

For We Are The Circumcision

By Shawn Reynolds

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Bible Text: Philippians 3:3
Preached on: Sunday, July 24, 2016

Grace Particular Baptist Church

5725 Imperial Lakes Blvd
Mulberry, FL 33860

Website: www.onefoldoneshepherd.org
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/graceparticular

How appropriate that song is, "All of Him."

If you will this morning, turn with me in your Bibles to our text this morning which is found in the third chapter of Philippians, it's Philippians 3:3.

3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

Let us pray.

Dear heavenly Father, I thank thee, Lord, for those that thou hast gathered this day. Lord, I thank thee, Lord, for thy sufficiency in all things and pray for those, Lord, that are not with us today that are traveling. Lord, we pray for their safe passage to and back and, Lord, that thou would be an ever present help to them this day and this hour. Lord, unite us in thy Spirit. May you be pleased now to prepare the hearts of those here and those that would hear this message, that you would be pleased to bring forth thy truth and that you, Lord, would be glorified, that you would show us the way in thy Son and that you would settle us this day at thy feet to be instructed for thou, Lord, art worthy. To you, Lord, all glory and honor and praise. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Earlier in the week when the Lord gave me this text, I felt with the Apostle Paul when he says this first line, "For we are the circumcision," I felt very bold and very joyful and very strong in the Lord to stand and to say those things. "Yes, Lord, we are the circumcision." And at that moment, I felt that I couldn't wait to get up here and proclaim that, that we, the children of God, the church that's in Christ Jesus, are the true circumcision. And I find in that statement a boldness; I find in that statement a truth; I find in that statement strength. But from the moment the Lord revealed that to me, I haven't been able to find that in myself. I thought that part of the sermon would be easy, "we are the circumcision"; to get up and to announce what the people in Christ are. I find myself many times, a lot of times lacking. Lacking in the things that I read in the word of God that should be, that ought to be. The strength that we have positionally to know that the Lord has finished all things for his children is where there is a great rest and we know that there remaineth a rest for the people of God and yet I find that in my mind and in my heart, there are times, a lot of times, that I can't even get to those simple truths and I

know that the Lord has his purpose in that, to reveal to me his Son, the suitability of his Son, to carry me, to rescue me, to reveal to me life, what life is.

I've said it many times this week to those around me that life is hard and it is. It is for the child of God because I was telling my wife yesterday, if you've ever read the Psalms of Asaph, he had a lot of crying out to the Lord for what he would deem to be prosperity around him of those that were wicked and those in life that seemed to have all the answers and had the frivolity and the happiness but the Lord brought him to the same conclusion. We have to be brought to end of ourselves and those desires that we have and I thought back on that this morning. I thought back at the time when the Lord gave me this text and how happy and joyful I was to say "we are the circumcision," and I started thinking about the reasons, the reasons that are laid out for us here. We have four of them: we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit; we rejoice in Christ Jesus; and we have no confidence in the flesh. And as you look at those things in and of themselves, each one of them, if you look at them through your eyes, you start to get puffed up and you start to think it's because of some merit or because of something that makes you special and all of a sudden the Lord then comes and says, "No. That's not the case. It's because of grace." These marks or these things that a child of God identifies with are only because of the grace of Christ in his soul.

And when Paul says that in verse 3, he says, "we are the circumcision." He is comparing the church to what he mentioned in verse 2 where he says, "Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision." The concision, of course, were those who put all of their life and their duty in the letter of the law. The concision is the same word for circumcision. One verse he says we are the circumcision, and in verse 2 he's telling us to beware of the circumcision. You say, "Well, what can all of that mean? What is Paul speaking about. What is it that we're to beware of?" And then I think we're starting to see hopefully that on one hand he says beware of dogs, beware of evil workers and beware of the concision and the concisionist, of course, believed that what they did they did for God, what they did they did out of duty, what they did and this outward show of religion is what would bring God's favor. Their obedience through whatever mark, of course, this being the outward mark of circumcision which they believed was a mark of a child of God, but Christ has fulfilled the law, Paul says. Christ is the end of the law. So he says, "No, we are the circumcision." And right when you sit there and you listen to those words and you think of how the whole religious world means that, we have an outward mark, we worship God this way, we go to church every day, we go two times on Sunday, we go Wednesday night services, we have prayer studies, we have children's classes, we have gymnasiums, we have all of these things, that makes us, see this outward mark that we have? And Paul says beware of them. Beware of them, dear ones.

