



PHILIPPIANS THE SECRET TO JOY

“Learning How to Count”

Philippians 3:1-11

February 19, 2012 PM Service

1. The Qualities That Count --*True Believers*

- A. They rejoice in the Lord
- B. They exercise discernment
- C. They worship in spirit
- D. They glory in Christ Jesus
- E. They put no confidence in the flesh

2. The Religious Credentials That Do Not Count

- A. Salvation by Ritual
- B. Salvation by Race
- C. Salvation by Rank
- D. Salvation by Religion
- E. Salvation by Tradition
- F. Salvation by Sincerity
- G. Salvation by Legalistic Righteousness

3. Counting Up the Benefits of Knowing Christ

- A. Knowledge
- B. Righteousness
- C. Power
- D. Fellowship
- E. Glory

Our Response:

1. Have you come to the place where you understand that without His deliverance in your life you are doomed? That no matter what your religious credentials may be; you cannot get to heaven on your own? You can make that decision & be delivered today from your sin and self. You can become a follower by accepting this free gift of God; if you will by faith believe, and surrender your heart and life to Him! **Admit** to God you are a sinner, **Ask** for His forgiveness, **Believe** Jesus is God's Son, **Confess** Him as Savior & **Commit** Your Life to Him as Lord for the rest of your life & being His fully devoted follower!
2. Have you asked Christ into you heart, but never made it public? Have you been baptized – identified with Christ & His church through Baptism? If not, you can make that decision today & be obedient & follow through & become a part of the Bethsalem Family.
3. Are you a member of a Body of Believers – a Church Home? Without one a Christian is an orphan. Don't just attend – step over the line today and join this family! We need you and you need us.
4. It's a good thing to evaluate our salvation and walk with Christ – so may we do that tonight – what is the most important thing in our lives tonight?
5. Are you counting the way God does – do you see everything in your life as a loss in comparison to knowing Jesus every day? Name something that you struggle with as counting loss in comparison to knowing Him. In what way does that need to change? Write it down and make the necessary change so that nothing stands in the way of knowing Christ intimately each and every day.
6. Are you experiencing those benefits of truly knowing Christ? Are you growing in knowledge, in right living, in the power of Christ, and His fellowship and glory?

PHILIPPIANS: The Secret to Joy

“Learning How to Count”

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This chapter’s entire theme could be narrowed down to Paul’s view of what really matters most!

It is a matter of counting, which in the Greek meant to evaluate or to assess.

Very few people ever really sit down and weigh seriously their lives and the values and priorities that control their decisions and directions.

Yet, Scripture encourages us to make certain that we test ourselves, take an inward inspection of our lives and see where we are.

“Test yourselves to make sure you are solid in the faith. Don't drift along taking everything for granted. Give yourselves regular checkups. You need firsthand evidence, not mere hearsay, that Jesus Christ is in you. Test it out. If you fail the test, do something about it. I hope the test won't show that we have failed.” 2 Corinthians 13:5-6 **THE MESSAGE**

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.

One day Saul of Tarsus, the rabbi met Jesus Christ, the Son of God and on that day, his life was changed.

Let’s look at what really counts, and what really counted in Paul’s life.

1. The Qualities That Count --*True Believers*

A. They rejoice in the Lord

They have that indestructibility of Christian joy and it is so because it is in the Lord. Its basis is that the Christian lives forever in the presence of Jesus Christ. He can lose all things, and he can lose all people, but he can never lose Christ. That is joy!

B. They exercise discernment

It meant to beware of and watch for certain false teachers, and false things that were being said about the gospel. Something we even need to exercise today.

Paul describes them in three ways

1. **Dogs** It was not a good thing as it might be today. Dogs were hated and were vicious scavengers. The idea is that were trouble makers and carriers of dangerous infections.
2. **Evil Workers** He plays on words, the Jews thinking they were righteous because they taught faith plus good works equals salvation. Not so! Our flesh really never can do any good works, righteousness because our flesh is evil!
3. **Mutilators** Referring to circumcision that it is not required for salvation as the Jews said it was. They were saying you had to become a Jew then a Christian not so. It was no more than mutilation because it had nothing to do with salvation. The Holy Spirit circumcised the heart, that was what mattered most, the inside not the outside.

C. They worship in spirit

We will talk more about worship starting possibly in the month of May on Sunday nights, but this is an important concept which Jesus shared with the woman at the well about in John 4.

Worship is much more internal than external. It is based on the Spirit's work in our lives and also that it is done in truth. No hypocrisy, it was the real thing.

It is true worship and ultimately that means a lifestyle of worship , not just a Sunday thing.

D. They glory in Christ Jesus

We don't boast in all that we have done, or what we have accomplished or great things our families did or our church did, etc. Instead as Paul stated, if we are going to boast I will only boast in the cross of Christ. Paul understood as should we that we have really nothing to boast about, it is only by His grace that we are what we are.

E. They put no confidence in the flesh

There is confidence in anything except Jesus. True believers

recognize and realize that the flesh is corrupt and can do nothing good!! It is not the outside that is most important to God, it what He is doing on the inside of our hearts.

