

Religion Doesn't Impress God

Philippians 3:4-8

⁴ though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so:

⁵ circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, *of* the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

⁷ But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. ⁸ Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which *is* from the law, but that which *is* through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;

INTRODUCTION:

Paul introduces us to his own testimony of how he reckoned that all he had that at one time he had counted to take him to heaven was found to be worthless, of no value at all. He show us this by the terms he uses in verse 7-8

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verse 7 word gain

kerdos: gain

Original Word: κέρδος, ους, τό

Part of Speech: Noun, Neuter

Transliteration: kerdos

Phonetic Spelling: (ker'-dos)

Short Definition: gain, advantage

Definition: gain, advantage, profit.

HELPS Word-studies

Cognate: 2771 *kérdos* – gain (profit), acquired through "faith-trading." Accordingly, faith (4102 /*pístis*) and 2772 (*kérma*) are directly connected (Phil 1:21-25,3:7-9). See 2770 (*kerdainō*).

verse 7 word loss

zémia: damage

Original Word: ζημία, ας, ἡ

Part of Speech: Noun, Feminine

Transliteration: zémia

Phonetic Spelling: (dzay-mee'-ah)

Short Definition: damage, loss

Definition: damage, loss, detriment.

HELPS Word-studies

Cognate: 2209 *zēmía* – damage (detriment); a mercantile term for "loss"; a "bad deal" (unsuccessful business transaction) which results in a *fine* (*penalty*, forfeiture).

Jesus describes this in His Sermon in Matt 13:44

44 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field."

45 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, 46 who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

F.B. Meyer writes, "He was a man with a rich religious nature, capable of an infinite hunger after God who passed from one stall to another amid the religions of the world seeking for the best. But finally when he came where the gem of heaven and earth and sea the pearl of great price lay, translucent and glistening, he gladly sacrificed all he possessed to win it," end quote.

All my profit was worth nothing

Rubbish

skubalon: refuse

Original Word: σκύβαλον, ου, τό

Part of Speech: Noun, Neuter

Transliteration: skubalon

Phonetic Spelling: (skoo'-bal-on)

Short Definition: refuse, dregs

Definition: refuse, dregs, dung.

HELPS Word-studies

4657 skýbalon (from **2965 /kýōn**, "dog" and **906 /bállō**, "throw") – properly, waste thrown to dogs, like filthy scraps of garbage (table-scraps, dung, muck, sweepings); (figuratively) *refuse*, what is good-for-nothing except to be discarded (used only in Phil 3:8).

Vice is not the only useless refuse. Vice is not the only garbage. Vice is not the only rubbish. Religion is rubbish, too. Any manmade effort to gain salvation is as much rubbish as vice is rubbish. And Paul is speaking out of personal experience. He said that Christ saved him

and he said, "I was the chief of sinners." And listen, he was the chief of sinners not because he lived a vice-filled lewd licentious life because he didn't, he lived an eminently moral life. But he saw the deepest vilest rubbish of life as religion...not immorality. It's one thing to act immorally, it's something else to believe that God is so low that you can earn acceptance with Him. One desecrates God to one degree, the other desecrates God to a greater degree. One violates His law, immorality, one assumes Him to be less than He is and violates His nature. Thus religion is a rubbish. And the rubbish that Paul viewed in his own life was not the rubbish of vice, but it was the rubbish of religion...of trying to please God through self-effort and religious works.

Refer to Context

The False teachers that came in trying to teach circumcision and Law keeping was required

verse 3

No confidence in the flesh.

But of all that he had, not one thing was worthy of his confidence to save him

Confidence

pepoithésis: confidence

Original Word: ΠΕΠΟΙΘΗΣΙΣ, εως, ἡ

Part of Speech: Noun, Feminine

Transliteration: pepoithésis

Phonetic Spelling: (pep-oy'-thay-sis)

Short Definition: confidence, trust

Definition: confidence, trust, reliance.

