

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

PHILIPPIANS 3:7-9 • TV214B

A television broadcast sermon delivered
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 26TH, 2011

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Transcribed, edited and published
DECEMBER 7TH, 2011

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Zebulon Baptist Church
6088 Zebulon Highway
Pikeville, KY 41501

Philippians 3:7-9

“Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.”

I would be pleased if you would take your Bible and open it to the Book of Philippians. I am going to be speaking today from the 3rd chapter. I will be using as a text, **verse 8 and 9**. I want to read and refer to several verses that precede our text.

Some of you write to me and tell me that you have groups that sit in the living room and listen to this telecast and there are others who play this tape later on. However you are listening, if you will open your Bible to **Philippians 3**, I am going to speak from these verses, the latter part of **verse 8** and all of **verse 9**.

This is what it says; *“That I may win Christ and be found in Him not having my own righteousness which is of the law but that which is through the faith of Christ.”* Watch

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this statement here; “*the righteous which is of God by faith.*” That is what we want to talk about in the message, the righteousness of God.

Paul had a great love for this church at Philippi. There were several reasons:

First of all: He was God’s instrument to plant the Gospel there.

He was the one they heard. He was the first preacher. He was their father in the faith. They heard Paul preach and God redeemed them. God revealed Christ to them.

Secondly: He was now a prisoner in Rome when he wrote this epistle. This church had sent their pastor down there to minister to Paul. He got sick while he was there and stayed a good while, as he ministered to Paul.

Paul sent this epistle back to the church at Philippi. He loved these people. He was their first preacher. He had a special place in his heart for these folks.

Thirdly: Another reason for this epistle was that the apostle was burdened for this church.

He was concerned about them. He was troubled about them. The reason was because of the false preachers and false teachers. False teachers were everywhere (and have been and are).

Peter wrote to the church and said that there were false prophets among the Israelites in the wilderness as there are false preachers in the early church and in the churches now. The woods are full of false preachers and false teachers, covetous preachers and covetous teachers.

Paul knew that, they were everywhere. His great concern was the fact that these false teachers and false preachers had crept into this church at Philippi. They had crept in, they had secretly brought themselves into this church.

Paul was concerned about it. He was concerned about these false teachers and false preachers and what they were doing to these people.

He said in *verse 1*; “*to write the same things to you is not tiresome to me, (I rejoice in the Gospel; I love the Gospel) and it is profitable for you.*” It will keep you from error of spirit and doctrine. It will keep you from presumption. It will keep you from the error of these false teachers.

Paul said, “I am going to say the things that I have said to you before. I am going to say the same things that I said to the church at Galatia and the church at Ephesus and the church at Corinth.

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That is not tiresome to me, wearisome at all or grievous to write the same things. And for you it is profitable.”

In **verse 2**, he calls these false preachers that had crept into the church and were troubling the people and denying the sufficiency of Christ; he called them “*dogs*.” He said, “*Beware of these dogs*.”

Do you see it there, “*evil workers*, (flesh merchants?); *Beware of the concision* (people who put an emphasis on the flesh).”

Those are strong words now, but they are not too strong for men who make merchandise of people’s souls. It is not too strong to call them “*dogs*.” That was the Jewish word for Gentile heathens and pagans; they called the “*dogs*,” gentile dogs. Paul calls these false preachers and false teachers “*dogs*.” He said, “That is what they are, dogs.”

He said, not only that but they are “*evil workers*,” workers of iniquity. Not only that, they are flesh merchants. They get gain by exploiting simple people. They get personal gain, personal fame and personal possessions by exploiting poor, simple, people and making merchandise out of men’s souls.

You are not a person to them, but a number. You are a statistic, not an individual. They are not concerned about your heart, your welfare, and your relationship with God. They are concerned about their things. They will let you know if you will listen carefully enough.

These false preachers were denying and do deny the sufficiency of Christ, His person and His work. What they try to do is preach a Jesus. They preach a Christ and they preach a cross but they add something to be done by you and me and something to be done by them.

They say, “God can and He will if you let Him. God wants to save you if you will let Him. God will meet you half way if you will meet Him. If you take the first step God will do this. If you give your heart to Jesus He will come into it.”

