

Losing Self, Gaining Christ

Philippians 3:1-11

Big Idea: True righteousness isn't found in our achievements or good works—it's filthy rags before God. Paul counted everything as loss to gain Christ. Stop trying to earn salvation. Jesus paid it all. When we lose self-righteousness, we gain Christ. That's the gospel.

Key Takeaways:

1. Joy is found in the Lord, not in circumstances - We can rejoice even in suffering when our hope is anchored in Christ.
2. Self-righteousness is spiritual danger - Trusting in our own goodness, religious performance, or moral achievements keeps us from Christ.
3. There are only two religions: "Do" and "Done" - Either we try to earn salvation (impossible), or we trust in what Christ has already done (the gospel).
4. Knowing Christ is the ultimate goal - Eternal life is not just going to heaven someday; it's knowing Jesus personally now and forever.
5. True transformation requires death to self - We must lose our supposed righteousness to gain Christ's righteousness.

Scriptures:

- ☐ Jeremiah 9:23-24
- ☐ Acts 16
- ☐ 1 Peter 5:5
- ☐ Matthew 19:16-22
- ☐ Isaiah 64:6
- ☐ John 17:3
- ☐ Galatians 2:20
- ☐ Luke 5:12-13

Opening Question:

What's something you worked really hard to achieve or earn in your life? How did you feel when you finally got it?

Discussion Questions:

Read Philippians 3:1-6. What does Paul mean when he warns against "the dogs" and "those who mutilate the flesh"? Who were the Judaizers, and why were they dangerous to the early church?

In verses 5-6, Paul lists his impressive credentials. What modern-day equivalents might people list today to prove they're "good enough" for God?

What does Paul mean in verse 8 when he calls all his achievements "rubbish" or "loss"? Why would he use such strong language?

The sermon asked: "Are you putting your confidence in your flesh?" How would you honestly answer that question? What things are you tempted to rely on instead of Christ alone?

Pastor Tim shared that his life verse is Philippians 3:10: "That I may know Him." On a scale of 1-10, how much does your daily life reflect a genuine desire to know Christ more deeply? What gets in the way?

Read the story of the rich young ruler (Matthew 19:16-22). How does this story illustrate the danger of self-righteousness? What was Jesus really exposing in this man's heart?

The sermon said, "If we fear God, we don't have to fear anything or anyone else." How does fearing (reverently respecting) God free us from other fears, including the fear of being exposed or known?

Paul talks about sharing in Christ's sufferings (v. 10). Why is suffering an important part of knowing Christ? How have you experienced greater intimacy with God during difficult times?

The Grand Canyon illustration showed that no one can "jump" their way to righteousness. How can we help others understand they can't earn their salvation? What would you say to someone who believes they're "good enough"?

The monkey trap illustration showed how pride keeps us trapped. What are you holding onto that prevents you from fully grasping Christ? What would it look like to "let go" this week?

Practical Applications:

1. Each morning, before you do anything else, remind yourself: "My righteousness is in Christ alone, not in what I do today."
2. Set aside 15 minutes for self-examination using Psalm 139:23-24 as a guide. Confess specific areas where you've been trusting in yourself rather than Christ. Share your struggle with a trusted friend or accountability partner.
3. Spend time each day this week meditating on Philippians 3:7-11. Ask God: "What does it mean for me to know You more today?"
4. Think of someone who might be trusting in their own goodness. Pray for an opportunity to share the "done" versus "do" distinction with them. Use your own story of coming to faith as an illustration.

Closing Thought/Prayer:

Thank God that salvation is "done" through Christ, not dependent on your performance. Ask for grace to know Christ more deeply—both the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings. Pray for those you know who are trying to earn their salvation through good works or religious activity.
