

## “The Surpassing Worth of Knowing Christ”

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Scriptural Text: Philippians 3:1-11, ESV

### Righteousness Through Faith in Christ

<sup>1</sup> Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you.

<sup>2</sup> Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. <sup>3</sup> For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh—<sup>4</sup> 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: <sup>5</sup> 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; <sup>6</sup> as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. <sup>7</sup> But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. <sup>8</sup> 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 <sup>9</sup> 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— <sup>10</sup> that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, <sup>11</sup> that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

I grew up next to a boy named Brian who was about the same age as me. We grew up from about the ages of three or four and on through our high school years. We did so much together; we explored the woods, we saved the stream for minnows and crawdads, we rode mini-bikes, we knocked down wasp’s nests, and we had apple fights. We did all of these things together and the list could go on and on. We talked a lot as well as played a lot. We talked about life, about God, and about family.

I remember one of the conversations we had, which we had on several occasions because we were kind of competitive with one another, was about our dads. It usually began with one of us saying, “Well, I think my dad could whip your dad.” The other, of course, would say, “No, my dad can whip your dad.” We would go back and forth as to why our dads were stronger and more proficient in a brawl with one another.

I remember very keenly defending my dad’s honor in those and having the absolute confidence I was absolutely right my dad could absolutely whip Brian’s dad in a fight. However, looking back, I believe my confidence may have been misplaced. My dad was neither a muscleman nor a brawler. His job required him to be inside a savings and loan and watch over accounts and make sure the savings and loan was doing all that was required by law. Brian’s dad, on the other hand, worked in construction. He, naturally, had a larger build. In addition, he was used to everyday strengthening his body with the work given to him.

I am glad I had a high esteem in my dad. My misplaced confidence did not do me any real harm. However, that is not always the case. Sometimes misplaced confidence can be catastrophic. Misplaced confidence in a faulty airplane can lead to a fiery crash. Misplaced confidence in a drunken surgeon can lead to death. Misplaced confidence in an unscrupulous business partner can lead to bankruptcy.

Who or what we place our confidence in is a very, very grave matter. Nothing carries more consequence than a decision regarding where we place our confidence regarding our relationship with God and regarding our eternal destiny. That is the theme of our text in this study.

The central idea we will discover is: a Christian is one who puts no confidence in their flesh and one who puts all of their confidence in Christ. Christians do not count their own works to merit God’s blessings, but they count upon Jesus and His work alone to merit God’s eternal blessing for them. That is what a Christian is and that is the central idea the Apostle Paul is driving in our text.

In our previous study, we discovered, in Verse 1, God calls us to joy just as surely as He calls us to purity. Joy is not an accessory of our spiritual clothing, but joy is a basic piece of our attire; as basic as shirts and shoes are. A Christian without joy is a Christian who is unclothed and unready and what a sad and unnecessary thing that is for any of us to be without joy. Paul writes,

<sup>1</sup> Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord.

Joy is a command and it is a duty to God we are commanded to pursue. We observed joy was commanded. Joy in the life of a Christian is a priority to God. We also learned joy is located and discovered in the Lord and only in the Lord. The principle we learn is: the salvation God gives us through Christ secures our joy. Jesus Himself brings us our joy as He forgives us our sins, as He brings us and adopts us into God's family, as He leads us and feeds us as our Good Shepherd, as He redeems us from slavery to sin through His blood, as He continuously intercedes for us as our High Priest, and as He protects us as our Defender. What joy we find in the Lord! Now and for all eternity we have joy in the Lord.

We will look, in this study, the fourth aspect of joy which this paragraph teaches: **Joy threatened. Our joy is in danger of being stolen from us by false doctrine.** Our joy is not always safe in this world. Our joy is in danger of being stolen from us.

Beloved, watch out for the Devil's joy-robbers in your life. They are many and they are strong. The Apostle Paul has already discussed several joy-robbers in this epistle which the Devil employs to take joy from us. There is persecution from the world around us and Paul has talked about that. There are conflicts within the church which can rob us of joy. There is a love for this world that can grow within us if we feed it. This will ultimately bring about the greatest of sadness and it will cause us to lose Christ Himself. There is a focus upon one's self which leads to self-pity, self-glory, self-interest, and self-righteousness. All of these are joy-robbers. Look out for the joy-robbers Satan would bring to rob you of that which God would have you to possess.

