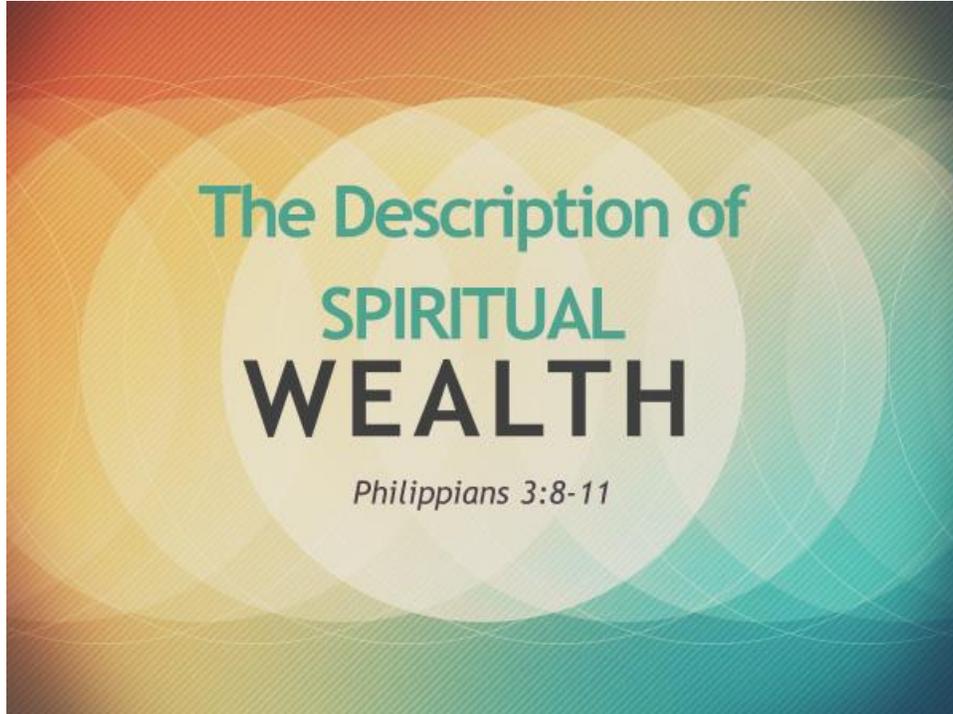


TBC SERMON NOTES & STUDY
September 13, 2020 – Dr. Bryan Ferrell, Senior Pastor

Video file: www.timberlakebaptist.org – (Or on Facebook & YouTube)



TBC - Paul's Philippians Epistle can be outlined in 9 parts:

1. Paul's Gracious Greeting 1:1-2
2. Paul's Thankful Prayer 1:3-11
3. Paul's Challenging Circumstances 1:12-26
4. Paul's Christlike Exhortations 1:27-2:18
5. Paul's Faithful Companions 2:19-30
- 6. Paul's Serious Warnings 3:1-4:1 (Today's Message)**
7. Paul's Joyful Instructions 4:2-9
8. Paul's Thankful Praise 4:10-20
9. Paul's Friendly Farewell 4:21-23

(→ Do not forget the Deeper Study lessons (3) attached below)

I. TBC Sermon Text today:

Philippians 3:8-11 (ESV)

8 Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ

9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—

10 that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,

11 that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

II. TBC Sermon Points:

4 Descriptions of the Surpassing Spiritual Wealth in Christ

- 1) The Fortune of Knowing Him (vs. 8)
- 2) The Treasure to Be Found In Him (vs. 9)
- 3) The Wealth of Fellowship Alongside Him (vs.10)
- 4) The Prize in Being Raised With Him (vs.11)

III. INTRODUCTION:

1 – Why is it a typical response for people with a genuine salvation experience to share the “Good News” with great zeal and passion?

2 – How was Paul’s “new life” zeal so much more impressive than what we see in a new profession of faith conversion today? (Think about Paul’s long-term ministry journey and commitment to the gospel)

3 – Why is Philippians 3 a perfect picture of understanding the passion and focus of Christ and His redemptive work? (Explain)

4) Discuss this statement Pastor Ferrell shared: “If you come to Christ as a king, He will send you away as a beggar. If you come to Him as a beggar, He will send you away as a king.”

1) The Fortune of Knowing Him (vs. 8)

a. What was the significance and uniqueness of Paul’s salvation testimony in Acts 9:1-9? Why was this an “outside” and circumstantial testimony of what happened to Paul? (Compare to Philippians 3 internal change)

Acts 9:1-9 “...As he was traveling, it happened that he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” And he said, “Who are You, Lord?” And He said, “I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, but get up and enter the city, and it will be told you what you must do.”

.....Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; and leading him by the hand, they brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.”

b. Describe the uniqueness of our choices working in conjunction with God’s light and grace provided to us.

2 Cor 4:6 For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

c. Why is salvation NOT passive? (Think about your involvement in response to God’s sovereign work)

1 Kings 8:60 “so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD is God; there is no one else.”

d. According to Pastor Ferrell, why was God using the LAW in the O.T.?

Jeremiah 31:33-34 “But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the Lord, “I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,” declares the Lord, “for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”

2) The Treasure to Be Found In Him (vs. 9)

> How we gain it

> Where it comes from

a. In your own words, explain what it means to be IN CHRIST as Paul uses this term often in the New Testament.

b. How is it that we are fully IN CHRIST in the exact moment of our turning in faith to Jesus Christ?

c. How significant is having Christ's righteousness in getting into heaven? (Explain according to Romans 10 below)

Romans 10:10-11 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; for "Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved

D. What is the best biblical definition of "faith?" (Read Hebrews 11:1-6 for help)

3) The Wealth of Fellowship Alongside Him (vs.10)

a. Why is it important to "KNOW" God? (Contrast knowing *about Him* Vs. *knowing Him intimately*)

b. Explain this statement; "To *know* God is to be saved."

c. Discuss this theological statement; "The *penalty* of sin was dealt with at our salvation and the *power* of sin is being dealt with in our sanctification." (Try to use Scripture in referencing your answers)

d. How is suffering effective in connecting with the Lord intimately? Why?