2. The Religious Credentials That Do Not Count

Religious Credits that do not impress God

A. Salvation by Ritual

There was no ritual that could save him, he was circumcised the eighth day as a proper Jew would be, yet he realized in the eyes of God this simply did not matter. The focus was the outside and not the heart.

B. Salvation by Race

He was of the race of God's chosen people, by birth he was a Jew descended from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He could have claimed this right, as many Jews tried to do and even do today.

C. Salvation by Rank

He was born of the tribe of Benjamin, one only two tribes who had remained true to the covenant and Jerusalem worship. He also knew what tribe he was from, when most did not any longer. Benjamin seemingly was one of the more noble tribes because of its lineage.

D. Salvation by Tradition

He was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, he had not given in and lost his heritage when it would have been easy to do so. Instead, he left Tarsus and went to Jerusalem to study with Gamaliel.

E. Salvation by Religion

He was a Pharisee, the elite of the elite, influential and highly respected group of men who carefully lived to know, guard and obey the Law. The focus on the outside and not the heart!

F. Salvation by Sincerity

He had persecuted the church with great zeal and fervor. He was zealous for what he thought God wanted and hated Christians as a result. He realized how wrong he was on that road to Damascus. He had gone to the extreme with his beliefs, to the point of arresting and even having Christians killed!

We can be sincere, and be sincerely wrong!!!

G. Salvation by Legalistic Righteousness

He lived up to the standards of the as blameless as possible, if someone had investigated his life, they would have found it so. Many of us probably would not do so well. By all outward appearances he was a model Jew walking blamelessly in the sight of God. He thought he was righteousness until he changed the measuring stick, he looked at Jesus Christ and compared himself and he fell way short!

Many of us are using the wrong measuring stick, well compared to so and so, I'm doing really good!

Notice the amazing statement that is made here, the theme of the chapter here and yet another secret of joy filled living, all these 7 things he just listed, (and they were a big deal, hard for us to see—be like us putting up my spiritual resume' today) were absolutely nothing, trash, good for nothing in view of knowing Christ. Not knowing stuff about Him, not just reading about Him and hearing about Him, but having that personal and intimate relationship with Him daily!

ILLUS: Win/Loss Column or Gains/Losses

All those things that were in the gain column were now in the lost column, and those things he had imagined would give him joy and salvation now were replaced by 5 incredible benefits!

3. Counting Up the Incredible Benefits of Knowing Christ

A. Knowledge

It is a head knowledge, understanding and knowing who He is and all that He has done on our behalf. But as we have said only that, and that is certainly important, but an experiential knowledge, I have that relationship with Him because of experience. It is that love and intimacy of a relationship that forms a close bond where we are able to call Him Lord.

B. Righteousness

Right standing with God and acceptance by Him

We understand that there is a transfer that takes places, we lost our own self-righteousness and gained Christ's righteousness! What a

deal. It wasn't that he just spoke up for us, or co-signed with us, but we received all of Him, no co-signing was possible or needed.

ILLUS: Dad co-signing car, versus transferring the money into my account

When God looks at us, those of us who have trusted Christ as our personal Lord and Savior, He sees Christ's righteousness!

C. Power

We will touch on this idea on Easter Sunday, but the idea is that the same amazing power that raised Christ from the dead is available for you and me!

D. Fellowship

This seems a little odd to those of us who are not walking with Lord, but Paul considered this a privilege, because he knew what it brought. When we suffer for the Lord's sake, it is in those times that we grow ever closer to Him. It drives us to Him, at least it should!

E. Glory

The resurrection, or new bodies which we will receive on that day when Christ returns. He is not expressing doubt, but rather humility on Paul's part. The NASB translates it in order that, which probably better states the idea.

Our ultimate joy, face to face intimacy with the Savior, the conquering of death hell, and the grave and heaven!

OUR RESPONSE:

1. Let's take an assessment of our spiritual lives this morning as Paul urged us to do. Do have that joy of the Lord in your heart? Are you daily exercising discernment in your daily walk? Do you worship in spirit and truth? Are you a true worship of Christ? Are you boasting only in Christ and not putting any confidence in the flesh today? Are these marks found upon your life and mine?
2. What are you claiming or counting as your way to heaven. What does your ticket say? If you find any of the seven things we listed earlier, it just simply will not cut it. Some of you though possibly are claiming though. Well, my family were Christians or good people, or

we went to church, or lived in the right place, or we were good moral people. If all these things were good enough, then Christ would not have had to come and die for our sins.

3. Are you willing to count as loss all thing in the view of knowing Christ personally and intimately?
4. Are you experiencing the knowledge of Him in your life? HIS righteousness, His power, His fellowship and His glory? If not why not today?
5. Why not quit trusting in yourself and start trusting in Him alone for your salvation?
6. If you are not a part of the body of Christ, why not make that a reality today. We need you and you need us, plus it is simply being obedient to what Christ command us to do, love the bride!