In these verses, Paul emphasizes a specific joy-robber: the thief of false teachers within the church who pervert the Gospel of Christ, the Gospel of grace, into a system of works-righteousness. Paul tells us to "look out" and he says that very specifically in Verse 2,

<sup>2</sup> Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh.

A distortion of the Gospel places us on a performance-based relationship with God. A performance-based relationship with God will suck the joy of God out of our lives. We will not be able to say, "Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me,"<sup>1</sup> if we are attempting to perform in such a way we will no longer be a wretch before God. It is grace which motivates joy in the life and that is what makes the Gospel so amazing and so powerful.

Paul begins this chapter in such a friendly tone, does he not, yet, in Verse 2 he turns the corner and he becomes fierce. He sees these false teachers as murderous, robbers attempting to break into the church to corrupt and kill God's children. He says, "Look out! Look out! Look out!" False teaching in the church is a very clear and present danger to our joy.

Who is Paul warning us against? He is warning the church against a group of false teachers who, in the 1st Century, went into the cities, after churches were already established. They were known as *Judaizers*. They were people who mixed Old Testament Law with New Testament Gospel and they taught God grace was good, so they did not deny God's grace altogether and they did not deny Jesus, but they taught the need to add into the mix of God's grace human righteousness in order to be accepted by God. They taught God gives that initial push through Christ, but the final approval before God will depend upon how the work of holy living is completed

Christ gets the ball rolling, so we need Jesus, but then Jesus and His grace can be left behind and work must be completed to gain God's acceptance. And, each person's ultimate acceptance will be dependant upon what was done to complete the work God began in Christ. Through their teaching salvation becomes a glorified self-help program instead of a Divine rescue.

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<sup>1</sup> John Newton (1725-1807). *Amazing Grace*, 1 Chronicles 17:16-17

These false teachers did not abandon Jesus altogether. That much we must make clear because we often believe work's righteousness is only done by people who proclaim work's only apart from Christ and that is not true. These false teachers still taught about Jesus, but they simply added human works to the prerequisite of salvation, "Yes, you need Jesus, but you also need the Law of Moses in order to be saved from your sin. God does His part and you need to do your part, too. Together, you can gain a home in Heaven and have a right relationship with God."

Paul regards this teaching as "spiritual strychnine" in the heart of the believer. Paul is telling the church in Philippi, and us, "Do not pick up what these teachers are putting down. Do not drink their cool-aid." He has already seen how these teachers harm many in the church in the region of Galatia and those churches there. He wrote a letter, earlier, to the churches in Galatia,

<sup>6</sup> I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—<sup>7</sup> not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.<sup>8</sup> But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed.<sup>9</sup> As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.

By following after these false teachers and believing in what they are teaching, he tells them they are deserting Christ and they are turning to a "different gospel", not that there really is another one, but there are some who are troubling the churches in Galatia. Who are these? These are the dogs and the evil doers and the mutilators of the flesh. He is telling them no one has the right to change the Gospel because it is established forever in Heaven. The Judaizers were redirecting the basis of salvation from Jesus' work to man's work.

The principle we learn is: when we add human righteousness to the Gospel, the message of the Gospel becomes so perverted the Apostle Paul calls it a "different gospel," and something altogether different. In other words, adding works-righteousness to the Gospel does not merely create another version of the same Gospel, but adding human performance creates a different message altogether.

Someone may protest, "We do not have Judaizers threatening the church today. This seems to be out of date." "I have never been tempted," someone might say, "that I need to be circumcised in order to be accepted by God." There is some truth to that. We do not have Judaizers in the form in which they appeared in the 1st Century, but we do have many of the Judaizers cousins who are teaching the exact same message with just a little bit different detail. We have many who teach salvation will be gained through Christ *plus* human effort. They teach Divine approval is given on the basis of God's work through Christ and our work toward Christ, and Paul says, "Beware! Look out! This formula of Christ's work plus your work will rob you of the joy of glorying Jesus. You will not be able to be a person who glories in Jesus if you are counting on your own personal performance to finish the work of Jesus. You will be glorying in both Jesus and yourself, rather than in Jesus alone." This robs Him of the glory due Him because salvation is completely of Him and from Him and through Him.