4) The Prize in Being Raised with Him (vs.11)

a. How would you explain glorification in relation to salvation and sanctification?

b. Why is it helpful to remember how destructive it was when you trusted in yourself compared to your undying faith and trust in Jesus Christ today?

- c. 2 Corinthians 5:8 How is death different to those who belong to Christ? Why?
- d. Why should we be focus on our eternal resurrection to glory as part of our faithful walk with Christ now?
- e. Discuss the many ways that eternal thinking can help us in this world?
- f. Read Revelation 20:12-14. Why is this important to know in our faithful walk with Christ? How is this linked to the Fear of God?

MY THOUGHTS & NOTES:

➤ **MEMORY SCRIPTURE: ISAIAH 64:6**

(Write out the Scripture 20 times if you find it difficult to memorize)

DEEPER STUDY #1: (SCRIPTURAL PASSAGE STUDY)

I. (3:7-11) Righteousness— Perfection— Paul: Paul sought to win Christ, to win His righteousness and His perfection. The one thing in life that Paul sought was the righteousness and perfection of Jesus Christ. He knew that no matter how good he could become, he could never become perfect. He still came short and he was still doomed to face death. Therefore, his only hope for living forever was the righteousness and perfection of Jesus Christ. He had to trust Christ; he had to focus his heart and life—all he was and had—upon Jesus Christ. He had to trust the righteousness and perfection of Jesus Christ to *cover him*. Therefore, he cast his heart and life upon Christ. He lived for Jesus Christ, and he trusted God to honor his commitment. He trusted God to *count his faith* as the righteousness and perfection of Jesus Christ. If God did not do this, he was lost and doomed to death forever; he could never gain perfection. His only hope was Christ and Christ alone. This is what the present passage is all about. Paul believed with all his heart that if he trusted Jesus Christ—that if he sought after the righteousness and perfection of Jesus Christ with all that he was and had—God would take his faith and *count it as righteousness*. God would honor his commitment to His Son by accepting and giving him eternal life. Note five significant points.

1. Paul had a *past experience* with Christ: there was a time when he had counted *his own righteousness* as loss (Phil. 3:7). Paul was referring to his conversion experience. There was a time when he had given up his own self-righteousness and works, his own attempts to become perfect. There was a time when he had accepted the fact that he could not become perfect—he could not gain righteousness—he could not make himself perfectly acceptable to God.

- a. Note that this is a past experience, a once-for-all experience. It is a definite time when Paul made a definite decision—a decision that he was unable to secure righteousness and perfection himself. If he was to become righteous and perfect, he had to trust the love of God—that God loved him enough to cover him with the righteousness and perfection of Christ.
- b. Note also that this did not mean that Paul quit trying to live for God. On the contrary, it meant that Paul tried more diligently than ever to live for God. When God saw Paul's total commitment to Christ, God knew that Paul's faith was genuine. He knew that Paul really believed that Christ was his Savior, his hope for perfection and righteousness—for eternity. If Paul had not committed himself totally to Christ, God would have known his faith was not genuine and God would not have saved Paul.

Thought 1. God sees our faith; whether or not it is genuine. Genuine faith makes a total commitment to Jesus Christ. A person who truly believes in Jesus Christ gives all he is and has to Christ. He counts his own effort and works, his own righteousness as loss—as nothing—in order to gain Christ.

"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23).

"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6).

2. Paul had a continuous experience with Christ: he constantly counted all things as loss and as waste in order to win Christ (Phil. 3:8). The word "count" is in the present tense; it is continuous action. When a person has made the decision to seek after Christ, he is *to continue* to seek after the knowledge of Christ—to learn all he can about the righteousness and perfection of Jesus Christ.

- ⇒ It is not a matter of making a decision to follow Christ, and then turning and walking on as a person has always walked—doing his own thing and fulfilling the desires of the flesh and the mind.

- ⇒ It is making a decision to follow Christ and continuing to seek after the knowledge of Him—continuing to seek to know Him more and more.
- a. Note that the knowledge of Christ is said to be excellent: it is the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. The knowledge of Jesus Christ is the most excellent knowledge in all the world. No other knowledge can give a person righteousness and perfection. No other knowledge can make a person acceptable to God and give him the right to live eternally.
 - b. Note what Paul says: "I have suffered the loss of all things." The words "have suffered" mean to forfeit and to cast away. The phrase all things includes not only the religious position Paul had attained, but the "social, financial, intellectual, and political" gains he had made as well (Lehman Strauss, *Devotional Studies in Philippians*, p.163). Wuest gives a graphic description of what Paul gave up to become a Christian believer.

"Paul was a citizen of Tarsus. At the time he lived there, only families of wealth and reputation were allowed to retain their Tarsian citizenship. This throws a flood of light upon Paul's early life. He was born into a home of wealth and culture. His family were wealthy Jews living in one of the most progressive of oriental cities. All this Paul left to become a poor itinerant missionary.

*"But not only did he forfeit all this when he was saved, but his parents would have nothing to do with a son who had in their estimation dishonored them by becoming one of those hated, despised Christians. They had reared him in the lap of luxury, had sent him to the Jewish school of theology in Jerusalem to sit at the feet of the great Gamaliel, and had given him an excellent training in Greek culture at the University of Tarsus, a Greek school of learning. But they had now cast him off. He was still forfeiting all that he had held dear, what for? He tells us, 'that I may win Christ'" (Kenneth S. Wuest. *Wuest's Word Studies*, Vol.2. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1966, p.91).*

"Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee" (Mark 10:28).