“If, if, if.” They deny the sufficiency and the efficacy of Jesus Christ’s person and work. They just can’t say, “*Christ is all and is in all*,” but He is. “*Christ is all and in all and you are complete in Him*.” Christ is made unto us all the wisdom we need, all the righteousness we need, all the redemption we need and all the sanctification we need.

These false preachers say, “You must be circumcised to be saved;” Christ is not enough. They will tell you that you must be baptized to be saved, that Christ is not enough. “You must keep the Law; you must keep the Sabbath Day.” One day out of seven you must not walk to the store or cook a bowl of beans in order to be saved.

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“You must tithes. You have to send us 10 % of what you have and God will bless you.” There isn’t a word of truth in it. “You must keep the Law. You must adopt our denominational peculiarities. You must adopt our traditions and our customs.”

They will also say, “You must wear your sleeves so long and your hair so long. You must not wear earrings and no makeup. You must do these things if you want to be saved.”

These are false prophets and Paul was warning the people about them. He said, “They are dogs. They are evil workers and they are flesh merchants and deal in the flesh.” That is their area, it is flesh and nothing else but flesh.

Let me tell you something; “*Christ is all.*” Christ is sufficient. We are redeemed by Christ plus nothing, minus nothing. Nothing of human works and nothing of human merit and nothing of human righteousness, and nothing of human worth is needed to justify a sinner’s soul.

“*In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sin.*” Paul said, “I am going to keep saying and I want you to listen to me, it is not tiresome to me. It is profitable to you and I want you to be aware of these dogs. I want you to be aware of these evil workers. I want you to be aware of these flesh merchants who deny the sufficiency of Christ.”

It is not Christ plus anything; it is Christ that saves. We are redeemed not with corruptible things such as silver and gold but with the precious blood of Christ. “*There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.*” *Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, Jesus Christ our Lord.*” It is plus nothing, minus nothing.

In **verse 3** Paul declares, these flesh merchants, these circumcisers, these baptizers, I want to tell you something, “*we are the true circumcision;* (we are the true Israel; we are the true people of God),” characterized by three things:

Do you see **verse 3**? He just talked about these false teachers. He said, “They are dogs; they are evil workers; they are flesh merchants. We are the true Israel; we are the true circumcision who worship God in the spirit.”

We don’t worship God by running up and down the aisle by holding hands and building monumental cathedrals and temples. We don’t put a stained-glass window in and steeple that point to the sky and have a cross that is higher than anyone else’s.

We don’t have processions and uniforms. Let me tell you something; a man who has to put on a uniform to prove his holiness has no holiness at all. That uniform of religion will not cover a black evil heart, nor will anything else will cover a sinful heart.

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First of all: God's people are known by their love for one another.

They are known by the grace in their heart, by their love for Christ. They worship God in spirit, not in the flesh, not in the form of religion, not in the rituals and ceremonies, and holy days or processions.

That is not how they worship God. It is not by counting beads and burning candles and bowing before altars and idols. They worship God in spirit. I am telling you the truth; that is what the Scripture says. That is the first mark of a true believer, true circumcision; they worship God in the spirit.

Secondly: They "*rejoice in Jesus Christ.*"

They don't rejoice in water. They don't rejoice in works. They don't rejoice in law and they don't rejoice in liturgy. They don't rejoice in rituals and they don't rejoice in reformation. They rejoice in Jesus Christ alone.

He is their foundation. He is their refuge. He is their confidence and He is their hope and life. Jesus Christ is plus nothing, minus nothing.

Thirdly: "*We have no confidence in the flesh,*" yours, mine, or anyone else's.

Our confidence is not based upon man's flesh. We are all sinners saved by God's grace. We will never be anything else but a sinner saved by grace until God kills us. We will never be anything else until God takes us to glory and we put this flesh in the ground and put dirt on it and plant a few flowers over it and tell it good by.

That's when we will be without sin. That is so. "*We are the true circumcision.*" He said, "Don't pay any attention to these evil workers, these dogs; these flesh merchants, and these covetous, false, prophets."

