

J  **Y**

from the inside out

Finally, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord!



“Honey, what are you doing on the floor?”

“I just want to remember. Some people don’t have a bed, mom. I didn’t have a bed, mom. God gave me a bed. And I wanted to remember what it was like to not have one.”

Remembering and Rejoicing go hand in hand:

- Remember how God has worked in your own life
- Remember how God has worked in other's lives (the Bible is a good way to do this)
- Remember God's promises and look to the future

God's Plan

Philippians 3

To write the same things to you is not troublesome to me, and for you it is a safeguard.

What is to follow is a message Paul repeats in all of his letters. It was one of Jesus' reoccurring messages too. Understanding this message will safeguard us. It is NOT the message of 21st Century Cultural Christianity.

You may be shocked.

Warning: Every time Paul taught this message, it got him in big trouble. In Romans 3:8, Paul reports that other Christians are slandering him by reporting that he is teaching that it is okay to “do evil so that good will come.”

April's Disclaimer... Every time I have taught this message, it has caused me problems too. Someone will inevitably get upset with me saying I am pro some kind of sin. 😊 But I am just repeating Paul!

Beware of the **dogs!**

Beware of the **evil workers!**

Beware of **those who mutilate the flesh!**

- Paul is warning them away from “Christians Pharisees” who are teaching the Philippians to follow a list of rules instead of the Holy Spirit.
- The litmus test rule du jour was "circumcision." Other times they fought over other rules (like whether or not to eat meat sacrificed to idols - I Corinthians 8).
- The “Christian Pharisees” are teaching that men must be circumcised or they are not following Jesus.

3 For it is we who are the circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh

Loosely Interpreted:

3 For it is we (not those who are preaching rule following) who are the circumcision (those who are right with God), (and we are right with God because we) worship in the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh (no confidence in a set of rules to make me right with God).

The Pharisees

- Know the right rules and keep them. (Matthew 5:20 & Luke 11:46)
- Know the right theology and believe it. (Luke 11:52)
- Know the right good works to do (including evangelism) and do them. (Matthew 6:2 , Matthew 23:15)

They did all these “good” things, but when Jesus showed up... they didn't even recognize him! Matthew 9:34

Why? Worked to control God and others. Not to be God's people. They had a relationship with a set of rules – not with God

The Christian Pharisee (often called Judaizers)

- They showed up after Paul had founded a church
- They were often Jewish Pharisees who had become Christians (or their converts) who believed Jesus was not sufficient for us to be right with God. They added that we must keep their list of rules.
- They had a long list of rules – circumcision was just one of them. But it was the litmus test of the day.
- Christian Pharisees still exist in the church today

Are we Christian Pharisees?

- What is our litmus test rule du jour?
- What rule do people have to follow or are we certain they are not really followers of Jesus?
- What rule do people have to follow or you can not be in fellowship with them?
- Paul says what rules you follow are not the litmus test of your Christianity.
- Paul says that the litmus test is “are they worshiping in the spirit of God? boasting in Christ Jesus? and having no confidence in the flesh?”

Do we accept the Grace and Love of God for ourselves,
the blood of Christ covering our sins, while we force
others to live under the law?

If anyone could keep a list of rules, it was Paul...

⁴ even though I, too, have reason for confidence in the flesh. If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more:

- ⁵ circumcised on the eighth day,
- a member of the people of Israel,
 - of the tribe of Benjamin,
- a Hebrew born 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 Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as **loss** because of Christ. ⁸ More than that, I regard everything as **loss** because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the **loss** of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him...

- Paul does not recognize his good works as gain or as neutral, but as a negative because they kept him from gaining Christ.
 - In other words, it is easier for a crack addict who knows they need help to recognize her need for Jesus than a Christian Pharisee (church member?) who thinks she is righteous because she keeps a set of rules.
- Righteousness (being right with God) does not come from the law (the rules you follow), but through faith in Christ.
- Paul is saying, “Beware of those who were just like me”

...not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith.

Two kinds of righteousness:

1. My own righteousness –from following the law
2. The righteousness of God – based on faith

Which is real?

Are you saying that there are no rules and we can do whatever we want and still be right with God?
(Remember this is what they accused Paul of!)

I am saying what Paul said in verse 3: “worship in the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh” – then the rules are irrelevant. We may look like we follow them, but we are following Jesus instead.

Following Jesus is like being in love. You can't wait to find out where he is and what he is doing and how you can help him. You cherish every second of getting to know him and being with him. You lose yourself in him and do things for him because you want to – not because there is a rule.

A sure fire way to kill a honeymoon is to make a list of “here is what you have to do for me to be happy with you” rules.

Same thing happens when we love Jesus. We long to please him. It happens from the inside out – not because someone has given us a rule to follow. We let his love overflow from us.

In fact, doesn't what Paul says next sound like this kind of love?

¹⁰ I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead. ¹² Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. ¹³ Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

This is not what 21st Century Cultural Christianity teaches! It generally gives us a list of rules to follow and if we follow them we are good to go.

- This strips us of serving Jesus from a heart of desire and passion.
- It makes us think if we keep the rules, then following Jesus doesn't matter.
- Frankly, other religions have a better list of rules than we do. Circumcision? Really?

¹⁵ Let those of us then who are mature be of the same mind; and if you think differently about anything, this too God will reveal to you.

This speaks to the litmus test du jour. Paul is telling them to be of the same mind – but when they aren't, then be patient for God to reveal the truth.

¹⁶ Only let us hold fast to what we have attained. ¹⁷
Brothers and sisters, join in imitating me, and observe
those who live according to the example you have in
us.

¹⁸ For many live as enemies of the cross of Christ; I have often told you of them, and now I tell you even with tears. ¹⁹ Their end is destruction; their god is the belly; and their glory is in their shame; their minds are set on earthly things. ²⁰ But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. ²¹ He will transform the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself.

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