"And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me" (Luke 5:27).

"For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it" (Luke 9:24).

"So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:33).

"And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting" (Luke 18:29-30).

"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" (Phil. 3:8).

3. Paul sought a future experience with Christ: he sought to be found in Christ (Phil. 3:9). Paul was looking ahead either to death or to the return of Christ. When he came face to face with God, he wanted to be *found in Christ*. He wanted to stand before God in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, not in his own righteousness.

Note that the righteousness of God is *Christ Himself*. The righteousness of God does not refer to behavior or works or deeds of righteousness. No person can ever secure the righteousness of God by behavior or works or deeds—no matter how good the works or deeds may be. The righteousness of God is Jesus Christ Himself. A person has to trust the righteousness of Christ to cover him if he wishes to become acceptable to God.

"Christ, the righteousness which is of God" (Phil. 3:9).

"But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference" (Romans 3:21-22).

"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For *Christ is* the end of the law for *righteousness* to every one that believeth" (Romans 10:3-4).

"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. 1:30).

4. Paul sought a victorious experience with Christ: he sought to know Christ—to know His glorious power over the world and all that is in the world (Phil. 3:10).

This is one of the Bible's great verses of Scripture, a verse that should be memorized and that should dominate the believer's life. As clearly seen throughout this whole passage, Paul's great pursuit in life was to know Christ. This verse spells out exactly what he meant by knowing Christ.

- a. To know Christ is to know the power of His resurrection. The power of the Lord's resurrection refers to three great things (see note, Power—Ephes. 1:20 for discussion).
- b. To know Christ is to know the fellowship of His sufferings. Most of us are willing to share in the blessings of Christ but we want nothing to do with the sufferings of Christ. We shrink from the ridicule, questioning, and abuse He had to bear. There is nothing pleasant about suffering pain and having people oppose us. There is nothing wrong with being honest about the fact. Paul said that he wanted to know the *fellowship* of the Lord's sufferings. That is, he wanted to share in *the purpose for which Christ was suffering*. Why did Christ suffer? He suffered because He proclaimed the righteousness and salvation of God—because He proclaimed the way men could become acceptable to God and live forever. Paul was saying that he wanted to suffer right along with Christ, suffer for the same cause—suffer for proclaiming the righteousness and salvation of God.

There is no question about it: if we live for Christ—proclaim the righteousness and salvation of God—we shall suffer persecution. Why? Why would the world persecute anyone who brings the hope of eternal life to them? Because some persons want to live their lives like they want, and a righteous life and message condemns them. Therefore, they oppose anything that keeps them from living a life that pleases their own personal desires and flesh. The believer must know: he shall suffer persecution if he truly follows Christ.

"Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22).

"For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake" (Phil. 1:29).

"Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (2 Tim. 2:10).

"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12).

"But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; but sanctify the

Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ" (1 Peter 3:14-16).

"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (1 Peter 2:21).

Note one other thing: God draws close to the believer when he suffers for the cause of Christ. God gives a very special sense of His presence, love, and care when the believer is suffering. In fact, His presence is so near and dear it is called "the spirit of glory and of God" which rests upon the suffering believer.

"If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified" (1 Peter 4:14).

- c. To know Christ is to be made conformable to His death. Jesus Christ subjected Himself totally to God. He put His own flesh and desires to death; He did only what God willed and desired. Even when He died, His flesh did not desire to die. He did not want to take the sins of the world upon Himself and be separated from God (cp. Matthew 26:39, 42). But He subjected Himself to God's will. God willed Him to die for the sins of the world; therefore, Christ subjected His flesh and desires to do exactly what God willed. He subjected His flesh and desires and died for the sins of men.

Paul sought to be conformed to the death of Christ. He sought to subject himself totally to God—to put his flesh and desires to death and to do only the will and desire of God.

⇒ Paul sought to *deny himself and take up the cross* of Christ daily.

"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23).

⇒ Paul sought to *crucify his old man* with Christ.

"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Romans 6:6).

⇒ Paul sought to count himself dead to sin but alive to God.

"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:11).

⇒ Paul sought to *kill himself* all day long.

"As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter" (Romans 8:36).

⇒ Paul sought to *die daily*.

"I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily" (1 Cor. 15:31).

⇒ Paul sought to be always *delivered to death* for Jesus' sake.

"For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh" (2 Cor. 4:11).

⇒ Paul sought to be *crucified with Christ*.

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

⇒ Paul sought to be *dead with Christ*.

"Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances" (Col. 2:20).

"It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him" (2 Tim. 2:11).

5. Paul sought an eternal experience with Christ: he sought to be resurrected from the dead (Phil. 3:11). Paul sought to use all means—to commit himself totally—for this one great purpose: to attain to the resurrection of the dead. The words "if by any means" are not expressing doubt and uncertainty. Paul was not questioning the resurrection nor if he would be resurrected. Paul was simply saying what he had already stated (Phil. 3:7-11). He uses all he is and has—all the means at his disposal—for this one great purpose: to attain to the resurrection from the dead. He is totally committed to that glorious day of redemption. He lives for that day and for that day alone.

What is so significant about the resurrection of the dead? What is to be so different about that day? At death, we go to be with the Lord. Quicker than the eye can blink, when our time comes, we shall stand face to face with Christ. What is the difference between meeting Christ then and the resurrection? Why did Paul long for the resurrection over and above his meeting the Lord at death? There are at least two significant reasons why the resurrection, the glorious day of redemption, takes precedence over our meeting the Lord at death.

