

SCRIPTURES FOR 7/29/07 LIFEGROUP LESSON

Philippians 3:1-11

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— 4though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; 6as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless.

7But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. 8What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. 10I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of

sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Romans 2:28-29

A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man's praise is not from men, but from God.

Matthew 28:19

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

1 Peter 3:21

and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

Colossians 2:12

having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

NOTE TO LEADER: There is a lot of material here. Familiarize yourself with it so you know which stuff you are most comfortable with and what you will cut if you get short on time. Try to keep the lesson/discussion 20-30 minutes in length. Good luck and let me know if you have any questions. - Ed



JOY In the Journey: Can You Spell Value?

Jeff Browning

NOTE TO LEADERS: All items in *italics* are for your information and not designed to be read aloud.

OPENING:

ICEBREAKER or GET YA THINKIN' QUESTION: _____

OPENING PRAYER NOTES: _____

INTRODUCTION:

(have someone read Philippians 3:1) Paul says, "I don't mind repeating myself, if it will keep you out of trouble," and Jeff basically paraphrases this scripture, "Better safe than sorry."

Q: Can you think of an instance where you have done the same? (*subordinates, kids, students, etc.*)

Q: Jeff suggests, "We're all in this together." Who is? (*possible answers: mankind, Christians, the Philippians, Gentile converts, etc., but the real answer follows in subsequent scriptures*)

DIG DEEPER:

(have someone read Philippians 3:2-3) Here Paul is very hard on the Judaizers, those who would impose Jewish ritual on converted Gentiles. Peter also refers to them as "dogs" in 2 Peter 2:22, where he says, "Of them the proverbs are true: "A dog returns to its vomit," graphically describing believers who return to Jewish practice. This seems quite harsh, but is designed to make the important point that our salvation does not spring from some physical act but from faith in Christ. In fact, in Romans 2:29, Paul describes circumcision as a heart issue not a flesh issue.

Q: This is still a danger. Do you know any modern examples of believers empowering outside ritual? (*purchasing indulgences, tongues necessary sign of Holy Spirit, send me money and you will be saved, etc.*)

Q: Why does the Christian Church view of baptism (a necessary step in the plan of salvation) not make us dogs like the Judaizers? (*both Jesus [Matt. 28:19] and the apostles [Col. 2:12, 1 Peter 3:21, and others] taught baptism for salvation [neither taught circumcision or adherence to the law], we do not teach that there is power in baptism, Paul's primary concern, in fact Paul uses baptismal symbolism in verses 10-11*)

APPLICATION:

In order to slam home the idea that we are not to trust in the flesh, Paul shares his earthly, Jewish, pre-Christian credentials. This demonstrated several aspects of status that we are not to rely on (*have someone read Philippians 3:4-6*):

1) Religious upbringing

Q: What is a current example of reliance on religious upbringing? (*esp. infant baptism, catechism, attendance, etc.*)

2) Heritage

Q: What is a current example of reliance on your religious heritage? (*my parents were Baptists so I am a Christian*)

3) Education

Q: What is a current example of reliance on religious education? (*liberal theology professors*)

4) Zeal & Legalism

Q: What is a current example of reliance on zeal and/or legalism? (*Jimmy Swaggert and Ted Hagard were zealous but corrupt, Pat Robertson and Jesse Helms are/were legalistic but discompassionate*)

(have someone read vv. 7-11) Paul says what was profit is now loss, in fact everything is rubbish compared to knowing Christ. Paul says righteousness that comes from faith in Christ trumps righteousness gained by observance of the law. Finally, Paul says we can share in Jesus' resurrection by sharing in His suffering and death (either symbolically or actually).

Q: How can we share in His suffering? (*risk persecution, stand up for our faith*) His death? (*baptism, martyrdom, selfless service [death to self], submission*)

CONCLUSION:

If a man of great prestige and position, such as Paul, can only find true fulfillment in submission to Jesus, what about us? Would you rather rely on your accomplishments or Christ's? Is it more important for you to receive glory or Jesus?

OTHER ACTIVITIES:

GROUP NEEDS: _____ SHUT-IN MINISTRY: _____

WHO'S LEADING...

THIS WEEK: WORSHIP: _____ PRAYER: _____

NEXT WEEK: WORSHIP: _____ PRAYER: _____