Philippians 3:1-11

Review…

- **Philippians 1:1-30 – Rejoicing in suffering**
- **Philippians 2:1-11 – Rejoicing in Serving**
  - To be a servant we must bring unity to the Church of God…
  - To be a servant we must have humility…
  - The perfect example of a servant is Jesus Christ!
- **Philippians 2:12-30 – The example of the church**
  - The church of Philippi was an example in how they always served others…
  - Timothy was an example in how he was flexible to be used anyway God wanted…
  - Epaphroditus was an example in how he was willing to sacrifice it all to serve!

Joy in Believing… (*3 things*)

- **1st – The false and the true believer… vs. 1-3 (*3 points*)**
  - Finally my brothers…
    - Paul had already shown how we can have Joy in suffering / and Joy in serving…
    - But Paul is far from done with his letter to the Philippians – he has 44 more verse to go…
    - Paul says finally here to emphasize the point he is about to make…
    - Now in chapter 3 he will show us how we can have Joy in believing!
  - 1st – Paul loved the Saints in Philippi… vs. 1
    - He wanted more than anything – for them to rejoice in the Lord…
    - For that reason he was willing to write to them the same things over and over…
    - You may have noticed that the Bible often repeats itself…
    - The same message given in many ways – 'we cannot earn our way to heaven'…
    - The reason is because often we do not hear it – or do not understand – the first time…
    - The Bible tells us over and over in the hope we will eventually get it…
    - It is too important for us not to get / so we must repeat it as many times as needed!
  - 2nd – There are fake believers… vs. 2
    - Paul called them dogs – it was not a compliment…
      - In Jewish culture is was common to refer to unbelieving gentles as dogs…
      - It was not a compliment – the reference was to wild / untamed rabid savages…
      - Like a rabid dog these men go around trying to bite and infect others with their poison!
    - Paul called them evil workers…
      - Their poison was - they thought they were good enough to get to heaven…
      - But they were comparing themselves to others – not God's standard with is perfection!
      - We need to be careful whom we choose to compare ourselves to...
      - We might compare ourselves to the world around us – and think we are ok...
      - The problem is the world is getting worse and worse every day...
      - Meaning if we are comparing ourselves to them - we are also getting worse!
    - Paul calls them mutilators…
      - A very similar word to circumcise – the idea being these men were Jews…
      - And they mutilated / circumcised others – teaching you had to be a Jew to be saved…
      - Speaking of the Judaizers - religious teachers who taught you had to keep the Law...

- Paul had an ongoing battle with these false teachers – **II Corinthians 10**...
- His first encounter with them came after his return from his first missions trip...
- **Acts 15:1** - "Certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, 'Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.'"
- I know a lot of Christians that have a lot of rules they try and live their life by...
- And even though they have been in church for many years - they have not matured...
- All they have is their unchanging rules - the problem is they do not change either!

o 3rd – We are the true believers… vs. 3
- We are the 'true' circumcision – who worship God in the Spirit…
  - There are two kinds of circumcision – outward and inward…
  - **Romans 2:29** - "A true Jew is one whose heart is right with god. And true circumcision is not a cutting of the body but a change of heart produced by god's spirit. Whoever has that kind of change seeks praise from god, not from people."
  - Every Jew was circumcised physically in obedience to the Law...
  - But if they did not keep law – they showed were not circumcised spiritually...
  - It is not about our words – or where we are – it is about the actions from our lives...
  - If you live like the devil - then it is a good bet you are not a child of God...
- True believers do not put any confidence in themselves…
  - If we are honest - we know what we are supposed to do - we know right from wrong
  - The question is how do we manage to consistently do what is right!
  - **Romans 7:15** - "I don't understand myself at all, for I really want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do the very thing I hate."
- Circumcision of the heart – is how we are able to obey the Lord…
  - Those who are circumcised in their heart – walk by the Spirit...
  - **Colossians 2:11** – "When you came to Christ, you were 'circumcised', not by a physical procedure. It was a spiritual procedure, cutting away your sinful nature."
  - Before we came to Jesus we did what our sin wanted us to – we were slaves to sin...
  - We were bound/captive to the sinful desires of our heart – we did not know better...
  - We did not think about Jesus – how to live for Jesus – how to live a righteous life...
  - We did not trust in Jesus – we only knew how to trust in ourselves...
  - But when we accepted Jesus Christ – we died to that old sinful nature...
  - The sinful desires of our heart were cut off – so we were free to live for the Lord…
  - **Romans 6:6** – "Our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin."
  - That change of heart – circumcision – is how we can be obedient to the Lord!