- a. The glorious day of resurrection will launch the events that will soon bring about the new heavens and earth. At death, when we go to be with the Lord, the world continues on in its sin and shame, disease and death, evil and corruption. *God is still being...*
 - cursed and dishonored.
 - denied and ignored.
 - rebelled against and rejected.

But as stated, the resurrection will launch the events that bring about the glorious day of redemption—the new heavens and earth—the day when all evil and sin and the cursing and dishonor of God will be stopped. God will become All in All: worshipped and served in glory and majesty, dominion and power forever and ever.

"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28-29).

"And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:40).

"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (John 11:25).

"And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust" (Acts 24:15).

"Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you" (2 Cor. 4:14).

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thes. 4:16-17).

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter 3:10-13).

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away" (Rev. 21:1).

- b. The glorious day of resurrection will be the day when believers will have earthly bodies transformed and recreated into perfect eternal bodies. At death when we go to be with the Lord, we do not receive our perfect eternal body. We will either be given temporary spiritual bodies or live with Christ as disembodied spirits. But as stated, at the resurrection the elements of our present bodies will be called forth by God from all over the world, and the elements shall be transformed into perfect and eternal bodies. And we shall live with and for God forever.

"So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is

sown a natural body: it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body" (1 Cor. 15:42-44).

"And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 15:49-54; cp. 1 Cor. 15:12-58).

"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life" (2 Cor. 5:1-4).

"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (Phil. 3:20-21).

(Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible - Commentary - Galatians, Ephesians, Philipians, Colossians)

MY THOUGHTS & NOTES FROM THE DEEPER BIBLICAL STUDY:

(Note: Hiding the Truth of God's Word in your heart happens when you determine to practice what you have learned in obedience)

DEEPER STUDY #2: (ADVANCED EXEGETICAL STUDY)

In Phil 3:7-8b Paul performs the first type of cost–benefit analysis, where gains outweigh losses. In this case, however, Paul’s analysis is used not to decide on a course of action but to explain the results of an action already taken: “but what things were gains to me, these things I have come to reckon a loss on account of Christ.” Paul allows that, when viewed on its own terms, living as a committed Pharisee produces a net gain, that any losses incurred by that lifestyle are more than matched by the “gains” accrued. But from Paul’s new perspective as a Christ-believer, a very different analysis emerges. Any gains that came from being a good Pharisee are completely overshadowed by the “surpassing greatness [τὸ ὑπερέχον] of the knowledge of Christ,” so much so that Paul now reckons them mere “table-scrap.” Paul had used this kind of reasoning earlier in 2 Corinthians. Speaking of the comparative “glory” (δόξα) of what he calls the “new covenant” versus the old, he writes, “for what had glory [τὸ δεδοξασμένον] turns out in this case not to have had glory [οὐ δεδόξασται] on account of the glory that now far surpasses it [τῆς ὑπερβαλλούσης δόξης]” (2 Cor 3:10). What was once glorious turns out not to have been glorious at all when viewed in light of what is surpassingly glorious. It is striking that in both Philippians and 2 Corinthians Paul’s evaluative logic—“what was X is now not-X in light of what is surpassingly X”—results from an altered state of consciousness interpreted as a mystical experience of Christ that he calls γνῶσις: “the knowledge [γνῶσεως] of the glory of God in the face of Jesus” (2 Cor 4:6), and “the knowledge [γνῶσεως] of Christ Jesus my lord” (Phil 3:8). This gnosis is personal and intimate: according to the 2 Corinthians text it is found in the “face [προσώπῳ] of Jesus Christ,” whereas in Philippians it is “of Christ Jesus my [μου] lord.” It is also transformative: in 2 Cor 3:18 believers who achieve “γνῶσις of the glory of God [τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ]” are “transformed from glory to glory” (μεταμορφούμεθα ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν), while in Phil 3:10 Paul aspires to be “conformed [συμμορφιζόμενος] to [Christ’s] death” and eventually to his resurrection when “[Christ] will transform [μετασχηματίσει] the body of our humiliation to be conformed [σύμμορφον] to the body of his glory [δόξης]” (3:20). The metamorphosis of the seer was a central element in emerging Jewish mysticism. Paul’s language of γνῶσις, however, finds an impressive parallel in “pagan” mysticism and magic.

Excursus: *PGM* 3.591–611 and Paul’s γνῶσις Χριστοῦ
PGM (Greek Magical Papyrus) 3.591–611 is an ancient prayer of thanksgiving. It contains a number of striking parallels to Paul’s description of γνῶσις in Phil 3:7-11 and 2 Cor 3:18. Slightly different versions of the prayer appear in the Coptic *Prayer of Thanksgiving* (NHC VI.7) and in the Hermetic *Asclepius* (41b), which

suggests (1) that it was an independent composition and (2) that it was popular in certain mystical circles. The prayer expresses gratitude for the gift of γνῶσις and the transformation or “deification” that it brings. In *PGM 3* the prayer comes at the end of a larger “spell to establish a relationship with Helios.” In *Pr. Thank.* it is added as a kind of postscript to a dramatic dialogue depicting the ascent of a mystagogue and his initiation to the eighth and ninth (i.e., supraplanetary and therefore divine) spheres where a knowledge of God is acquired. Here are the relevant lines (595–601):

“[We give thanks to you for] having granted [χαρισάμενος] us understanding [νοῦν], speech [λόγον], and knowledge [γνῶσιν]: understanding, that we might understand you; speech that we might call upon you; knowledge, that we might know you [ἵνα σε ἐπιγνώσωμεν]. We rejoice that you have shown yourself to us [σεαυτὸν ἡμῖν ἔδειξας]. We rejoice that while we were still in bodies [ἐν πλάσμασιν; the Coptic reads “still in the body (σῶμα)”] you began to deify [ἀπεθέωσας] us by the knowledge of yourself [τῇ σεαυτοῦ γνώσει].”