So the very first thing we have in front of us when we hear these words "For we are the circumcision" is division. The circumcision that's talked about here cannot be a physical circumcision. Paul said it in Galatians 6:15, he says, "For in Christ Jesus," and that's where this whole message comes from today, it's in the union with Christ Jesus. I speak from that union almost every time I'm up here because that's where I believe life comes from, the eternal vital union in Christ Jesus. Paul says the same thing, "in Christ Jesus

neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." So if Paul tells us later in Galatians which he wrote before Philippians that circumcision, the actual physical act doesn't avail anything for the child of God, it must mean something else. It's the circumcision of the heart. It's the new heart and for the child of God, Paul says we, the church, are the circumcision and he said that right after warning us of the false circumcision.

So he brings forth to us that there is a great division and that might shock you today. I know that in this life, we think that even coming to this building is a safe haven. We think that when we come in here and we shut the doors, that we're all of a like mind and we all worship God in spirit and in truth. But there has been a division all throughout history and there always will be. And I'm not talking about Republicans and Democrats. I'm not talking about whites against blacks. I'm not talking about things that divide our society. I'm talking about how the Lord looks at mankind. There is, as Paul said, there is an elect remnant who are the circumcision. We are the circumcision.

Turn with me over to 1 Corinthians real quick. Let me show you something that he said about division, and this is a remarkable thing. It's hedged here right in between two things, right after he's talking about what we would deem today to be head coverings and right before he talks about the Lord's supper being instituted, he says this in 1 Corinthians 11 and it's quite remarkable if you ever saw this in 1 Corinthians 11. Look at verse 18. He says, "For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you." Did you hear that? There are divisions among you at Corinth. There are divisions in the church, the local church in Galatia. There are divisions in Ephesus. There are divisions everywhere.

Why is that? He tells us, "I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. For there must be also heresies among you." There must be heresies among you. When the physical circumcision of the hands and the works gets into the people of God where the circumcision is of the heart and is of the spirit, there is going to be heresy and that heresy comes in when it's a mixture of the law and grace, and it's a mixture of the world and the separation that the Lord calls the people out of the world for.

In the church, not the spiritual church, not the church, but in the local church, Paul says, "It's amazing. I partly believe this. I mean, I know that this happens in the churches," and he says, "You know, but there must be also heresies among you, that they," listen to this, "that they which are approved," that's the people of God, that's the remnant, "that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." There is a reason the Lord said in Matthew 10:34, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth, I came not to send peace but a sword." A sword divides and all throughout the ages and still true today, there is always a mixture and how is it the people of God can tell what's true and what's not? The Lord says, "I bring forth the heresies that are among you." And we look and we shake our heads and we say, "Well, that's a sad state," but it's a true state. The Lord must divide. The Lord shows where the truth is in his Son.

"There must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." That's the church. That's the people of God. The Lord is the one who rightly divides and I'll tell you, what a blessing and what a mercy it is to have a pastor and those who preach the singleness of the truth that the Lord keeps from a mixture because that leaven, when the leaven comes in, it can leaven the whole lump. It can mix right in there and then all of a sudden our terminology, the things we talk about with one another, we've got a mixture. We've got a mixture of law and grace. All of a sudden our terminology is coming to, "This is what we do. This is what we have to do. This is what we've got to do for the Lord." Is that grace?

There are many heresies that come into the body of believers and when Paul said we are the circumcision, he was making a delineation between those and the ones he mentioned in the previous verse. And I'm going to tell you something, it's hard to discern. It is. You can't discern it in your own knowledge and your own intellect because the professing religious world says the very same things you do: Christ, grace, salvation. We hear these words and we say, "We have a commonality with those." But all through the word of God, we keep being warned, warned about what? That this is an ever-present reality in the body of believers. So who is faithful and sufficient for such things? Paul says, "You know, we are the circumcision," and there is a big difference and as we've seen, there must be divisions.