HELPS Word-studies

Cognate: 4006 *pepoíthēsis* (a feminine noun derived from 3982 /*peíthō*, "persuade, be persuaded") – properly, *persuasion*; used of human confidence (deluded self-persuasion in Phil 3:4), but more commonly of *Spirit-produced persuasion* (2 Cor 3:4; Eph 3:12). See 3982 (*peíthō*).

I also might have confidence

ἐγὼ

I

PPro-N1S

2192 [e]

echōn

ἔχων

have

If (1st class conditional understood as true)

More mallon

mallon: more

Original Word: μᾶλλον

Part of Speech: Adverb

Transliteration: mallon

Phonetic Spelling: (mal'-lon)

Short Definition: more, rather

Definition: more, rather.

HELPS Word-studies

3123 *mállon* – the *comparative* ("-er") form of *malla* ("very") meaning "rather, more than," i.e. *more than* what it is compared to. **3123** /*mállon* ("more than, better rather") is a *comparative* adverb so it refers to what is *better* as compared to what is merely "good." This involves *prioritizing* or *ranking* to elevate the better over the good, i.e. the higher priority (the *more important*) over the less-important.

Paul Inherited this

I. Salvation is not Ritual (Circumcision)

circumcised the eighth day,

With respect to Circumcision an 8th sayer

in **Genesis 17:12**, **Genesis 21:4**, **Leviticus 12:31**, God institutes circumcision, that physical operation as a sign of His people. And He said it is to be done on the eighth day after a male child is born. That was a strict Jewish rite.

"I'm no Ishmaelite." Ishmael, you'll remember, wasn't circumcised till after his thirteenth year, according to **Genesis 27:25**. I'm no pagan who proselytes to Judaism and in adulthood is circumcised. I am a legitimate Jew by birth, circumcised the eighth day, faithful to the cardinal ritual at birth, a true blooded Jew, nursed in the ceremonies of my ancestral religion. I followed that basic requirement, my parents had me circumcised.

not by ritual

rites, religion, ceremonies, mass,

II. Salvation is not Race (Stock of Israel)

"Israel only have I known," **Amos 3:2**.

who are Israelites, to whom *pertain* the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of *God*, and the promises; ⁵ of whom *are* the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ *came*,

So that's where the children of Israel come from...Abraham through Isaac through Jacob who was Israel. There are other people who can trace their heritage back to Abraham because Abraham had another son by the name of Ishmael. He was an illegitimate son born of the handmaid Hagar. He fathered the Arab people. There are some people who can say I am a child of Abraham but the Ishmaelites are not the children of Israel, they are the children of Abraham through Hagar. There are some people who can say I am through Abraham and Isaac because Isaac had two sons, Jacob and Esau. And Esau produced the Edomites, more Arabic people. And there are people who can say I am of Esau, so I come through Abraham and Isaac. But only those who come through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are Israelites. So Paul is saying I am pure in terms of my Jewish heritage, pure

descent from God's chosen people. That's a credential. And I'll tell you right now the Jews believed that if they were circumcised the eighth day and if they were of the pure line coming out of the loins of Jacob and coming through the twelve tribes that were the children of Jacob, they were therefore the chosen people of God who were the saved, the redeemed, the inheritors of eternal glory.

being born into the right family means nothing

III. Salvation is not Rank (Tribe of Benjamin)

Now this is a ranking tribe. Of all of the tribes, certainly the two most elite were Judah and Benjamin. We talk a lot about Judah because out of the line of Judah comes the Messiah, but we can't forget Benjamin. Benjamin was a very very elite tribe. Let me tell you why. Benjamin, first of all, was the younger of two sons born to Rachel. And you will remember the story in Genesis chapter 30 that Rachel was Jacob's favorite wife. And that made Benjamin a favorite child. In fact, he was the last and thus he was the baby of all and the baby of the beloved wife, the tenderly beloved Benjamin.