When we embrace a performance-based faith, one of two things will happen to the soul. We will either despair because we fail and we recognize we fail and we say, "I am not living up. I look at the Law of God and I believe if I do not live according to the Law, I will not be accepted by God," and we despair in our guilt. Or, we rejoice in ourselves and we become self-righteous and we say, "Hey, I believe I measure up really well. I measure up a lot better than most of the people around me," and we pump out our chest and become prideful within ourselves and that is called "self-righteous".

But, either way, whether we are despairing in our failure or in our pride and believe we are succeeding and we become self-righteous, we are outside of Christ and we will lose our joy in Christ. Look out for those who suggest we can do something to gain merit before God in order to be accepted by Him. Our joy will be stolen from us and we will become a sour soul as we take our eyes off of Jesus' accomplishment and we begin to focus upon our accomplishment. The principle we are learning is: our joy rests upon what Christ has done for us and not what we do for Christ.

How serious of a danger is this brand of false teaching? Notice how strong Paul's words are: they are dogs, they are evil doers, they are mutilators of the flesh. Some read that and think, "I believe Paul was a little bit unkind there. Look

at the words he used to describe these false teachers. Is that really a person who represents gentle Jesus who was always loving and who always spoke kindly to people? He is calling them ‘dogs’, ‘evil doers’, and ‘mutilators of the flesh’.” Again, Paul is using strong language, but that is so he would be very, very clear on a very important subject.

I am all for being nice. Nice is great, but when eternal matters are at stake we cannot afford to be so nice that people misunderstand the Gospel. Scripture teaches salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, and in Christ alone,

<sup>Ephesians 2:8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,  
<sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Jesus Himself calls those who teach false doctrine “ravenous wolves” and a “son of Hell”,

<sup>Matthew 7:5</sup> “*Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.*”

<sup>Matthew 23:15</sup> “*Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.*”<sup>2</sup>

Jesus used strong language as well. When eternal matters are at stake we cannot afford to be so nice that people misunderstand the Gospel.

Next, Paul presents his personal testimony in order to reject the religion which looks to human merit, or personal performance, to gain acceptance from God. He is not condemning their message because he is not able to live up to it. It was not sour grapes with Paul. In other words, someone might accuse Paul, “You do not follow the Judaizers because you could not live up to what they are saying.” Paul responds, “No, that is not true at all. Let me tell you my testimony. In fact, I excelled at the very thing they are teaching you to do and to become,”

<sup>5</sup> 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; <sup>6</sup> as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

What is a Christian, really? A Christian is one who boasts in Jesus and who places no confidence in the flesh. In Galatians 6, Paul says,

<sup>14</sup> But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

He is telling this church, “We recognize we have nothing of merit to bring to God and we receive His salvation and His life solely upon the basis of His mercy.”

The greatest question in life is: How can I be right with God? Many in our world would answer, “Well, by doing good deeds; by going to church; by living a life of integrity; by loving my neighbor.” But, the Apostle Paul is saying, “Do you really believe God will accept you on the basis of your work? If that is what you think, let me tell you my testimony. If there is anyone who would have confidence in their own work and their own performance, I would have reason to have even more because I have lived this life absolutely to a ‘t’.”

Notice the kinds of things Paul listed, in Verses 5 and 6, in which he used to place his confidence in order to be right with God, “This is where I was and I was living this life. I used to place my confidence in religious rituals. I was circumcised the eighth day. I was a member of God’s chosen people by birth and I followed all of those rituals which God laid down in the Old Testament, including circumcision which is the most important Old Testament ritual for a believer. I did that on the eighth day at exactly the right time and the right place and formerly initiated into God’s covenant. Furthermore, I was of a privileged race. My family was of the right kind. I was of the people of Israel and of the Tribe of Benjamin. I was a Hebrew of Hebrews.”