Let's go to Romans 2 real quick and we'll explain what this really is. What is this circumcision? He said that there are divisions. There can be ones who say, "We have the circumcision," and that circumcision is outward acts that are looking at what they do for God and they're looking at all the outward marks and they say, "That's truly the believers." Paul says, "No. Beware of them. We, the people of God, are the circumcision." He says it this way in Romans 2 at the end, "For he is not a Jew," and we're talking about a believer here, "For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh." Paul said, "No, the outward works of religion are not what saves a man. It is not what makes him of the circumcision. It's not what makes him a child of God. It's not the outward work."

However, look at verse 29, "But he is a Jew," a believer, "which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter." So many times we try to worship the Lord in the letter. In the spirit, not in the letter, "whose praise is not of men." Now listen, if you just take that phrase right there, "the praise is not of men," what does that tell you about the child of God? His relationship with the Lord is inward; it's between him and his Lord and it's not on display for man to see. That's Christ's work. If someone sees there's a difference in you because of the light of Christ in you, it's because his light is shining out of you. But your relationship with the Lord, that's what Paul says there, it's not for the praise of men, it's not in the outward show of religion, it's not how you pray out into assemblies, it's not how you tell everybody how moral you are and how you won't do this or you won't do that and people look at you and say, "Oh well, that one's a real moral character. He's an upstanding man in our community." And yet you bust the doors of hell wide open.

What is it that makes a difference? Do we today as we sit and we hear this message, do we sit and we cling to the physicality of religion and say, "This is my works, Lord"? We remember one who did that, right? "Lord, this is the works of my hands. This is the works of the ground. Accept it." And the Lord said it's not of faith and he didn't accept it because anything not of faith is sin. That's what it's getting at, it's getting at the heart of the matter, if you will. It's the spirit. It's Christ in you. "He is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."

In Colossians 2, Paul says right after he says in verse 10, he says that we're complete in Christ, in verse 11, he says, "In whom," because he had to tell you that because he's speaking of Christ, "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands." It's not a physical act. That's what Paul is telling the people of God. He had to keep telling the Jews that because the Jews kept putting all their emphasis on physical acts; physical things they did for God; physical things that made them a believer. Paul said, "No, that doesn't make you a believer, it makes you a Jew, one outwardly." But the one inwardly is the one where Christ has circumcised the heart which he says here, "made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ." That tells me that that doctor, that divine physician is the one who circumcises the heart; who gives the new heart, as we'll see a little bit later.

And this all blends right into the second heading that we have in here because he says, "we are the circumcision," and then he defines what that is, "which worship God in the spirit." Jesus said so in John 4:24, he said, "God is a spirit and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." Did you ever wonder why Christ didn't say, "And they that worship him must worship him in the duty of ordinances, in the duty of the have-to's, in the duty of coming to church, in the duty of..." No. They that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth and that's what I said, we're dependent upon the Lord to provide that just as much as you are in that seat today and as much as I am up here to preach the message. He must fill me with his power and his spirit to bring forth his truth and he must open your ears by his Spirit to hear his truth. They that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

It's in the inward work of Christ's kingdom being set up in your soul and I can't explain it to you in the seat, if it's happened, if the Lord has done that, you're sitting there and you're saying, "Yes, I know what you're talking about." If he hasn't, you're sitting there saying, "I have no idea what you're talking about. This is all foreign to me. Are you telling me I'm not supposed to pray? Are you telling me I'm not supposed to come to the house of worship?" Absolutely not, I'm saying for the child of God, why you do. It's because of him. It's because the circumcision of your heart. We worship Christ in the spirit.

I think of Hannah, not our Hannah but Hannah in the Bible, who sat there and was pouring out her heart to the Lord and Eli, who was the prophet, the priest who stood there watching her, misunderstood, thought she was drunk when her heart was being poured out; when she was being exercised by the Holy Spirit; when the Lord was revealing to her

and she was crying out to the Lord, and the man of God standing there couldn't even discern it and he came over to her and thought she was drunk. Do you see where we're headed with this? It's all of him. We're dependent upon him. As the Lord revealed that to Hannah and caused her to cry out to him, he answered those prayers. Why? Because he authored them. He is the author and finisher of our faith and there is no creature in that at all. There is no merit. There is no man-centeredness. It's all of him.

