

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH IS OF GOD

PHILIPPIANS 3:8-9 • TV171B

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Philippians 3:8-9

“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 this morning from **Philippians the 3rd chapter**. I will be using as a text **verses 8 and 9**.

I want to read and refer to several verses that precede our text. Turn in your Bible, if you will; some of you I know write to me and tell me that you have groups that sit in the living room and listen to this telecast and others who play the 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; (now watch this statement here), the

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righteousness which is of God by faith.” Now, that is what we want to talk about in the message, is the righteousness of God.

Now Paul had a great love for this church at Philippi, a great love; there were several reasons:

First of all: He was God’s instrument to plant the Gospel here. He was the one they heard and 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 him. He got sick while he was there and stayed a good while but 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.

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 he was troubled is because there were false preachers and false teachers among them.

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 them, false preachers and false teachers and covetous preachers and teachers.

Paul knew that; they were everywhere. But, 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.

Now, he said in **verse 1**: “*To write the same things to you is not grievous* (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.”

“So, 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; that is not tiresome to me, that is not wearisome at all and grievous to write the same things, and for you it is safe and 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?

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They are “*evil workers, (flesh merchants), who are the concision*” that is 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’s not too strong to call them “*dogs,*” and that was the Jewish word for Gentile heathens and pagans. They call them “*dogs, gentile dogs.*” Paul calls these false preachers and false teachers “*dogs.*”

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

You are not a person to them, you are a number, and you are a statistic. You are not an individual they are concerned about; (your heart and your welfare and your relationship with God); they are concerned about their own things and they will let you know that if you 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; God can and He will, if you let him.

They say, “*God wants to save you if you will let Him. God will meet you half way if you will meet Him. If you will take the first step, God will do this. If you will 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 in all,*” but He is! “*Christ is all and in all and you are complete in him*” “*But of him are you in Christ Jesus who of God he is made unto us all the wisdom (all we need), righteousness (all we need), redemption (all we need) and sanctification (all we need).*”

But these false preachers say, “*you must be circumcised to be saved;*” Christ is not enough. They say, “*You must be baptized; 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.*”

“*You must tithe; you have to send us 10% of what you have; if you do, God will bless you.*” There is no word of truth in it. “*You must keep the law; you must adopt our denominational peculiarities. You must adopt our traditions and our customs. You must wear your sleeves so long and your hair so long and no earrings and no makeup.*”

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“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.”* They 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 and 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, even the forgiveness of sin.” Paul said, “I am going to keep saying it. I want you to listen to me; it is not tiresome to me; it is profitable to you and I want you to *beware of these dogs; I want you to beware of these evil workers.*”

I want you to beware of these flesh merchants who deny the sufficiency of Christ. It is not Christ plus anything; it is Christ that saves. *“We are not redeemed with corruptible things such as silver and gold but with the precious blood of Christ.”*

“There’s 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,” plus nothing, minus nothing, Christ alone.

Then, in **verse 3**, he declares this: These flesh merchants, these circumcisers, these baptizers, he said; *“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, and they are flesh merchants. We are the true Israel; we are the true circumcision, (who what), who worship God in the spirit.”*

We don’t worship God by running up and down an aisle holding candles and holding hands and building monumental cathedrals and temples and putting a stained-glass windows in and steeples that point to the sky and have a cross that is higher than anybody else’s, and have processions and uniforms.

Let me tell you something, a man that 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 cover a sinful heart.

God’s people are known by their love for one another, 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, and not in the processions. That is not how they worship God, not by counting beads, burning candles, and bowing before altars and idols.

First of all: They worship God in spirit and tell 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.

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

He is their foundation. He is their refuge; He is their confidence; He is their hope and He is their life. It is Jesus Christ, plus nothing, minus nothing. "*We have, (furthermore), no confidence in the flesh,*" yours, mine, or anybody else's.

Our confidence is not based upon men'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 and 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 goodbye. That is when we will be without sin. That's so!

"*We are the true circumcision.*" Don't pay any attention, Paul says, to these evil workers and these dogs, and these flesh merchants, and these covetous, false prophets."

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

Now then; in **verse 4**, he turns the table on them. He says to these false teachers, (if you want to talk about your religious heritage); "*if any man thinks he has whereof to trust (glory) in the flesh, I more.*" Paul says; "if you want to talk about your religious heritage, I will talk to you."