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<sup>2</sup> New King James Version (NKJV)

The Tribe of Benjamin was very special because Benjamin was the only son who was born in the Promised Land. All the other sons were born outside of the Promised Land. Furthermore, Benjamin was the only Tribe faithful to Judah, the Tribe David came from, after Solomon died. Paul was of a very special, faithful tribe, the Tribe of Benjamin. “Regarding religious affiliation,” Paul continued, “I was a Pharisee. I was one of those, that by the 1st Century, every one in the culture respected my group as the holy, religious, right group to belong to. I was a member of that group, the group everyone else wanted to get into because they were acknowledged to be strict in their righteous code of living.

“Furthermore, I was so sincere in my devotion to God. I looked at the church and the Gospel of Jesus Christ as something horrendous and I was so devoted I persecuted the church. That is how sincere I was.”

Does sincerity count with God? Not if we are sincerely wrong, and that is what Paul is saying in his testimony. He was sincere, but he was sincerely wrong.

Then Paul said, “As to righteousness under the Law, I was blameless. I counted on my own human righteousness and that is what I had confidence in; that I live a right life and that God would accept me because I lived the right life.” The Pharisees believed a person could actually keep the six hundred and thirteen commandments written in the Torah, the Law of Moses, and they believed that, not because they believed they were sinless, but that they were blameless. In other words, if they did sin they went, right away, to the rituals, the sacrifices, necessary in order to be cleansed. That was Paul’s life. No one could point to his life and say, “Here is a sin and you did not follow the prescribed Law in order to be cleansed.” Or, “Here is a sin which could not and was not covered underneath the Law.” Paul was blameless.

Consider this list for a moment: religious ritual; privileged family; religious affiliations; sincerity of faith; major efforts to do good works; successful at it,

<sup>7</sup> But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

Paul’s is teaching us that misplaced confidence can kill us spiritually. He realized the things he used to think that made him rich toward God were things which were keeping him from God and he now considers them rubbish, as garbage, as refuse and something to be thrown out. The things he considered as spiritual money in his bank account he now understands to be debts, and they were things which were sinking him deeper into ruin before God.

Why were these things, religious ritual, privilege race, religious affiliation, sincere devotion or faith in God, human righteousness, actually robbing him of any relationship with God? It was because they were keeping him from Christ and they were keeping him from having the necessary confidence in Christ.

When Saul met Christ on the road to Damascus, the spiritual balance sheet of his life was completely turned upside down. Everything he thought which was giving him favor before God, he recognized they were keeping him from God and everything he thought would keep him from God was actually the things he needed in order to be rich toward God. That conversion changed everything for Paul and that is what he is teaching the Philippians.

Finally, we want to consider how **joy is energized: joy thrives when Christ becomes our treasure**. I love how Paul completes this paragraph of his letter.

**There are five ways in which Christ is our treasure. The first is the treasure of knowing Christ,**

<sup>8</sup> 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...

Paul is talking about the things he used to place his confidence in order to be right with God and he now sees them as complete loss. Paul once hated the person he now most loves. He sees Christ is everything and knowing Him is of surpassing value.

When Paul uses the phrase “surpassing value” he is saying that knowing Christ is so valuable nothing in the world or in the universe is comparable to the treasure of wealth he has come to discover in knowing Christ. Think of that. Is

there anything you have that is so valuable that nothing compares to its worth? Perhaps it is your health and it is the one thing valued more than anything. Perhaps it is a relationship with a spouse or a child or a parent or a friend. Perhaps it is some prize possession. Paul says, “For me, it is knowing Christ. My health, any other relationship, any prized possession, or any past affiliation, all is loss compared to the surpassing value of knowing Christ.”

The word “knowing” is interesting and it means: an experiential, personal knowledge and involvement. This is not a cold, doctrinal knowledge of Christ, but it is a relational knowing. A relational knowledge of Jesus is what Christianity is all about. It is the center. Christianity is not about living according to a certain moral code. It is not about singing certain songs or going to a certain place at a certain time. It is not about saying certain prayers or believing in a specific doctrinal statement. At the very center of Christianity is personal and relational and knowing Christ. Jesus tells us,

<sup>3</sup> “*And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.*”

It is the same word “know”.

Paul will repeat the treasure of knowing,

<sup>10</sup> that I may know him...

This is interesting because in Verse 8 he seems as though he already possesses this, but in Verse 10 it seems as though he is still obtaining this. Does Paul already know Christ? Yes and no.

