

Philippians: Gospel Partnership

Confidence in Christ

Philippians 3:2-7 ESV [2] Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. [3] For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh—[4] though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: [5] circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; [6] as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. [7] But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

The person and work of Christ is the only thing of ultimate value therefore we ought to be vigilant to be found in him.

Introduction

Literature studies ⇒ compare characters in a literary work
 — HAMLET + LAERTES, VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN + CREATURE

3 Purposes:

- ① meaningful similarities + differences
- ② better understanding of the big picture
- ③ better appreciate deeper, more profound truths

Three Comparisons Indicating ~~that Christ is Life~~ *the supreme value of Christ*

- this is the deeper understanding

1. A General Comparison: Philippians versus Them (people who claim to be in the church)

Identity – Dogs vs. Circumcision

Dogs

- not a lovable pet, an inconsequential creature in a miserable condition
- confronted the opponents view of Jewish privilege, now privilege is determined by one's relationship to Christ
- cling to Christ you will share in the feast, cling to anything else and you remain outside scavenging food
- talking to those who were adversaries, but true for all not found in Christ – Arrogant?

↳ inconsequential in an ultimate sense
↳ meaningless apart from Christ - FUTILE

Circumcision

- Circumcision was a mark of identity with the people of God
- This is the circumcision of the heart, produced by the Spirit – Jeremiah 4:4
- This is the identity of those who belong in the new covenant, that are in Christ

Conduct – Evildoers vs. Spiritual worshippers

Evildoers = evil worker

- Contrary to fellow-worker Epaphroditus
- They are not gospel- partners
- May be pointing to the fact that they rely on their own works (circumcision)
- My work vs Christ's work

Spiritual Worshippers → "worship by the Spirit"

- Worship refers to carrying out religious duties – the service one offers to God
- A life oriented towards serving God, not men

Men → define who you are by what you do
 → define who you are by what you worship
 by who
how

Confidence – Mutilating vs. Glorifying

Mutilate the flesh

- They claimed to promote circumcision but were really promoting mutilation *because not the true circumcision*
- They had confidence in a path to God whose foundation was obedience to the Law
- They were glorying in their ability to earn their own salvation through works

→ surgery on the wrong limb

→ Do you celebrate what you have done?
 ↳ singing, took some great notes, gave offering \$ \$

Glory-ing in Christ Jesus

- Glory = to boast or take pride in, thus their confidence, boasting, bragging is in Christ
- Similarly, they put no confidence in the flesh
- Our works, born out of the flesh (frailty living under the bondage of sin and death) are not worthy of our confidence- false hope
- Christ is our confidence, not our works

→ false confidence
 [jeans repaired + their lip]

A comparison that results in a stark contrast between those who are in Christ and those who only claim to be.

ARE YOU "IN CHRIST"? OR, ONLY CLAIMING TO BE?

2. A Specific Comparison: Them versus Saul (Paul pre-conversion)

Adversaries

Things One Cannot Influence

- circumcised on the eighth day
 - literally, "with respect to circumcision, an eight-dayer"
 - he is part of the covenant with Abraham

- of the people of Israel
 - one could be circumcised and be a non-Israelite
 - Paul was a true blood, a genetic Israelite, an ethnic Israelite

- of the tribe of Benjamin
 - the tribe of Benjamin were known for being the faithful remnant after the exile in Babylon

- a Hebrew of Hebrews
 - an odd phrase that likely means that by every measurement possible, Paul is a Jew second to none

↳ how often do you glory in things you had no control over?!

Things Which One Can Influence

- as to the law, a Pharisee
 - held in high regard, particularly for their strict observance, even versus the dogs
 - one of the spiritual elite of Judaism
 - Paul was strict

- as to zeal, a persecutor of the church
 - an indication of intensity – on fire, passionately devoted
 - Paul was more zealous

- as to righteousness under the law, blameless.
 - Within the framework of the Law
 - No outstanding guilt under the provision of the law
 - Paul was unstained

Even by their own standards, and with their own warped and twisted framework, the adversaries had nothing on Paul. Whether things dependent solely on God's providence or in things in which one's own actions play an integral part, Paul wins by comparison. He demonstrates through the comparison that they even fail on by their own reckoning. This sets up his last comparison for a convincing demonstration of the superiority of Christ and of being found in Him.

3. A Universal Comparison: Saul versus Paul Everything is Loss Compared to Christ

- "But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ."
- All things which we make much of – ethnicity, nationality, *education,* accomplishments, discipline, passion, heritage, inheritance, *economic standing,* identity, conduct – pales in comparison to Christ
- Being found in Christ decimates all other things by which we might evaluate our lives.

Paul's comparison are not really between the Philippians and the "dogs" who they are in conflict with. Paul's comparison is ultimately between being found in Christ and being found outside of Christ. All things that we might consider gain, whether we are Philippians or Jews or zealous or disciplined or admired or ignored or virtuous or evil, all things are a loss compared to Christ.

- or b tw him
+ them or
him before
after

Comparing and Counting

Compare:

- Christians, *when you evaluate your life, take stock*
 - Not with other people, but with Christ
 - 2 Corinthians 10:12 ESV [12] Not that we dare to classify or compare ourselves with some of those who are commending themselves. **[**But when they measure themselves by one another and compare themselves with one another, they are without understanding.**]**
 - Let Christ be the standard of all your comparing

- Non-Christians

- Not arrogant, you think I'm wrong
- There is nothing in us that ultimately amounts to anything worthwhile apart from Christ
- Compare what you have to ~~that~~ Him

ultimately meaningless

↳ forgiveness, reconciliation, eternal life

Count: • C

- Count the benefits – forgiveness, peace with God, justification, purpose, eternity – But don't stop there
- Count Christ – Compare all things to the one true standard, the person of Christ
- Put your confidence in Him

*TALLY
RECKON
TABULATE*