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

That is what it says here; "*if any man, (pick out your champion and bring your Goliath upon the hill, any man) if any man thinks he hath whereof to trust (glory) in this flesh, I more (I've got much more).*"

Listen to Paul, "*On the eighth day I was circumcised and was of the tribe of Benjamin.*" There are not many Benjamin's out there; this is the small tribe, the little bunch from which Paul came. This tribe was called, "*the beloved of God.*" That's my heritage, he said; what's your tribe? Is it Rubin or Gad? What's your tribe; mine is Benjamin?

All right, he said; "(I go to one better); *I am a Hebrew of Hebrews.*" I'm not a half-breed. My momma was a Hebrew and my daddy was a Hebrew. There are not many of those out there.

Then Paul said, "*I was a Pharisee.*" You say that you are a preacher; are you a pastor; are you a deacon or maybe you are a chairman of the board. Paul said, "*I was a Pharisee;*" that is as high as you can go in Judaism unless they make you the high priest.

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“I was a Pharisee of Pharisees.” More than that, “I was zealous. I destroyed my enemies in religion. I put them to death; anybody that was an enemy of Judaism I put them 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, the letter of the law, “*I was blameless.*” Paul could charge any man, any witness to step forward and accuse me of any violation of your laws, the Ten Commandments, and all the rest of them, the Levitical and the laws governing the tabernacle.

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

They would make him the President because he has all the credentials except one; (as Saul of Tarsus) he didn’t know God. He didn’t know Christ. He didn’t have the grace of God in his heart and that is what is wrong with most religionists today; they have everything but grace. They talk about it and they have everything but Christ.

Paul said; “you think you have something to boast of, you have something to brag about? “*I more*” and brother, he read his pedigree loud and clear.

What was wrong and what’s wrong today is that he felt this was his title to heaven. He thought this was his title to heaven, the fact that he was of Benjamin, (a “Benjamite”), the fact that he was a Hebrew, the fact that he was a Pharisee, the fact that he was a moralist, the fact that he was a religionist, the fact that he kept the law, the fact that he had done all of these things in God’s name.

That is what they are going to say at the Judgment, Christ said. They are going to say; “*Lord; we have prophesied in your name and in your name we cast out devils and in your name we did many wonderful works.*” Then He shall profess unto them, “*I never knew you. Depart from me you workers of iniquity.*”

Then Paul continues and says, “I thought that acceptance with God rested in these things.” That is what Paul thought. He thought that acceptance with God was based on his doings; and how many think that today? Well, they think it because that’s 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.

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

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Why? Because it could not meet the righteousness that God demanded. It could not meet the requirements that God Almighty demanded. It could not meet the holiness of God's law. It could not meet the strictness of God's justice.

Paul said, "*I count these things loss* (a total loss)." I burned them, I buried 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 have and everything that I accomplish in the name of religion and I cast it on the heap and I burn it. It is loss; it is a race, it is eradicated from my very thinking.

Not only that; "*I count it as so much dung* (garbage)." Boy, that would be hard for some of us to say. Somebody might come in and say; "Are you saved? Yes, I've been saved 40 years." Garbage!

"But I've been going to Sunday school ever since I was on the cradle roll and I've got a list of pins. I've got a row of pins down to my knees for being there every Sunday." Garbage!

Yes, but I love the choir; garbage! I taught Sunday school; garbage! I did this, that, and the other; garbage! That is what Paul calls "*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 (Paul). 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.*" Christ said to Paul, "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." That is what Christ to Paul.

He took all of his religious heritage and all of his religious deeds and all of his religious works and all of his religious zeal and he piled it in one pile and he said, "*take it away it is but garbage that I may win Christ and be found in him that I may know Christ.*"

Let me point out something here; "*I count all these things but loss and garbage and rubbish for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord.*" What's this "*knowledge,*" this "*excellency of knowledge?*" What is this excellency of knowledge of Christ Jesus? That is a pretty good question!

Well, all knowledge of Christ is not excellent, not even good, you say, "what?" That's right; it is not excellent. The demons have knowledge of Christ that is not excellent; that's right! "*The demons believe in one God.*" That is what James said; "*you do believe in one God, you do well. The devil believes in one God.*" So, that knowledge is not excellent.

Then, the demons said that when Christ appeared to them in the body of that demoniac; they said, "*We know who you are; you are the holy one of Israel.*" Well, that knowledge is not excellent.

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Judas had a kind of knowledge of Christ didn't he? He was with the Lord for three and a half years. He ate with Him, talked with Him, walked with Him, and heard Him. If you had said, "Which one was Jesus Christ?" Judas told them and he kissed Him on the cheek.

