

Philippians Bible Study - Lesson 8 - **Philippians 3:1-21**

November 3, 2024

Philippians 3:1-6

1. Paul says “Finally, my brothers...,” but goes on for two more chapters. However, both chapters continue to speak towards his key themes: staying firm in the true gospel, united as one Church.
2. In 3:2-3, Paul warns the Philippians against following the Judaizers - those who said you needed to follow Jewish laws to live faithfully as a Christian.
 - a. Where the Judaizers would say you had to “mutilate the flesh” (3:2), they would tell Christian converts that they had to be circumcised. But Paul reminds us that “we are the circumcision... and put no confidence in the flesh” (3:3)
 - b. Are there any similar stumbling blocks that we put in the way of new believers?
 - c. Are all traditions bad? Or is it about where we put our trust?
3. In 3:4-6, we see that Paul was one of the most upstanding Jewish leaders in following the law. If he could not lean on the confidence of following the law in his flesh, then no one can!

Philippians 3:7-11

4. “If people want to draw good works into the article on justification... and thereby want to merit God’s grace and become saved, then... works are not only loss and rubbish for such people but even harmful. However, the fault lies not with the good works themselves, but rather with the false trust that is placed in such works in opposition to the express Word of God.”¹
 - a. This passage of Philippians is used in the Formula of Concord to talk both about **Good Works** and **Righteousness**. Our confidence is in Jesus Christ alone, by faith alone.

Philippians 3:12-16

5. As those who are “mature” in the faith, and trust that while we are not perfect, we belong to Christ who was perfect in our place.
 - a. What is the prize that we race for (3:14)? When do we win/receive the prize?

Philippians 3:17-21

6. The Augsburg Confession uses Philippians 3:20 (“Our citizenship is in heaven”), along with others, to show why the church and civil government have different authority.²
 - a. Matt. 22:15-21, “Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s.”
7. In the explanation of Luther’s Small Catechism, Phil. 3:20 is used to help answer the question of “*What happens to me as a Christian when I die?*” → “When I die, the God-given unity of my body and spirit will be broken. I will immediately be in the presence of Christ, in heaven, but my body will remain in the grave until the resurrection.”³
 - a. Does this sound/feel different than what you thought before?

¹ FC SD IV 37.

² AC XXVIII 16.

³ LSC 2017, question 223.

God bless.

-Pastor Brubaker