

CITIZENS OF HEAVEN

THE BOOK OF PHILIPPIANS

Sermon-Based Study Guide
Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church
Philippians 3.1-11 | October 25, 2020
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I. Introduction to this Study

This week we continue our study of Philippians, turning the corner together into chapter 3 and its first eleven verses. In these verse Paul contrasts his old life, filled with good gifts that he has trusted for years (and ultimately they fall way short of God's best gift for him in Jesus), with his new life of rejoicing (even as he spends part of it in chains for the Gospel), and he invites us to join him in this joy.

You can also sense (and almost hear!) Paul's passionate please – Look Out!//Watch Out! – for those within the Christian community who believe that Jesus is the promised Messiah but also insist that only keeping the law will do as a standard for membership in God's people. Reflect on this declaration by Pastor Francis Chan, ***“When you add to the gospel, you lose the gospel! It's not Jesus plus your good works (whatever your version of good works may be). It's Christ and Christ alone.”***

May Paul's heartfelt exhortation encourage you in your life and faith, even now, in the times that we find ourselves experiencing and navigating together...

II. Connecting with One Another

Recall a time in your life when you have really **SHOUTED**, “Look out!” to someone...and/or a moment which you had a moment to calmly **advise** someone to “look out for _____....”

What is one skill you have that you can celebrate?

Consider the things people treasure. Why do they treasure these things?

III. Study the Text

- a. Why is Paul so concerned about the influence of the “dogs” on this young, Christian community?
- b. According to **verse 3**, what are the three distinguishing marks of a genuine Christian?
- c. What would the old Paul have been like as a friend? (**verses 4-6**) Why is Paul so stern and passionate in his warning against the kind of person he used to be? (**verses 2-3**)
- d. If this problem of those promoting circumcision had gone unchallenged, how would this have hurt the Gospel? How do legalisms get in the way of knowing Christ and rejoicing in the Lord?
- e. In **verses 4-6**, Paul could boast in his own religious privileges and accomplishments, because he had many! His list includes four items pertaining to birth privilege as a Jew:
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.



And three draw attention to his own religious achievements:

- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
- f. Paul lived a “good” life before he became a Christian (i.e., *was found in him v.9*). Was Paul trying to put down his religious background (**verse 7-8**)? Why does Paul consider his resume (and yours) to be “garbage”? On what are you basing your salvation?
 - g. How does the new Paul differ from the old? (**verses 7-11**) How are suffering and death involved in helping us to know Christ? How has following Christ been costly for you?
 - h. The knowledge Paul speaks of in **verse 10** isn’t merely an intellectual knowledge, it’s an intimate kind of knowledge shared between close friends and spouses. Why do you think his desire to know Christ in this way begins and ends with resurrection?
 - i. Why do you need Christ’s righteousness?
 - j. As you look back on the passage for today, what has Paul found that brings joy, and what has he found that destroys joy?

IV. Pray

- a. Pray that you may experience a life of joy that is derived from a right relationship with Jesus Christ.
- b. Thank God for the many good things in your life, asking Him to help you keep them in perspective, seeking first His kingdom and righteousness.
- c. Lift up those who don’t yet know of the best thing of being found in Jesus and that God would give you a heart for them and their salvation.
- d. Continue to pray for the witness of the Church during this difficult and divisive election season.
- e. Pray for Christians around the world who are being persecuted for their faith.
- f. Pray for Good Shepherd during these unprecedented times in our nation and world. May we, with the help of the Holy Spirit, seek in new and creative ways, to invite all people to grow into a Christ-centered life in God’s family.

V. Digging Deeper

- a. Paul uses the words joy and rejoice many times in Philippians. Read **Philippians 1.4, 18; 2.2,17; 3.1; 4.1,4,10** looking for Paul’s reasons for joy. What additional reasons can you find to rejoice?
- b. What thing(s) do you need to walk away from in your past that is keeping you from becoming new in Christ?
- c. How would you compare your upbringing to Paul’s? Your passion for Christ to Paul’s?
- d. How does the hope of your resurrection encourage you in the Christian life?
- e. Read **Acts Chapters 6, 7, 8, & 9** to deepen your understanding of the faith of Stephen (a man full of God’s grace and power) and Jesus’ transforming work in the life of Saul (later to be Paul)...

