give religious service to or attributing due worship and service to someone who deserves it. It is not something that you would only do once a week and it is certainly not limited to songs. We worship God by living as he would have us to live and by obeying his commands. We can also worship and praise him through songs, but that would mean that your heart was in what you are singing and it would be at that point that you are worshipping God with your heart, not your voice.
 2. **Glory (Rejoice) in Christ** – As we have seen throughout the Book of Philippians, we should be rejoicing in Christ every day. Our glory should not be rooted in this world, but in our Savior and Lord. A true Christian would exhibit this quality because we are in the world but not of the world. When you see someone that can still rejoice even in the midst of worldly trials and tribulations, that shows that their glory is sourced from somewhere other than this world.
 3. **Put no Confidence in the Flesh** – The Jews were putting all of their confidence in the flesh through rituals and following the law. A true Christian should understand that there is absolutely nothing we can do to save ourselves and all we must do is surrender to Jesus Christ. People that are self-centered and believe that they are the masters of their own destinies and they are in control, are probably not saved. They are putting too much confidence in the flesh.
- This is certainly not an exhaustive list, but it is what Paul was trying to get across to the Philippians.
- We all need to examine ourselves and each other to ensure we are demonstrating these distinctive qualities and not those deceptive qualities.
- Jesus Christ has paid the ultimate price for us, all he is asking us to do is to surrender our lives over to him and to live for him every single day that we have on this earth.
- When God changes us on the inside, the outside will also begin to change. However, you will never be able to clean up the outside truly, until you take care of the mess on the inside and only Christ can change that.
- How are you looking internally this morning?