Benjamin, furthermore, according to [Genesis 35:9](#) to 19 was the only one of the sons of Jacob born in the promised land. And thus he had a very unique identity and title to that land. Benjamin furthermore was given unique military priority. Read [Judges 5](#) verse 14, [Hosea 5:8](#) and you will find that apparently when the troops went to battle, Benjamin was the front line. They must have been loyal, courageous, great soldiers. Furthermore, when they went to find a king to what tribe did they go? Benjamin. And they found Saul, [1 Samuel](#) chapter 9, who was out of the tribe of Benjamin. You

remember when God divided up the land, the promised land, He gave certain sections of the land to the tribes. I don't know if you remember this but the section He gave to Benjamin included the city of Jerusalem. So the holy city itself was in the territory of Benjamin and thus Benjamin was a very very noble tribe, for in their territory was the great holy city of Jerusalem, **Judges 1:21** points that out to us.

Furthermore, according to **1 Kings 12:21**, you remember after Solomon the kingdom split because there was a revolution, and the northern kingdom and the southern kingdom were divided and Benjamin stayed loyal to the Davidic dynasty and stayed with Judah in the south. And Benjamin and Judah formed the legitimate southern kingdom, the northern kingdom went off in rebellion and eventually was carried away into captivity in 722 B.C. So Benjamin was loyal to David at the time of the kingdom being split. Benjamin and Judah then forming the southern kingdom.

A very famous man came out of the tribe of Benjamin, the man that God used to spare the entire nation of Israel from being massacred, that man's name was Mordecai. And Mordecai was used by God in the story of Esther to preserve the people of Israel. Mordecai was of the tribe of Benjamin.

So it was a noble group for a number of reasons, it stood above the other tribes. Not perfect by any means, and I don't want to be misunderstood, Shimei that fool who cursed David and threw rocks at him was a Benjamite, 2 Samuel chapter 16 and 19 record that. He did repent later on. But Shimei was a Benjamite, certainly not someone you'd want to claim. And maybe the worst of the activities of the Benjamites is recorded in Judges 19 and 20 where they perpetrated a gang rape that ended up in a victim being chopped into little pieces and mailed around to all the tribes. A gross thing, it ended up actually 25,100 Benjamites were massacred. So not all of the history of Benjamin is worthy of, you know, copying, but they were a noble group. They were considered a ranking tribe.

What is also interesting is this, that by the time Paul wrote Philippians most of the Jews didn't know their tribe. Two reasons...the records were lost in the Babylonian captivity and secondly, intermarriage had blurred the lines, the tribal lines. What Paul is saying is I have never been involved and my

family has never been involved in intermarriage, we have stayed pure Benjamites. So he is really a blue-blood. He is a Jew in the purest truest sense who even knows his tribe...which was not the case for all the Jews and perhaps the Judaizers in this case, none of them may have known their tribe, none of them been from the tribe of Benjamin perhaps as well.

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Privilege Class
Ranking Tribe

You can be a PK or MK and it means nothing to God
He is not impressed

Paul Achieved this

IV.Salvation is not Repetition (Tradition Hebrew of Hebrew)

I have maintained my tradition. This is directed, by the way, at the dispersed Jews who had been scattered all around, including perhaps these in Philippi. And having been scattered around they were greatly impacted by Greek culture. Many of them lost the Hebrew language and when they lost the language they lost the culture, they lost their tradition. You have a lot of Jews today who are trying to get their tradition back but they'll never really get it back without the language. But they in those days had the same problem. They had become Hellenized from the Greek word hellen which means Gentile. They had become victims of Greek culture, so they lost their language, they lost their tradition. He is saying...Not me, I had Hebrew parents, I'm a Hebrew child. I am a Hebrew of the Hebrews, I maintained my tradition.