Turn with me over to Isaiah 61. Now, we've read this many times and we've talked about this being messianic, being Christ fulfilling, but I want you to listen, Lord willing he opens your ears to hear what the work of the Spirit is. Who is it that Christ came to preach to? Is it the religionist who counts all of his works, who stands up and says, "Lord, this is what I've done for you"? Or is it the ones that are described for us here in these first three verses?

"The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings." These are the words of Christ. Christ would say these later. The Lord has pronounced him to be this to his church, to the "we are the circumcision." What is it that the circumcision has?

The Lord speaks, he says, "to preach good tidings unto," who? "Unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted." When you hear Paul warning against the religious professors of the times and he's warning them against those who have will worship and those who say, "We do this in the name of God. Look at us, for man to look at us. Look how smart we are. Look how much we've done for God." The Lord says, "This is who I've been sent to," and notice the work of him because you and I know that meekness comes from being in Christ. Humility comes from Christ. You know, there is a false humility and if you don't believe it, man in this life has perverted humility. Have you ever heard anybody talking about how humble they are? Have you ever heard anybody talking about how, "Oh, I was so humble when I did this"? That's a false humility because those who've been humbled don't speak about themselves humbling themselves. They know it's not possible. They know they can't. The child of God knows that we can't humble ourselves. We need the one who can.

"He hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives." Do you see that? And I know that that's not something we like to hear. We say, "Well, maybe I don't want to be a captive." But dear ones, we're captives every day. We're captives of many things. Sometimes Satan locks us up. Sometimes it's this old nature. I was reading an author this week who went off on a whole dialogue on how you can't discern sometimes your old nature from Satan's work. It's true. Those two work hand in hand. The world works hand in hand. All of this puts the child of God in bondage. That's what sin does, but the Holy Spirit reveals that sin. Why? Because a child of God has to be shown that there's one who sets him free; that proclaim liberty to him. If you're not in bondage, you're not going to want liberty. If you don't believe you've ever been in bondage as the Jews say, "We've never been in bondage. We're Abraham's sons." That's true. That's what the religious world says today. Be very careful. Paul warns against them and then he sets out to tell us what the

difference is. But we, the children of God, the church, we are the circumcision who worship God in the spirit.

"He proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." You know, it is very much wrong to sit and to sit there and dwell upon sin and to say, "Okay, yes, sin has me captive and I'm going to live that way the rest of my life." You don't get that in any of this. What you get is Christ setting free. It is a fact that we're always as long as we walk on this earth, we will have sin with us. Yes, we will. We'll have that old nature with us but for the church and the triumphance of Christ in that church, he shows us the victory in him, what he has done. What has he defeated? Do you feel at liberty because of his victory? Does he set you free from that bondage?

"To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn." Do you mourn? It's another mark of the child of God is that he mourns over the state that he is; that he does sin; that the Lord's blood covered his sin and when the Lord shows him that, what great peace and comfort there is in the Lord and then he goes off and sins more. I hope that makes you mourn. It makes me mourn. It brings me low. Then the Lord, the one who sets the freedom, who brings the captivity and sets captivity captive and sets them free is the one we that we have our dependence upon. You may spend time in your life trying to get out from under the dependence upon the Lord, that too is walking after the flesh. The Lord must humble his people to bring them to see their dependency upon him.

"To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them," listen to what he gives, "beauty for ashes." So that sackcloth and ashes and sorrow, what does the Lord give us? The beauty of his finished work on the cross; the beauty of his ascending into heaven and reigning as our high priest; the beauty of Christ finishing all things for his children.

He has given them "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning." We're going to get to joy here in a moment.

"The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness." You see, he does all of this to plant us and show us that in him is where righteousness is. Not in ourselves. He must put that down because by nature that's what this old nature is, a high righteous nature.

"That they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified." All of him. That's what my Bible keeps telling me, that it's all of him; that all of this is his work. This is what he has performed for his church for we are the circumcision which worship God in the spirit.

In Ezekiel 36:26-27, we're told what this worshiping the Lord in the spirit is. We're told, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes." Do you notice this?

People love to gloss over that, "I will cause you to walk in my statutes." Why? Because we're not going to do it on our own. We're dependent.