The more obvious similarities to Paul include the following: (1) that γνῶσις is more than simple understanding or νοῦς; (2) that it has as its object a god and comes as a gift or χάρισμα of that god; (3) that it is obtained when a god or goddess shows himself or herself to the mystic; (4) that it is transformative or “deifying,” or in Paul’s case angelifying or perhaps “Christifying”; and (5) that the transformation it produces begins even in this life.

- **8c-11** Verses 8c-11 consist of two lengthy purpose clauses (vv. 8c-9 and vv. 10-11), which begin respectively “that I might gain Christ” (ἵνα Χριστὸν κερδήσω) and “that I might know him” (τοῦ γνῶναι αὐτόν). The relationship between these two clauses is not immediately clear. Since, however, in 3:7-8b Paul insists that he has now replaced past “gains” with a desire for the “knowledge” of Christ, it is reasonable to assume that to “gain” Christ and to “know” him denote the same thing, though expressed from different points of view. Verses 8c-9 express Paul’s desire to be objectively transformed, while vv. 10-11 express his desire for the subjective experience that accompanies and in a sense produces this metamorphosis. In both cases the outcome is the same, namely, Paul’s eschatological salvation: to “be found in him” (v. 9a), to “arrive at the resurrection from the dead” (v. 11).

- **8c-9** The purpose clause beginning in vv. 8c-9 is governed by two finite verbs: “in order that I might gain [κερδήσω] Christ and be found [εὑρεθῶ] in him” (3:8c-9a). The first verb looks back to the earlier antithesis of “loss” and “gain” in 3:7-8b, while the second introduces a new theme of eschatological salvation based on

how one is “found” at the last judgment. This new theme, the believer’s standing in the final judgment, is then developed in a subordinate clause: “not having my own righteousness that is from the law, but the one that is through faith in Christ, the righteousness that is from God based on such faith” (3:9b). The believer who *gains* Christ in this life will be *found* to be righteous in the next.

Verses 8c-9 raise three problems for the interpreter, which I will treat in the following order: (1) the precise nuance of “*my own* righteousness,” (2) what Paul means by “the righteousness that is from God,” and (3) what it might mean to gain “Christ” and be found in “him.” Verse 9 also contains the much-discussed expression πίστις Χριστοῦ (here translated “faith in Christ”), which I will discuss in a separate excursus.

What does Paul mean when he speaks of “not having *my own* righteousness that is from the law”? Bultmann famously interpreted this to mean Paul’s earlier *self*-righteousness as a law-observant Jew, a righteousness that Paul would later reject as having been arrogant and sinful. But the juxtaposition here is not between Paul’s former allegedly arrogant *self* and God (as Bultmann must maintain), but between the Jewish law and God: “the [righteousness] that is from the law [ἐκ νόμου]” and the “righteousness that is from God [ἐκ θεοῦ].” The distinction, therefore, is simply between the righteousness that Paul was able to achieve as he earnestly sought to live by the law, a righteousness Paul imagines as being *without* divine enablement—thus the “my own”—and the righteousness he hopes to achieve as a Christ-believer, a righteousness produced at least in part by God’s power in him. Paul made the same point in Rom 10:3: “being ignorant of the righteousness of God and seeking to establish their own righteousness, they did not submit themselves to the righteousness of God.” Here again the criticism is not that Jews are arrogantly self-righteous but that they have failed to recognize Paul’s gospel of divine empowerment according to which God produces righteousness in Christ-believers, who are therefore not left to “their own” resources. For Paul this failure is not a sin but a tragedy with far-reaching consequences (Rom 10:1). Most scholars today rightly reject Bultmann’s reading for the theological imposition that it is.

This brings us to the second expression: “the righteousness that is from God.” Scholars who, following Bultmann, interpret “my righteousness” as *self*-righteousness typically go on to interpret “the righteousness that is from God” as an *alien* righteousness that is fictively imputed to the Christ-believer—a righteousness that effects little or no change in the believer’s person and that requires little or no effort on the believer’s part. But this finds no support in Paul and certainly not in Philipians, where God “who began a good work within you

will continue to perfect it until the Day of Christ” (1:6), and where the Philippians are urged to “work hard to accomplish your own salvation” (2:12). In other words, just as “my righteousness that is from the law” was an *actual* righteousness achieved by earnestly following Torah, so “the righteousness that is from God” is an *actual* righteousness produced over time as God now aids the believer in his or her own efforts at moral betterment. The only difference is that, to Paul’s mind, the righteousness achieved with God’s help offers a better prospect of “resurrection” (3:11).

To be fair, Paul could have been clearer. Judging from the letter of James (2:14-26), even Paul’s contemporaries misunderstood him. The principal point of confusion lies in Paul’s repeated insistence that the righteousness of Christ-believers is through “faith,” which he then neatly contrasts with the “works” of the law. Taken on its own, this antithesis between “faith” and “works” might seem to support the notion of an imputed versus an actual righteousness. But Paul is engaging in rhetorical shorthand in which both “faith” and “works” are metonyms for competing theories of how gentiles may join the eschatological people of God and prepare themselves for the final judgment. The latter theory, which Paul designates “works,” holds that gentiles become members of the people of God by submitting to the Jewish law and that they prepare themselves for judgment by following its sanctifying precepts. The former theory, which Paul designates “faith,” claims that gentiles join simply by believing that Jesus was the Messiah and that they prepare themselves for the judgment by living out the demands of his spirit, which now possesses them *and aids in their transformation*. As is often the case with Paul, clarity is sacrificed for rhetorical point. It bears repeating that, as regards the Philippians, Paul is concerned that this process has been stalled and that they are no longer making “progress in faith” (1:25).