He was raised in a pagan city. He was raised in Greek culture in Tarsus, in Cilicia which is near Galatia on the northeastern part of the Mediterranean Sea, not in the land of Israel. He was raised in Gentile territory under Greek culture and Roman rule. But he says, you know his testimony, "I was faithful and personally committed to the tradition of Judaism and the language of my parents." You remember according to [Acts 22:3](#) he left his country and he went to Jerusalem to study under Gamaliel who was the chief teacher among the Jews. According to [Acts 21:40](#) he could speak Hebrew fluently. He was a Jew. He was a Hebrew son of Hebrew parents. He followed the language, he followed the traditions, he followed the customs, he never deviated. According to Acts 26, listen to this in verses 4 and 5, he says, "All Jews know my manner of life from my youth up, which from the beginning was spent among my own nation and at Jerusalem since they have known about me for a long time previously, if they are willing to testify that I lived as a Pharisee according to the strictest sect of our religion." He was an unwavering Hebrew. And everybody knows it, he says. All the Jews know it.

just because you are loyalty to tradition of protestant or catholic or Judaism

V.Salvation is not by Religion (Pharisee)

the highest level of religious achievement in Judaism. You can't get any higher than being a Pharisee. The Pharisee was the religious radical fundamentalist, that was the Pharisee, the narrow-minded legalistic literalist fundamentalist who interpreted the Word of God specifically, directly to life. You know where they came from? They came out of the intertestamental period between the end of the Old and the beginning of the New, there was 400 years in there when there was no writing going on. And during that time the Jews began to drift into liberalism, they began to question the authority of Scripture, they began to compromise and at that time came this group called Pharisees which comes to mean separatists. And they were affirming that there must be an adherence to Scripture, that there must be an adherence to the Word of God, that there could be no deviation so they felt they had to guard the Scripture, they had to study the Scripture, they had to interpret the Scripture, they had to proclaim the Scripture, they had to apply the Scripture, they had to castigate people who didn't apply it, that was the Pharisees. They started out with a noble cause, they started out as noble men. Obviously over a period of time they degenerated and the point of their degeneration was when they came to believe that their strict adherence to the law was what saved them. That was the fatal flaw.

They were a very elite group. During the time of Christ the best estimate is that there were no more than 6,000 of them, that's all. No more than 6,000. Because it was such a strict demanding circumscribed legalistic life style

Not all of the Pharisees were snakes and vipers and fools and hypocrites and blind leaders and robbers and envious, jealous, proud fakers. Some of them were serious minded.

But you read it in **Acts 22:3, Acts 23:6, Acts 26:5, Galatians 1:14**, he often refers to his Pharisaic background. So he said I took religion to the highest level, very religious.

you ever look around the world and see people like this? Very religious...up to their ears in religion, you see them all over the world. I've seen them all over the world, wearing robes and doing all of their religious activities, many of them functioning as priests, sacrificing, taking on themselves unbearable burdens, living in poverty and loneliness. Many of them in pain and deprivation, functioning to fulfill a religious pattern that they believe will please God. The bottom line, He's not impressed.

VI. Salvation is not by Reliability (Zeal)

It's two sides of a coin, okay? Zeal is the coin. One side is love, the other side is hate. What do I mean? Zeal says I love God so much I hate whatever offends Him...that's zeal. I love God so

much I hate whatever offends Him. Paul loved God, he loved the law of God, he loved the community of God, that's the Jewish people, he loved all that God had revealed to such a degree that he hated anything he thought offended God and he thought Christians offended God. Why did he kill Christians? Because of zeal. He loved Judaism so much that he hated anything that threatened it and Christianity threatened it. So he persecuted Christians. To what degree? Read the book of Acts. He breathed out threatening and slaughter on them. He created havoc in the church. He killed Christians. He pursued them. He chased them. He wanted to take their life. Hey, he's one up on the Judaizers. All the Judaizers did was proselyte. He persecuted. You think you've got zeal? I've got more. I went after them to kill them.

In fact, he says, "I am the least of the Apostles," **1 Corinthians 15:9**, "I am the least of all Apostles." Why? "Because I persecuted the church, I'm not even worthy to be named as an Apostle. I persecuted the church." Why did you do it, Paul? "Zeal for God, I loved Judaism so much I hated Christianity because it threatened it.

VII. Salvation is not by Righteousness (my own)

VIII.

But what he is saying is this, that in general with regard to the righteousness which is advocated by God's law or the standard of righteous living advocated by the law of God, no one could find

me blameable. I lived a blameless life. By human judgment I was a model Jew and lived by God's law.

Matt. 19 Rich Young Ruler