"I will cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." That's what life in Christ is. "I've put my spirit in your heart," and I want you to see it's not a reformation of the heart, it's not a change of the heart. We love to use that terminology, "Oh, I hope they have a change of heart." Well, if they do, they're doomed. Those who have a change of heart believe they're just reforming the old man and the old nature is getting better. If that's the case and let God be true and every man a liar in this room today, if that's the case and you believe that your heart and your old nature is getting better and better and better, then you don't have any struggle going on in you and that life that you're living, it's something like Wesley was talking about, moving toward this sinless perfection. If you believe that, if you believe you're getting better and better every day, it's because you don't have any struggles in your life and the Psalmist wrote about those, "Beware of those who have no struggles." Those who have no struggles have not a conflict going on in their soul; they have not that warfare going on that the child of God will have all of his days. And what a mercy it is to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord that he teaches us about this conflict, and he teaches us where the victory is, and he teaches us what he does on our behalf, and he teaches us our need for him. And guess what? We're still dependent upon him.

Paul describes this warfare in Galatians 5:17, he says, "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other." And that's not all, the last part of this really brings it home for us, "so that ye cannot do the things ye would." Do you know what that tells me? That when the Lord makes you alive and he gives you his Spirit, there is a desire planted in you to please the Lord. Your desire is toward him. Paul said that, "I have that but how to perform that, I don't find that in me because there is a law in my members working against another law in me." And that's that conflict. That's the two armies that we have within us. That's the conflict that resonates every day in the child of God's life.

So we take the fourth point before the third point in our text, "and have no confidence in the flesh." So, "we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit," and then we take this next point, "and have no confidence in the flesh." And we just talked about that flesh and what it's made up of and we talked about how blessed it is and what a blessed place it is when the Lord reveals and brings us to not have confidence in the flesh, the flesh of man, to trust in man, or to trust in self. What a great blessing that is to be brought not to trust in yourself, not to lean on your own understanding, not to trust in your merit, not to trust in your hands, not to trust in what you do, but to trust in another. That's what "we are the circumcision" means.

Have no confidence in the flesh and that's what the Lord teaches his children not to put confidence in self. Self is the greatest monster of all. I hope today you see self as a great enemy to God. Paul did. Look at 4, 5 and 6 here. "Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more." Let me tell you why. Let me tell you about the merits that I've attained in my life

and why I would trust in myself more than I would God. "I was circumcised the eighth day, I was the stock of Israel, I was of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee." I was one of those high religious people. I was one of those people that sat up there with the upper chamber of people. I sat at the feet of Gamaliel. I learned all of the right ways to please God. I learned all of that religion. This is what I have confidence in. This is what I could have confidence in. These are the things that I've done. What roll call do you have there today? "Well, I'm this. This is my job title and this is what I've done in my life. I've been going to church this many years. And I've done this and I've done that." Okay, alright, everybody bring up what they have confidence in.

Then Paul says, "Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law." That's the outward works. He was blameless. No one could bring any charge to Paul, Saul, of what he did, what law he kept. "You're a high religious man. Look at you. You're out there trying to shut down all of these that are speaking about Jesus Christ and him being the sufficiency. You're doing good, Paul, Saul. Put an end to that. Put an end to all of that. You're doing great. You're doing what the law tells us to." And that's what Paul says, 4, 5 and 6, "Look at all of the things I have that I could put confidence in. Look at all the things that I could trust in." And we could all do that today. We could all sit down and write what's good about my life. And as you do that, what you're really putting down on that paper is the things that you can trust in; the things that you can wake up every day and say, "Oh, but I have this. Oh, but I have that." Maybe it's a big bank account. Maybe it's no debt. Maybe it's good health. What are these things that we have confidence in? Maybe it's abilities. Maybe whatever it is that we're called to do that day, we feel pretty confident in it because we have confidence that we've done it so many times.

What is it that we put confidence in? When Paul said, "we have no confidence in the flesh," do you not see that that is a great work of God and a great work of grace in the soul to show the child of God, "You have no confidence in any of that." But look how it had to happen to Saul, Paul. Look how it had to happen. He had to have the Lord come to him and do a mighty work of grace to show him the depth of grace and what to trust in, who to trust in, and that being the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's what he says in 7, "But what things were gain to me," all of those things were gain to me and all of those things we can write down on a piece of paper are gain to us, but do we count them loss for Christ? Because that's what it means to be arrested. That's what it means to have the kingdom of Christ set up in your soul. That's what it means when we read something like we do in verse 3 where Paul is coming from. He's not speaking of any creature merit here or creature involvement, he's speaking about what Christ has done.