Excursus: πίστις Χριστοῦ

In Phil 3:9 Paul speaks of having a righteousness that is διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ, which I have translated “through faith in Christ.” Scholars debate how best to interpret this expression, which appears with slight variation elsewhere in Paul’s authentic letters in Gal 2:16 (twice), 20; 3:22; and Rom 3:22, 26. At issue is the meaning of the genitive Χριστοῦ. It is often claimed that a “literal” English translation of πίστις Χριστοῦ would be “faith of Christ.” But such a translation already prejudices the case, since while Greek and English genitives have roughly the same range of meaning, the relative frequency with which these various meanings occur is significantly different for each language. As to the case in point, the Greek expression πίστις Χριστοῦ can readily mean either “faith in Christ” (an objective genitive) or “Christ’s faith” (a subjective genitive), whereas the stilted

English expression “faith of Christ” can realistically mean only the latter. A further ambiguity lies in the noun πίστις, which can either mean “faith” or “faithfulness,” so that in the case of a subjective genitive the phrase might also be rendered “Christ’s faithfulness.”

The principal argument in favor of a subjective genitive is that in all other instances where Paul uses πίστις with the genitive, the genitive is subjective. This is not an insignificant observation, but it needs to be carefully evaluated. In this case it is far from determinative, since πίστις Χριστοῦ is a technical expression in Paul’s theological vocabulary and therefore must be treated on its own terms. In other words, given his distinctive theory of justification by faith—which is the context in which the expression πίστις Χριστοῦ first appears and afterwards always occurs—it would not have been unreasonable for Paul to expect his readers to understand the genitive in expressions like πίστις ὑμῶν (“your faith”) in one sense and the expression πίστις Χριστοῦ in another, which is of course precisely how many of Paul’s interpreters have understood these expressions, not least the early Greek speakers Origen and Chrysostom, as we shall see below.

A second argument for the subjective genitive is that it avoids an unacceptable level of redundancy—or at least what certain proponents of the subjective genitive feel is an unacceptable level of redundancy. For instance, if πίστις Χριστοῦ is read as an objective genitive in Gal 2:16, then Paul refers to faith “in” Christ three times in three consecutive clauses: twice as πίστις Χριστοῦ and once as εἰς Χριστὸν πιστεύειν (“believe in Christ”), a repetitiveness that, according to Leander Keck, yields an “un-Pauline, wooden redundancy.” Judgments regarding what constitutes an acceptable prose style are necessarily a matter of taste, and it is hard not to believe that there is some confusion here between normative judgments and historical ones, since among at least some of Paul’s contemporaries varied repetition had become something of an art. At any rate, Paul is certainly not above repeating himself, not least when sermonizing on the topic of the inclusion of the gentiles. In this case, this fact is pointedly demonstrated by Gal 2:16 itself, where alongside the three faith-expressions just noted the expression ἔργα νόμου, “works of the Law,” appears verbatim three times. I will return to this fact below.

A third argument sometimes used in support of a subjective genitive is that it makes better theological sense. It is not always clear what a particular interpreter means by this, but again it is hard not to believe that in at least some instances normative judgments are influencing historical ones. Most interpreters, however, admit that Paul’s theology, insofar as it can be historically reconstructed, will accommodate either the subjective or objective genitive.

In turning to arguments favoring an objective genitive, it bears repeating—especially for modern English speakers—that an objective genitive governing πίστις is a completely natural reading of the Greek, as can readily be seen by the comments of such competent early Greek speakers as Origen and Chrysostom, who not only read Χριστοῦ in the expression πίστις Χριστοῦ as an objective genitive but felt no pressure to explain or justify that reading. Origen, in his commentary on Romans, glosses the expression τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ (which I would translate “the one who has faith in Jesus,” but which might also be rendered “the one who has Jesus’s faith[fulness]”) in Rom 3:26 unambiguously as “those who believe *in* Jesus [εἰς τὸν Ἰησοῦν].” Similarly, Chrysostom in *De incomprehensibili Dei natura*, hom. 2.419, commenting on the expression διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ in Phil 3:9, writes: “[Paul] then goes on to tell us what sort of faith he means, namely, the faith ‘of knowing him and the power of his resurrection and the sharing in his sufferings.’” Again, Christ is the object of faith. Though not a native Greek speaker, Augustine also takes it for granted that the genitive in the expression πίστις Χριστοῦ is objective: “the faith by which one believes in Christ” (*fidem qua creditur in Christum; Spir. et litt.* 9). Proponents of the objective genitive also rightly note that, while Paul speaks of Christ as the object of faith in numerous places, nowhere does he unambiguously speak of Christ as the subject of faith. Indeed, the principal evidence for the latter view is the phrase πίστις Χριστοῦ itself. So, for instance, Christ is never the subject of the verb πιστεύειν (“to believe”) nor is he ever called πιστός (“believing” or “faithful”) as, for instance, Abraham is. Even in those contexts in which the expression πίστις Χριστοῦ is used, no unambiguous reference is made in the surrounding discussion to Christ’s alleged “faith” or “faithfulness.” What the ensuing discussion does develop, however, is Christ as the object of faith. Thus Gal 3:26: διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν Χριστῷ, “through faith *in* Christ,” and Rom 3:25: διὰ πίστεως ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι, “through faith *in* his blood.” This is precisely what one would expect if an objective genitive were intended.