Husbands, do you know your wives? The answer is: yes and no. Yes, we know because we have experiential, personal knowledge, but “no” because we have much more knowledge to gain and we want to press on to continue to know my wife. That is what Paul is saying about Christ, “Yes, I know Christ. I know Him personally and I know Him experientially, but I want to know Him more,” and this becomes the driving ambition of his life. It is the one thing which moves Paul forward and it trumps every other goal. He is willing to pay any price in order to obtain it.

This is what Jesus talks about in His parables in Matthew 13, when He says,

<sup>44</sup> “*The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.*”

<sup>45</sup> “*Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls,* <sup>46</sup> *who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.*”

Paul is saying, “I was looking around in this world and this is what I used to believe would find meaning and have value until I found Christ one day. I was walking along a road toward Damascus to persecute Christians and Christ appeared. By grace Christ revealed Himself to me and all my values turned upside down so that the things I used to value, and things I used to believe were gain to me, I now consider as lost because I found this fine Pearl and I am selling everything to get it. This fine Pearl is simply knowing Christ experientially, personally, intimately, face-to-face.”

That is what Christianity is. Jesus does not live back in centuries long ago, amid the clouds of Heaven. He is near us. He is with us. To know Christ is to know Him in every part of our life. To know Him is when storms rage about us. To know Him is when dark shadows overtake our lives. To know Him is when there is light beaming. To know Him is when we are disappointed. To know Him is when we are in pain. To know Him is when we are living full of strength. To know Him is when we are dying full of weakness. To know Him is what Christianity is all about.

Do you know Him? The treasure is knowing Christ so let us press on.

**The second treasure we will consider is the treasure of the righteousness of Christ,**

<sup>8</sup> ...in order that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup> and be found in him...

What does it mean to “be found in Him”? Paul comments,

<sup>9</sup> 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...

There is a treasure of righteousness, the kind of righteousness which was unobtainable to Paul before when he was living his own kind of life. But, there is a righteousness now because his old kind of life was pursuing a righteousness through the Law, but now he recognizes there is a righteousness in Christ and it comes to him through faith.

As long as we place our confidence in our in our credentials or our righteousness we will never find Christ. Christ is found only by those who lose all confidence in themselves and place their confidence in solely in Jesus.

Notice, Paul speaks, in Verse 9, of two different kinds of righteousness. He speaks of human righteousness, the kind of imperfect righteousness we, men and women, can produce through our moral effort and our religious discipline. It is the righteousness which comes from the Law. This kind of righteousness is the kind Paul devoted the first half of his life to obtain. It is the kind of righteousness everyone possesses in some measure. No one possesses it completely; all of us have a little bit more to acquire in life, but all of us possess it in some measure. This righteousness helps us to compare ourselves with others, and it is usually a favorable comparison because we are a prideful people.

We may say, “Well, I may not be perfect,” in other words we have not obtained complete human righteousness yet, “but I am not a liar like so-and-so.” “I may not be absolutely pure in my heart, but I am not an adulterer like so-and-so.” We see this kind of righteousness as something we can accumulate more of throughout the day, throughout the week, or throughout the year. We go to church. We pray to God. We read our Bible. We believe the right doctrine. We go and serve in the local mission. We help the elderly. The list goes on and on and the more of these things we do the more of this kind of righteousness we accumulate. That is human righteousness.

But, then Paul speaks of another kind of righteousness and that is God’s righteousness and that is the kind of perfect righteousness. It is not imperfect and it is not in measure. One either has it completely or one does not have it at all. It is God’s righteousness because it represents the righteousness of God. It is His righteousness and it is His character. It is complete and it is perfect. It is a righteousness, truly, which God possesses by nature, but it is also the kind of righteousness God requires in order to be in relationship with Him. This righteousness comes to us only through faith in Christ. It is inaccessible through the Law. We can never acquire perfect righteousness, God’s righteousness, by doing the Law. This is the kind of righteousness which is complete in itself. One cannot have more of God’s righteousness or less of God’s righteousness. We either have God’s righteousness fully or not at all.