To be brought not to trust in self can be painful. It is painful. I think of Peter, you know, when you read that account in Matthew 26, it's only a few short verses, Peter is saying, "I will not deny thee. Though others will run, I will not deny thee." And just a few short verses later, he's saying, "I don't know the man" three times. Three times. I think of that

and it just makes my heart fall. I think of how that must have felt when the Lord looked on Peter and he assured Peter the great love that he had. "Peter, your sins are forgiven." And later when he appeared to Peter and said the things he did to Peter, the care for him, for that one, but it shows you what our verboseness is; it shows you what confidence in the flesh is. "O Lord, I'll never, never forsake you." But the Lord was forsaken. He was forsaken because we all at many times forsake him. But he stood in our place and put all of those sins away.

The last part I want to comment on this verse is the rejoicing in Christ Jesus. I told you when we started this message when I read that from Galatians 5 this union, when I read what Paul says here, "we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus." The child of God's joy is in Christ. Not thinking of Christ. Not standing next to Christ. Not professing Christ. Not saying, "I'm going to do this for Christ." The joy in Christ is in Christ. It's in that union.

I want to read you three things real quick out of the Lord's priestly prayer in John 17, high priestly prayer, and all three of these are union verses. I'm just going to read them and not say much about them and I want to ask you when I'm done reading these, do you find joy in what you hear? Is this where your joy is? Now listen to this, verse 10, "And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them."

Now listen to verse 21, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." That's that oneness. I find no greater joy than to be revealed the oneness that I have in Christ Jesus and because of his reconciliation, because of his mediation, because of his intercession, I have this oneness with the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." That's the world of the elect.

And then 24, "Father, I will that they also," and when the Lord says, "I will," you can count it. It's a done deal. Unlike us who is not as faithful, he is faithful. "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." That we behold his glory in him. When Paul says that in our text, "we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus," the joy of the child of God is in the oneness with Christ; is in the oneness with the Father; is in the oneness with the Holy Ghost. And the only way we can get there is to be brought there to see the finished work of Christ in what he's done, to wash us and renew us.

David said in Psalm 34:2, "My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad." His joy and his boast was in the Lord. That terminology, "in the LORD," what does that mean to you? Is it an abstract thought that you just have good thoughts of Christ or you have good thoughts of the Father or you have good thoughts of religion? Or is it deeper? Is it a relationship that you have because the seed of Christ is in you and you are in him?

I can't answer that for you, however, I can read 7 through 10 to show you what the Lord revealed to Paul what joy in Christ is. "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." Does this sound like someone whose brow-beaten and defeated and conflicted? No. I count it all loss. The knowledge of my Lord that he grows me in each day in the grace and knowledge of him, the excellency of the knowledge of Christ is so much better than all of that stuff that I denounced up there. It's nothing in comparison. And he has to bring each one of his children there to see the worthiness of Christ, 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." Christ is the prize. Christ is life. Christ is everything. And I pray that's the case in each child of God's life in here today, that the Lord would awaken us and show us that he has the pre-eminence, he is the pre-eminent one, and he is life.

Then here we go again, "And be found in him." Not beside him. Not thinking of him but to be found in him. Paul had a healthy understanding of this union. In him is where life is. To be found in him and where is in him?

"Not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law." That's what he just explained up there. All of the merit you have is the righteousness of the law. All of the things you bring to the Lord in your will worship is the righteousness of the law. I want to be found in him, in his righteousness.

"Not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of," what? "The faith of Christ." It's his to give and he gives it abundantly for his children to live by the faith of the Son of God.

"But that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." And that's the only way we'll apprehend Christ's finished work. And I've said it once this week and I'll say it again: faith does not apprehend circumstances in this life or future events, faith, the author and finisher of our faith is Christ and faith leads to Christ in his finished work.

"That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection," because that's where life is. Because he lives, the child of God lives because of this union, because of resurrection life in Christ, "and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." O Lord, conform us to what you died to. Lord, make us die to the world. Make us die to self. And Lord, make us die to the bondage of sin.

"For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

Dear heavenly Father, may you preach that to our souls this hour and the hour to come that you would be glorified. Show us, Lord, that you are our all in all. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.