This raises the question why, if Paul meant “faith *in* Christ,” he used the genitive in the first place, given its potential for misunderstanding—though that potential was considerably less likely for a native Greek speaker, as I have already indicated. At this point it is important to say something more about Paul’s prose style—not what we think it should have been but what it actually was—and to note in particular his penchant for balanced clauses characterized by such figures as isocolon, wordplay, paradox, and especially antithesis. Nowhere is this penchant more in evidence than in Gal 2:14-21, where the expression πίστις Χριστοῦ first appears in Paul’s letters, and where it may well have been coined, a possibility I will return to in the next paragraph. Paul’s indictment of Peter in 2:14 trades on the antithesis of Jew and

gentile: “If you, being a Jew, live as a gentile and not as a Jew, how is it that you compel the gentiles to live as Jews?” Similarly, in 2:19 he deploys the double antithesis of dying to the law and living to God: “to the law [νόμῳ] I died [ἀπέθανον] in order that to God [θεῷ] I might live [ζήσω],” which is then followed immediately in 2:20a by the brilliant isocolon ζῶ δὲ οὐκέτι ἐγώ, ζῆ δὲ ἐν ἐμοὶ Χριστός, “I no longer live, but Christ lives in me,” where antithesis shades into the paradox of spirit possession.

We are of course here concerned with the intervening material in Gal 2:15-16, where Paul continues the antithesis of Jew and gentile from 2:14 but adds a further antithesis—again a double antithesis—between ἔργα νόμου (“works of law”) and our expression πίστις Χριστοῦ. This is the first appearance in Paul of πίστις Χριστοῦ, which is here clearly coined on analogy with ἔργα νόμου, an expression already in use at Qumran and perhaps by Paul’s law-observant opponents in Galatia. Any ambiguity introduced by the genitive is immediately clarified in the next clause (2:16b)—καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεύσαμεν, “even we have believed *in* Christ Jesus” —after which the conceit can be repeated without misunderstanding: ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου (“from faith [in] Christ and not from works of law” 2:16c). The expression appears again in slightly different terms in Gal 2:20, where Paul is wrapping up his argument and rehearsing key themes, and later in 3:22, where it stands in contrast to the abbreviated ἐκ νόμου, as it will also do in Phil 3:9. The expression appears two more times, in Rom 3:22 and 26, where it is again in contrast to ἔργα νόμου. In answer, then, to the question why Paul chose the genitive, it would appear that he coined the expression πίστις Χριστοῦ as a double antithesis to the expression ἔργα νόμου in Gal 2:16, and that he afterwards repeated this antithesis to explain and defend his ideas on justification.

This leaves us with the third problem confronting the interpreter of 3:8c-9, which for lack of a better term I will call Paul’s “personalism”: “that I might gain *Christ* and be found in *him*.” For Paul all Christ-believers are possessed by the “spirit of Christ” (πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ; Rom 8:9; Gal 4:6; cf. 2:20) and are therefore already “in Christ” (ἐν Χριστῷ), one of Paul’s most distinctive expressions. Here, however, Paul allows that there is a further sense in which a Christ-believer may not yet be “in him” (ἐν αὐτῷ), a finding that will be made only at the final judgment. This takes us to the heart of Paul’s gospel, which is radically Christ-centered. Paul claims that Christ-believers are not only *possessed* by Christ (“in Christ” in the first sense) but that as a result of this possession they can be progressively *transformed* into his image (“in him” in the second sense): “my children, for whom I labor in birth *a second time* [πάλιν] until Christ is formed [μορφωθῆ] in you”

(Gal 4:19; cf. 1 Cor 4:15). This process of transformation is completed in resurrection: “just as we bore the image [εικόνα] of the earthly one, so we will bear the image [εικόνα] of the heavenly one” (1 Cor 15:49). But it is begun in earnest now: “we all with unveiled face beholding the glory of the Lord reflected [in Christ] are metamorphosed [μεταμορφούμεθα] into that same image [τὴν αὐτὴν εικόνα] from glory to glory.” To put this in the language of Phil 3:8c-9, “to gain Christ” means to be transformed into Christ’s image in this life, while “to be found in him” means to be judged righteous (i.e., fully [sufficiently?] transformed) in the final judgment.

• **10-11** Verses 10-11 constitute a second purpose clause that repeats and interprets the earlier purpose clause of vv. 8c-9, though now from the viewpoint of the Christ-believer’s subjective experience: whereas vv. 8c-9 spoke of *gaining* Christ, vv. 10-11 speak of *knowing* him. This allows Paul to amplify the theme of knowing Christ introduced at 3:8a. Formally, 3:10-11 is a graded list consisting of five items: “that I (1) might know him (2) and the power of his resurrection (3) and fellowship of his sufferings, (4) [even to the point of] being conformed to his death, (5) if somehow I might arrive at the resurrection from the dead!” It is generally agreed that the first item is explicated by items 2 to 5. A problem arises, however, when we seek to understand how items 2 to 5 are related to each other. A common solution is to see a chiasm, with item 2 corresponding to item 5 and item 3 to item 4. But this gives too much weight to form over substance and ignores the list’s obvious emotional crescendo in item 5. Paul is writing with great pathos, and his words both here and earlier in vv. 8c-9 are driving toward an eschatological conclusion, which he now explicitly presents as a quest: “if somehow *I might arrive at* [καταντήσω] the resurrection from the dead.” It is better, therefore, to allow for a linear progression of some sort, even if the result is not so tidy. I will first comment on the syntax of vv. 10-11. Items 2 and 3 continue to be governed by the infinitive “know” (γινῶναι) expressed in item 1: “that I might know him *and* the power of his resurrection *and* fellowship of his sufferings.” Item 4 carries its own verbal form, the participle συμμορφιζόμενος, “being conformed to,” while item 5 is a purpose clause expressed dramatically as the conditional “if somehow [εἴ πως] I might arrive at” A final syntactical observation concerns the textual problem in v. 10. I have already indicated in the textual notes above that the manuscript tradition is unclear whether Paul repeats the definite article before “fellowship” (“the power of his resurrection and *the* [τὴν] fellowship of his sufferings”) or omits it (“the power of his resurrection and fellowship of his sufferings”). If the latter is the case—and internal evidence points in that direction—then items 2 and 3 are further linked by the fact that they share the same article.

