Good News Church GA

Midweek Connect

3-3-26

Sermon Series:

"Joy in the Journey"

Paul's letter to the Philippians

SCRIPTURE TEXT: Philippians 3:1-11 The Fellowship of Joy (Knowing Christ)

1 Further, my brothers and sisters, 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. 2 Watch out for those dogs, those evildoers, those mutilators of the flesh (the false circumcision). 3 For it is we who are the circumcision, we who serve God by his Spirit, who boast in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh— 4 though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised 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; 6 as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless. 7 But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.

NEXT WEEK… 8 What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage (rubbish, dung, waste thrown to dogs), that I may gain (win) Christ 9 and 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 on the basis of faith. 10 I want to know Christ— yes, to know the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

Sermon & Book Notes

Sermon (Warner) – *"The Fellowship of Joy (Knowing Christ)"*
"Be Joyful" (Wiersbe) Ch. 8 – *"Learning How to Count"*

1 Further, my brothers and sisters, 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.

- In short, Paul is telling the Philippians that consistent, joyful focus on Christ is their best defense against being led astray or discouraged. Joy is a supernatural weapon of spiritual warfare. *"The joy of the Lord is our strength."* – Nehemiah 8:10

- *"Joy should be the normal state of the Christian. What a happy religion is ours in which it is a duty to be happy!"* – Charles H. Spurgeon

2 Watch out for those dogs, those evildoers, those mutilators of the flesh (the false circumcision).

- **Paul is referring to the "Judaizers" who's counterfeit gospel message was… Jesus + circumcision + continued adherence to Jewish law = salvation**

- The Jews often called the Gentiles "dogs" and referred to themselves as "the Circumcision." Paul turned it around to say that the Judaizers were the dogs and the Gentile Philippians were the true Circumcision.

- The Covenant sign of circumcision has been an outward cutting away of the flesh intended to signify an internal cutting of the heart. God has ALWAYS been more concerned about the heart than the external behaviors (which can be so manipulative and easily deceptive).

- Circumcision is a sign of God's work, not ours. The Good News is about God's work, not ours. The Judaizers (and religion, in general) always want to keep making it about what we do for God, instead of what God has done for us.

- *"In Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority.* ***11 In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed by human hands.*** *Your whole self ruled by the flesh was put off when* ***you were circumcised by Christ,*** *12 having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.* ***13 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ.*** *He forgave us all our sins, 14 having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. 15 And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross."* – Colossians 2:10-15a

3 For it is we who are the circumcision, we who serve God by his Spirit, who boast in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh— 4 though I myself have reasons for such confidence.

- Paul is saying that the Philippians are the true followers of God, because they are walking according to God's Spirit (from the heart) and not according to the flesh (outward behaviors). Those who truly belong to God *"put no confidence in the flesh"* because there is nothing in our flesh that earns any merit from God, only de-merit!

- Paul says that if anyone had a reason to put confidence in the flesh, it's him!

4 If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised 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; 6 as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.

- Paul gives 7 different qualifications that would usually justify his own self-righteousness. Even the number 7 is a sign of perfection. But, when he came to "know Christ," he saw that His best qualifications were nothing more than *"filthy rags"* (see Isaiah 64:6).

- *"The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing."* - Jesus (John 6:63a)

- *"I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord."* – Paul (1 Corinthians 12:3)

- What is "the work" of Christians? *"The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."* – (Jesus) John 6:29

7 But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.

- **ASSETS to DEFICIT -** Not only did Paul consider those things which once were thought of as assets as being completely neutralized, he now saw them as deficit (negative balance), such that they were taking away (negatively, adversely affecting his life).

    - **Life Preserver (inflated) > Life Preserver (deflated) > Anvil!!!**
        - It was as if Paul was saying, *"My self-righteousness boasting kept me from experiencing the glory and beauty of Jesus Christ."*

- **A WORD FROM WIERSBE -** *"Like most religious people today, Paul had enough morality to keep him out of trouble, but not enough righteousness to get him into heaven. It was not bad things that kept Paul away from Jesus—it was good things. He had to lose his religion to find salvation."* - Warren Wiersbe ("Be Joyful," Ch. 8)

8 What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things.

- Not just gains only, but EVERYTHING I consider a loss > for the surpassing worth of KNOWING Christ Jesus MY Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things.

    - Paul not only trusts Christ, he has come "<u>to know Christ</u>" and to value knowing Christ in a surpassingly worthwhile way.
        - Example: Marriage on Day 1 vs. Marriage on Day 18,250 (50 years). You knew your spouse on Day 1 and also on Day 18,250, but after 50 years, that "knowing" is a whole heck of A LOT deeper!

- Paul has, literally, lost all things, and in losing all things, he has discovered how immensely beautiful and magnificent knowing Christ is and how that is all that truly matters... KNOWING CHRIST.

- **Knowing about Christ is not the same as knowing Christ.**
  - Knowing About - history, doctrine, theology, example, teachings, etc.
  - Knowing – heart, voice, presence, thoughts, hurts, wounds, joys

- **How do we know Christ better? How do we know anyone better?**
  - Spend time. Have conversation. Ask questions. Listen. Experience life with. Have fun with. Laugh with. Cry with. Invite Him into your home. Go to his. Spend time with His family. Make knowing Christ a priority in your life.

Discussion Questions

1. What jumps out at you from the scripture text, book reading, or sermon notes?

2. What are some of the things (tangible and intangible) that may snare us and cause us to lose our Christian joy?

3. What is the basic difference between "works righteousness" and "faith righteousness?"

4. Why does the true Christian not put confidence in the flesh?

5. What is the only "good work" that takes the sinner to heaven?

6. Missionary, Jim Elliot, said, "He is no fool to give up what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose." What does that mean to you?

7. Why is the first step to salvation to admit that you need to be saved?

8. Why can't "things" make us truly happy.

9. What has been helpful to you in "knowing Christ" better?

10. What's your primary take away from this discussion?