He said, "*We are the true Israel who worship God in spirit, who rejoice in Jesus Christ and who have (absolutely) no confidence in this flesh. For in the flesh dwelleth no good thing. In the flesh no man can please God.*"

In **verse 4**, he turns the tables on them. Paul says to these false teachers, "If you want to talk about your religious heritage, (*if any man thinks he has whereof to glory in the flesh*), if you want to talk about your religious heritage, I will talk to you."

He says, "If you want to talk about your denomination heritage, your religious accomplishments, your high office, if you want to talk about your zeal, if you want to boast in what you have done for God, I have got more to boast in and about and of in all of you put together."

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That is what it says here, “*If any man.*” Pick out your champion. Bring up your Goliath upon the hill. “*If any man thinks he hath whereof to glory in this flesh, I have more.*”

Listen to him; he said, “*On the eighth day I was circumcised and of the stock (tribe) of Benjamin.*” There were not many Benjamin’s out there. It was a small tribe, the little bunch from which Paul came. Benjamin is called the “beloved of God.”

“That’s my heritage,” he said. “What’s your tribe? Is it Reuben, Gad? What’s your tribe? He said, “Mine is Benjamin.”

“Alright,” he said; I will give you one better; “*I am Hebrew of Hebrews.* I am not a half-breed. My momma was a Hebrew and my daddy was a Hebrew.” There are not many of those out there.

Then he said, “I was a Pharisee.” You might say that you are a preacher. Are you a pastor or a deacon? Maybe you are a chairman of the board. Paul said, “I was a Pharisee.” That is as high as you can go unless they make you a high priest. That is as high as you can go in Judaism.

“I was a Pharisee of Pharisees. More than that, I was zealous; I destroyed my enemies in religion; I put them to death. Anyone that was an enemy of Judaism, I put him to death. That’s my zeal. I thought I was doing God a favor.”

Not only that, but in regard to the law, the keeping of the law and the letter of the law, I was blameless and I could charge any man, any witness to step forward and accuse me of any violation of your laws, your Ten Commandments and all the rest of them, the Levitical law or the laws governing the tabernacle.

If Paul had lived today, if he was alive today, I will tell you this; he would be among the great religionists. He would be among the well known and he would be the most well known. He would be the leader of religion, morality, the law, your program and your denomination.

They would make him the president because he has all the credentials except one; he didn’t know God. He didn’t know Christ and he didn’t have the grace of God in his heart. That is what’s wrong with most religionists today; they have everything but grace.

They talk about it. They have everything but Christ. They talk about Him. Paul said, “You think you have something to boast of, you have something to brag about, I more.” He read his pedigree loud and clear.

What was wrong and what’s wrong today is that he thought this was his title to heaven. He really thought this was his title to heaven, the fact that he was of the tribe of Benjamin, the fact that he was a Hebrew, a Pharisee, a moralist, and a religionist. He held on to the fact that he kept the law and had done all of these things in God’s name.

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That is what they are going to say at the Judgment, Christ said, they are going to say, “*Lord; we prophesied in your name and in your name we cast out devils and in your name we did many wonderful works.*” The Lord said, “*I will profess unto them; I never knew you; depart from me.*”

Then Paul continues by saying “I thought that acceptance with God rested in these things.” That is what I thought. How many think it today? They think it because that is all they are hearing preached.

They say, “Do this and do that and God will do something. Come this far and God will come the rest of the way.” That is all that they are hearing preached.

Paul said, “I learned that all these things, all of my heritage, all of my morality, all of my reformation, all of my zeal, all of my religious enthusiasm, that all of it was worthless. All of my form and ceremony was worthless in itself, worthless.”

Why? It was worthless because it could not meet the righteousness that God demanded. It could not meet the requirements that God demanded. It could not meet the holiness of God’s law. It could not meet the strictness of God’s justice.

Therefore, Paul said; “I count these things but total loss. I burned them, I bury them. I cast them out of sight. I count them but loss. I take everything that I was and everything that I did and everything that I had and accomplished in the name of religion and I cast it on the heap and I burnt it. It is a loss; it is eradicated from my very thinking.”

Not only that, “but I count it as so much garbage.” Boy! That would be hard for some of us to say. Suppose someone comes in and says, “Are you saved?” He says, “I’ve been serving the Lord for 40 years.” That is garbage!

Some might say, “I have been going to Sunday school every since I was on the cradle roll and I have a list of pins, a roll of pins for being there every Sunday.” It is garbage!