If I were to offer one of two prizes for listening well to the sermon and one prize was \$100,000.00 cash and the other prize was \$20.00 cash, which would you choose. If you chose the \$100,000.00 in cash, you would have chosen poorly. Why? I have \$100,000.00 from *The Game of Life*.<sup>3</sup> Have you ever played *The Game of Life*? I have \$100,000.00 cash from *The Game of Life* and it is *Life* cash. When playing *The Game of Life* it is very valuable. One can pay their taxes with it. One can pay fines with it. One can save up for retirement with it. It is very valuable if one is playing *The Game of Life* and want to win the game. One needs that kind of cash, but it is not the kind of cash with which one can go out buy a soda from the soda machine or put in the offering plate and have the treasurer send a receipt for it. It is not the kind of cash one can buy anything with. It is only valuable in the realm of *The Game of Life*.

The \$20.00 I was hypothetically offering was United States currency. That kind of cash is valuable in all the other spheres of this world. One can pay taxes with it. One can purchase items with it. It is currency in this nation.

They are two different kinds of currency and they are completely different, yet they are both cash. There are two different kinds of righteousness, yet they are completely different. They are both righteousness. In this world human righteousness has some barter value in the game of life. As we are living out our life, human righteousness can earn one respect from peers in the work place and it may earn one a promotion in their job. Human righteousness may allow one to make speeches and receive medals. It can be bartered for many things as long as we are in this sphere in this game of life. But, outside of the game of life, in reference to Heaven, it has no value whatsoever.

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<sup>3</sup> The Game of Life. © 2013 Hasbro.

If I were to take *The Game of Life* cash to Culver's restaurant down the road and lay it down and ask for change, they would look at me as though I was a fool, and I would be a fool because that currency has no value whatsoever, "But, wait a minute! This is \$100,000.00!" "I am sorry, it is the wrong currency and it has no value whatsoever here."

When we go before God, as we stand before Him and give an account of our life, and we have all this currency of human righteousness and we say, "Here, God. Here is my currency. What do I get in return?" He will say, "That currency has no value whatsoever here." "But, it is \$100,000.00!" "It has not value here." "I worked hard for it." "It has no value whatsoever. None! The only currency traded here, with Me in Heaven, is the currency of My righteousness. Do you possess it?"

Here is the awesome truth Paul discovered and why he was so excited and why he was so concerned about these false teachers moving people from the true currency and the true value, he said we can gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of our own which comes through the Law, but a righteousness which comes through faith in Christ; the righteousness from God which depends upon faith.

There is a song written by Graham Kendrick which sums up the message of Philippians 3. He writes,

All I once held dear, built my life upon  
All this world reveres, and wars to own  
All I once thought gain I have counted loss  
Spent and worthless now, compared to this

Knowing you, Jesus  
Knowing you, there is no greater thing  
You're my all, you're the best  
You're my joy, my righteousness  
And I love you, Lord

Now my heart's desire is to know you more  
To be found in you and known as yours  
To possess by faith what I could not earn  
All-surpassing gift of righteousness

Oh, to know the power of your risen life  
And to know You in Your sufferings  
To become like you in your death, my Lord  
So with you to live and never die<sup>4</sup>

That is the joy of what it means to be a Christian. If you have never come to Christ and have received the righteousness of God which comes to you through faith, is there anything hindering you from coming to Christ and saying, "God, I want to set aside all my human righteousness because that is what is required. I want to turn away from that in order to obtain the righteousness available in Christ." Is there anything hindering you from coming to Christ Jesus today and saying, "God, I recognize my righteousness is worthless before You in Heaven. I recognize Your righteousness is a true treasure and I need it. I believe in Jesus in order to receive it." I urge you, this day, to come to Jesus Christ. Call out to Him. Believe in Him.

If you have come to Jesus Christ, has there been anything which has distracted you from the treasure that is Christ, the simple treasure of knowing Christ and knowing His righteousness and saying, "That is what my life's ambition is. That is all that really matters to me." Won't you commit your way afresh today and say, "God, I need You so I will not be lured in by the treasures of this world and away from Christ, that I would have the single focus that knowing Christ is the only thing that matters. It is my one true ambition in life."

God delights to give as we humble ourselves before Him and ask.

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<sup>4</sup> Graham Kendrick. "Knowing You", copyright © 1993 Make Way Music