

## 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.

### Community Group Study 06 Dec 2009

#### Introduction

In this passage Paul demonstrates a passionate anger towards those who misinterpret Christianity as religion. In verse 3 he outlines 3 characteristics of true Christians (worship by the Spirit of God, glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh) and contrasts that to those who seek to please God by their own deeds. He calls them "dogs", refers to their ceremonial circumcision as "mutilations of the flesh" and asserts that their 'Godly' deeds actually make them 'evildoers'.

Why his anger? Because the issue of how we please God is central to faith. One cannot have the wrong view and still be classified a Christian. It is only by counting all our good deeds as loss and trusting fully in the finished work of Christ that we "gain Christ". Having a righteousness that is not our own but that comes through faith in Christ. A firm grasp of this truth makes us secure, stable and produces the fruit of righteousness in our lives.

Paul demonstrates that of all people, he would have much reason for confidence in his own flesh. Yet he counts it as loss that He may be found in Christ. This righteousness is not simply a legal status, it's being made alive to know and love Christ. Paul uses the intimate word "know", showing that faith in Christ leads to communion with Him and knowledge of God.

Religion is ultimately horrible because it cannot lead us into God's presence. Paul's summary of true faith is that Christians "worship by the Spirit of God, glory in Christ, and put no confidence in the flesh".

#### Discussion

- >>Why is Paul so strong with religious people?
- >>In our walk with God, what things do we put confidence in?
- >>What does it mean to know Christ?

#### Explanation

- >>What does it mean to "worship by the Spirit of God"?
- >>How do we gain Christ?
- >>What is this "righteousness that comes from the law"?

#### Application

- >>What do you need to count as loss?
- >>How does putting "no confidence in the flesh" work out practically for you?
- >>What will it mean for you to "glory in Christ"?
- >>Carefully consider what aspects of your Christian life are 'religious', and lead you away from God.