“Well, I led the choir.” It is garbage! “But, I taught Sunday school.” It is garbage! “But, I did this, that, and the other.” That’s garbage! That is what Paul says, “*It is dung, (rubbish). I count it but dung (rubbish) that I may win Christ and be found in Him.*”

My friends, this is from the prince of preachers. This is from the prince of prophets. This is from the man that God called in a supernatural, unusual, as one born out of due time on the road to Damascus. God said, “I have ordained you; I have commissioned you; I have separated you from your mother’s womb to be a prophet to the Gentiles. Go and speak in my name.”

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That is what he said. He took his entire religious heritage and all of his religious deeds and all of his religious works, and all of his religious zeal and piled it in one pile. He said, “Take it away, it is but garbage that *I may win Christ and be found in Him.*”

Watch this; let me point out something here: “*I count all of these things but loss (garbage and rubbish) for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord.*”

What’s this knowledge, “*this excellency of knowledge?*” What’s this excellency of knowledge of Christ Jesus? That is a pretty good question; what is this excellency of knowledge of Christ Jesus?

Well, all knowledge of Christ is not excellent, not even good. You say, “What?” That’s right; it is not excellent. The demons have some knowledge of Christ that is not excellent. That’s right! The demons believe in one God. That is what James said, “You believe in one God, you do well; the devil believes in one God.” So, that knowledge is not excellent.

Then, the demons said when Christ appeared to them in the body of that demoniac, “*we know who you are; you are the Holy one of Israel.*” That knowledge is not excellent.

Judas had some knowledge of Christ didn’t he? He was with Him for 3 ½ years. He ate with Him, talked with Him, walked with Him and heard Him. You might have said, “Which one is Jesus Christ?”

He told them; he kissed Him on the cheek. They didn’t know which one was Christ. He did. He had some knowledge, but it wasn’t an excellent knowledge, the one that Paul is talking about here.

Nicodemus had some knowledge of Christ. “*We know, he said, that you are a teacher come from God.*”

The professors of religion in **2nd Peter 2** had some knowledge, because Peter said; “*it would have been better if they had never known the Gospel than to have known it and left it.*”

What is this knowledge? Let me show you: He said, “*I count these things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.*” That knowledge is right there in that name, Christ Jesus my Lord.

All that you need to know about Him is right there in His name. What does the word Christ mean? Christ means, anointed, ordained, Messiah, God in human flesh. That is what the word Christ means. That is what our Lord asked him; “*what think you of Christ; whose Son is He?*”

The Samaritan woman says, “*When Christ is come, He will tell us all things.*”

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That crowd that went out to hear John the Baptist said, “*Are you the Christ?*” That crowd asked Jesus the Lord of Nazareth, “*Are you the Christ?*” They knew what the Christ is, the Christ is the Messiah. The Christ is the anointed one. The Christ is the Redeemer; that is who He is.

The Christ is the Redeemer; that is who He is. This knowledge of Christ is to know Him as the Christ. “*Whom do you say that I am?*” He said this to the apostle and they said, “*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*”

Well, take the second name there, Jesus. The angel appeared to Joseph and said, “*Thou shalt call His name Jesus.*” That Son born of Mary, that supernaturally conceived virgin-born, miracle-child, is Jesus.

What does the name Jesus mean? It means the same as the Old Testament name Joshua, which means God my Saviour, or Jehovah my Saviour. “*Thou shalt call His name Jesus; He shall save His people from their sins.*”

He shall die. He shall be buried and He shall rise again, My Lord, Christ Jesus my Lord. He is Sovereign, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. He is that excellent name, “*the name which is above every name.*”

“*The Father hath exalted Him and given Him a name above every name.*” He said, “*This same Jesus whom you crucified, God hath made both Lord and Christ.*” That is all you need to know. That is the “*excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.*”

Christ is who He is; that is who He is; He is the Christ. He is the Son of God. Jesus (Saviour) is what He did, He saved His people from their sin. He died; He’s the Saviour, God my Saviour. He is Joshua; He is the Deliverer. That is why He did it that “*God may be just and the justifier.*”

Where is He now? He is my Lord. “*God hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue shall confess that he is Lord.*” That He is what? LORD!