- **2ND – RIGHTEOUSNESS BY WORKS … VS. 4-6 (*7 THINGS*)**

o 1st - If anyone could have been saved by his works – it would have been Paul… vs. 4
- Paul was circumcised on the 8th day – in accordance with – **Genesis 17**
- Paul was saying he was a 'true' descendant of Abraham – heir to the promise of God…

o 2nd - Paul was a pure-blooded Jew – both his mother and father were Jews… vs. 5

o 3rd - Paul was of the tribe of Benjamin – he even knew his heritage…
- It is likely that Paul – whose name was first Saul before God changed it…
- Was named after the first King of Israel – King Saul of Benjamin!

o 4th - Paul was the Hebrew of Hebrews…
- When Filipinos move to the States / Europe – the first generation keeps their culture
- But the second / third generation become part of their new culture language…

- Most of the Jews in Paul's time had lost their Hebrew culture / language…
- Because Israel had been conquered by the Greeks / and then Romans…
- Many of the Jews had taken on the Greek language and culture – but not Paul…
- He was still VERY Jewish in his culture / and still spoke the Hebrew language!

o 5th - Paul was a Pharisee – he kept the Law… vs. 6
- 500 years before Jesus the nation of Israel had become very wicked...
- As a result God punished Israel - allowed the nation of Babylon to conquer them...
- They spent 70 years in captivity – then God let them return home…
- In an effort to get right with God there was a 'spiritual revival'...
- A group was created to ensure Israel never rebelled against God again...
- The Pharisees were the group that was created to keep all the commands of God!

o 6th - Paul persecuted the church of Christ…
- Saul held the coats of those who stoned Steven to death – **Acts 7**…
- **Acts 9:1** – Paul hunted Christians and put them to death for their faith in Christ…
- He believed that Christianity was a cult – and he was determined to stamp it out!
- Paul had everything going for him – if anyone could have been saved it was him…
- But instead of being a 'man of God' - he was unwittingly at war with God!
- We are certainly no better than Paul – and if we think we can be saved by our works…
- We will find like Paul did – that in truth was are the enemies of God!

o 7th - Paul was blameless according to the Law…
- He followed the Law to the letter – never making one mistake outwardly…
  - Where Paul failed is when he realized the Law also looked at the heart…
  - You shall not covet (*speaking of the desires of the heart for something you don't have*)
  - Paul could control what he did / his actions – but he could not stop his desires
  - I know a lot of people who think they are good Christians because they follow rules
  - They show up to church every Sunday – but what is in their heart….
  - We might be able to keep ourselves from having an affair with a beautiful woman…
  - **Matthew 5:28** – "Whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has committed adultery…"
  - But how many of us have never looked at a beautiful woman and thought…
- Paul realized the Law could not make him righteous…
  - Because the Law points out to us all our failures – showed us all our flaws…
  - The problem is it does nothing / can do nothing – to help us change…
  - There is only the ability to show us what we do is wrong – not to make it right…
  - Being told what to do and not to do still depends on me to make the right choice…
  - But if we want to sin – the Law is powerless to stop us – it just tells us we sinned

- **3RD – RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH… VS. 7-11**

o What Paul thought was important – he now consider worthless… vs. 7-8
- When Paul met Jesus on the road to Damascus – **Acts 9** – his eyes were opened…
  - He realized that for all his efforts – he was still not good enough to earn heaven…
  - The only way for him to be saved – was by faith in Jesus Christ!
- Paul lost his religion – in order to gain a relationship with Jesus…
  - Everything Paul had done in his past – even everything Paul did today…
  - He considered all his works / his religion – as trash (*literally manure*)…
  - Get the picture – when we show up in heaven - try and present out works to God…
  - It is like handing Him a pile of caribou poop – repulsive / pungent…
  - Throw out the trash – forget trying to be good enough to earn heaven…

- Paul counted it all lost – so he could gain Christ…
  - The only way to get to heaven is to 'know Jesus Christ'…
  - Being a better Christian is not about what we do – it is all about who we know…
  - The more we get to know Jesus – the more we will be like Jesus!

o What does it mean to know Jesus… vs. 9-11
- We know about the gift of His righteousness by faith…
  - Paul did not want to be found standing in his own righteousness…
  - He wanted to be found having the righteousness of Jesus Christ…
  - We may think we look pretty righteous - but to God our goodness is filthy rags!
  - **Isaiah 64:6** – "All our righteousness are like filthy rags [menstrual cloth]..."
  - We are REALLY bad people - we are all – every one of us – TOTAL sinners…
  - Yet God loved us so much that He gave His life for us – **John 3:16**
  - Jesus paid the price for our sin – and gave us His reward of Heaven!
- We know about the power of the resurrection…
  - If there were no resurrection – if death was the end – then life would not matter…
  - You could do what you wanted whenever you wanted without consequence…
  - But we know death is not the end - we have the hope of eternal life to come...
  - Jesus was the first to be resurrected - but all who believe will follow His example!
  - In fact everyone will live forever - our spirit is eternal...
  - The question we are left to answer - is where will we spend out eternity!
- We know we must suffer for Jesus…
  - We like the idea of the gift of God – and the power of the resurrection…
  - But we tend not to like the idea that we have to suffer with Jesus…
  - **II Peter 1:22** – Jesus suffered – so we are also called to suffer for Jesus!
- We know we must share in His death…
  - In order to be resurrected – we first have to die to our self…
  - The idea being our old man – sinful nature – was crucified and buried with Jesus...
  - We were then 'raised from the dead' – no longer the old sinful man we once were
  - We were given 'new life' – freed from sin to live for God - **II Corinthians 5:17**
  - We are 'born again' – not to live in sin / but to live in godliness
  - If I am dead - then there is not point in me trusting in my abilities...
  - I do not even for a moment consider trusting in myself to overcome sin...
  - I have to depend completely and entirely on Jesus Christ!