They didn't know which one was Christ; Judas did. He had knowledge but it wasn't an "*excellent knowledge*," that Paul is talking about here.

Nicodemus had certain knowledge of Christ, he said, "*we know; that you are a teacher come from God.*"

The professors of religion in **2nd Peter 2** had 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 we need to know about Him is right there in His name.

Christ; what does the word Christ mean? It means the anointed, ordained, Messiah, and God in human flesh; that is what the word Christ means. That is what Christ our Lord asked Saul of Tarsus when he was persecuting believers; "*what think ye of Christ? Whose Son is he?*"

There was a Samaritan woman that said, "*When Christ is come he will tell us all things.*"

That crowd went out to hear John the Baptist and they said, "*Are you the Christ?*" That crowd asked Jesus the Lord of Nazareth; "*are you the Christ?*" They knew what the Christ is; they knew that Christ is the Messiah; Christ is the Anointed one, that Christ is the Redeemer; that's who He is.

This knowledge of Christ is to know him as the Christ. "*Whom do you say that I am,*" He said to the apostles? 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 the Son of God and the Son of Man.

What does the word Jesus mean? It is the Old Testament word 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; He shall rise again.

Christ Jesus, is my Lord; He is sovereign, King of kings, Lord of lords, that excellent name, the name which is above every name. "*The father hath highly exalted him and given him a name above every name.*"

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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, that who He is who He is.

He is the Christ. He is the Son of God. Jesus; that is what He did; He died *“the just for the unjust.”* He is the Saviour, God my Saviour. He is Joshua; He is the Deliverer. That is why He died, *“that God may be just and justifier.”*

Where is my Lord now? *“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 what, “sweet little Jesus boy?” No bud; you have missed it. It’s not the “man upstairs,” no, you have missed it too; it’s “the good Lord,” no sir.) that he is Lord to the glory of God the father;”* that is who He is. *“Excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.”*

Whatever the rest of the world does, that 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.”* That is who He is.

Do you have that knowledge? Is your knowledge the knowledge of demons? We believe that there is one God, always have. Is your knowledge the knowledge of Judas? “I know who He is, I will kiss Him on the cheek” or maybe like Nicodemus; “we know you are bound to be from God, fellow, because nobody could raise the dead but a fellow from God.”

No, “the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.” What’s that second statement, *“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 a church; heaven help us. I don’t want to be found in the waters, deep as you can make them. I don’t want to be found resting with the law at Sinai. I don’t want to be found in the premillennial, post-millennial, or anybody else’s millennial camp; I want to be found in Him, in Christ Jesus my Lord.

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, all of his physical comforts, all of his earthly relationships and to count them but *“dung, (rubbish), that he may win Christ and be found in him?”*

What is it to be found in Christ? 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 to do my father’s will and this is the will of him that sent me, that of all that 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 everlasting covenant. I want to be found in that covenant in Christ.

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I want to be found in Him, my Representative. I was in another fellow who represented me named Adam and “*in Adam I died.*” In Christ I am made alive. “*By one man’s disobedience I became a sinner. By another man’s obedience I am made righteous.*”

I want to be found in Him as the Representative who walked this earth in human flesh representing those 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.*” When Christ died I died 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; He is the life and I am the branch.

I want to be in Him as the Head of the church. I want to be in Him the Chief Shepherd. I want to be found in Him as my righteousness; He is “*the Lord our righteousness*” and I want to be found in Him at the judgment. I don’t want to stand there alone.

Somebody said, “That old spiritual song says that you have to stand in that judgment; you have to stand by yourself.” I beg your pardon! If I am in Christ I stand it in Him and “*there is therefore now, no 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.*”

Well, what does this mean? It means that some people who think they are righteous. “*They are going about to establish their own righteousness.*” They have a negative righteousness. They say, “I never did do that.”

They have a religious righteousness; “I fast and tithed.” They have a moral righteousness; “I keep the law.” They have a comparative righteousness; “I’m not as bad as old Joe, Bill, or Bob.”

But, this righteousness that 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 God planned it; God purposed it, provided it and it is His righteousness.

It is that righteousness that He purposed, that he planned, and 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 righteousness for those whom He represented.

It is provided by the Holy Spirit. This righteousness is promised by the Father, purchased by the Son, and provided and applied by God’s Spirit. I want to be found in Him, in Christ Jesus the Lord!