It is not that He is the “sweet, little, Jesus boy.” No; you missed it. He is not the man upstairs; you have missed it too. You might say, “Well, the good Lord.” No sir; you need to say, “*He is Lord to the glory of God the Father.*” That is who He is. That is the “*excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord.*”

Whatever the rest of the world does it doesn’t make any difference. He is my Lord. I don’t know what the rest of you are going to do, Joshua said, “*but for me and my house, we are going to serve the Lord.*”

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That is who He is. Do you have that knowledge? Is your knowledge the knowledge of demons? We believe that there is only one God and always have. Is your knowledge the knowledge of Judas? “I know who He is, I will kiss Him on the cheek.”

Or maybe you are like Nicodemus. They told him, “We know that you are bound to be from God, because no one could raise the dead but a fellow from God.” No, that excellency is the *“excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.”*

What is that second statement? The Scripture says, *“That I may win Christ and be found in Him.”* When I am found, I want to be found in Him. That is where I want to be found.

I don’t want to be found in the Baptist church, heaven help us. I don’t want to be found in the waters as deep as you can make them. I don’t want to be found wrestling with the law on Sinai.

I don’t want to be found in the pre-millennial or post-millennial or anyone else’s millennial camp. “I want to be found in Him.” That’s what Paul said.

What is it to be found in Christ? What is it that led this man, this religious man to give up all of his religious traditions, all of his material possessions and all of his physical comforts? What led this man to give up all of his earthly relationships and *“count them but dung (or rubbish) that he may win Christ and be found in Him?”*

What is it to be found in Christ? Watch it! It is to be found in Him as He is the Surety of that Covenant. God gave His Son a people. You can write that down; that is what the Scripture says.

Christ said, “I came down to do my Father’s will and this is the will of Him that sent me that of all of which the Father hath given me I will lose nothing but raise it up again at the last day.”

He is the Surety of an eternal Covenant. He is the chief Shepherd of a blessed Covenant. His blood is the blood of the Covenant. I want to be found in that Covenant in Christ. I want to be found in Him my representative.

I was in another fellow who represented me whose name was Adam. In Adam I died. In Christ I was made alive. By one man’s disobedience, I became a sinner. By another man’s obedience I became righteous.

I want to be found in Him as the representative who walked this earth in human flesh representing somebody, in Him.

I want to be found in Him on the tree. *“I am crucified with Christ. God forbid that I should glory save in the cross by whom the world is crucified unto me and I am crucified to the world.”* I died when Christ died.

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In Him, I want to be in Him in the resurrection. I want to be in Him in the ascension. I want to be in Him seated at the right hand of the Father.

I want to be in Him, the True Vine; Christ is the life and I am the branch. I want to be in Him, the head of the Church. I want to be in Him, the chief Shepherd. I want to be found in Him as my righteousness, the Lord our righteousness, and I want to be found in Him at the Judgment.

I don't want to stand there alone. Somebody says; "You have to stand in Judgment by yourself." I beg your pardon; if I am in Christ I stand there in Him and there is "*therefore no condemnation (judgment) to them who are in Christ.*"

"I want to be found in Him not having my own righteousness." What does that mean? Well; "*There is none righteous, no not one. There is none that doeth righteousness. All of our righteousness's are filthy rags.*"

What does this mean? There are some people who think they are righteous. They are going about to establish their own righteousness. They have a negative righteousness. They will say, "I never did do that."

They have a religious righteousness; they will say, "I fast and tithe." They have a moral righteousness by saying, "I keep the law." They have a comparative righteousness; they say, "I'm not as bad as old Joe, Bill, or Bob."

This righteousness we are talking about here is the righteousness of God. Read it again in **verse 9**: "*That righteousness which is of God.*" What does that mean? It means that God planned it, God purposed it and it is His righteousness.

It is that righteousness that He purposed, that He planned. It is that righteousness that meets His demands. It is that righteousness which is purchased by His Son. The Lord Jesus in His active obedience, in His passive obedience fulfilled all righteous for those He represented.

His righteousness is provided by Holy Spirit. This righteousness is promised by the Father, purchased by the Son and is provided and applied by God's Spirit. I want to be found in Him!