Perhaps the most natural way to read vv. 10-11 is as a kind of “curriculum” for knowing Christ (item 1) and thereby achieving resurrection from the dead (item 5), with the curriculum proper coming in items 2 to 4. The first element in the curriculum (item 2 in the overall list) is to know “the power [δύναμιν] of [Christ’s] resurrection.” In his evolving criticism of the Jewish law, Paul eventually settled on the problem of empowerment. According to Romans, the law is correct in naming sin (3:20; 7:7) but “powerless” (ἀδύνατος) to overcome it (8:3; cf. Gal 3:21). Paul’s gospel, on the other hand, conveys “the power [δύναμις] of God for salvation for all who believe” (1:16; cf. 1 Cor 1:18, 24; Rom 15:13). Through the gospel, believers come to be possessed by the “spirit” of the resurrected Christ (Rom 8:9; cf. Gal 4:6), who as a “life-giving [ζωοποιούν] spirit” (1 Cor 15:45) now conveys the power of God for their transformation: “the one who raised Christ from the dead will *give life to* [ζωοποιήσει] your dead bodies through his spirit that inhabits you” (Rom 8:11). When, therefore, in Phil 3:10 Paul describes the first element in his curriculum as knowing the “power of Christ’s resurrection,” he is presumably referring to the experience of sensing oneself possessed by Christ: “I no longer live, but Christ lives in me” (Gal 2:20). The most obvious channel for this experience was ecstatic worship. But Paul also encouraged his followers to cultivate this experience on a more routine basis by variously “walk[ing] according to/in the Spirit” (Rom 8:4; Gal 5:16), “mind[ing] the things of the Spirit” (Rom 8:5), “[being] led by the Spirit” (Gal 5:18; Rom 8:14), “follow[ing] the Spirit” (Gal 5:25), and thereby “put[ting] to death the deeds of the body by the Spirit” (Rom 8:13).

The second element in Paul’s curriculum (item 3 in the overall list) is to know the “fellowship [κοινωνίαν] of [Christ’s] sufferings [παθημάτων].” Christ-believers gain their initial experience of Christ in baptism when the spirit of Christ comes to possess them: “God sent the spirit of his son into our hearts, crying ‘Abba!’ which means father” (Gal 4:6). They deepen that “fellowship” through suffering: “it has been given to you . . . not only to believe [πιστεύειν] . . . but also to suffer [πάσχειν]” (Phil 1:29). It is difficult to be more precise about the relationship in Paul’s mind between believers’ possession by Christ and their suffering with him. One possibility is that the power that comes from possession makes the endurance of suffering possible. Another possibility is that possession by the spirit of Christ is made even more palpable—one senses a “fellowship” with Christ—through belief that one is suffering with him (2 Cor 12:9; cf. 4:7; Rom 8:23-27). Needless to say, these possibilities (and there may be others) are not mutually exclusive. The complex psychosomatic relationship between possession, suffering, and symbolic death in the experience of many shamans offers a possible heuristic analogy.

This leads to the third and final element in Paul’s curriculum (the fourth item in the list): “[even to the point of] being conformed to his death.” The language here is metaphorical and hyperbolic, but the hyperbole is that of religious enthusiasm, and for Paul, at least, the superlative experience it seeks to describe was real, as the language of metamorphosis (“being conformed”; συμμορφιζόμενος) makes clear. Paul uses similar imagery and a similar progression from empowerment to suffering to death in 2 Cor 4:8-10: “Now we have this treasure [the spirit of Christ?] in earthen pots, in order that it might be seen that the power which is beyond comparison [ἡ ὑπερβολὴ τῆς δυνάμεως] belongs to God and not to us. In every way we are afflicted, but not crushed; despairing, but not utterly desperate; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the death of Jesus [τὴν νέκρωσιν τοῦ Ἰησοῦ]” (trans. Furnish). The fifth and final item in Paul’s list is climactic: “if somehow I might arrive at the resurrection from the dead!” Paul’s tentativeness regarding his resurrection—“if somehow”—calls for comment. According to Josephus, the Pharisees believed that, while all the dead would be judged, only the righteous would experience resurrection, by which account “resurrection” is equivalent to final salvation. This seems to be the way Paul is using the term here, and his usage elsewhere is consistent with this: he uses “resurrection” when speaking of the fate of the righteous (including, of course, Jesus) and “destruction” when speaking of the fate of the unrighteous. The point of v. 11, then, is that Paul’s continuing efforts to “know” Christ are tantamount to his ongoing quest for salvation, which quest the Philippians must imitate (Phil 1:19; 2:12). Paul will develop this theme further in 3:12-16.

Analysis

Paul continues to argue through personal example for the thesis of 3:1 that the Christ-believers at Philippi must learn to “rejoice in the Lord,” by which he means take consolation in an ever-increasing “knowledge of Christ.” Paul argued this in 3:2-11 by way of rhetorical comparison (σύγκρισις). Now in 3:12-16 he employs a new figure, ἐπιδιόρθωσις or self-correction (3:12-14), followed by a short exhortation (3:15-16). Paul’s specific objective in these verses is to highlight the claim adumbrated in 3:7-11 that for the Christ-believer the knowledge of Christ remains a relentless quest. To illustrate this mind-set—“Let as many of us, therefore, who are ‘perfect’ *think* this way, and if in anything you *think* otherwise . . .”—Paul introduces the image of a runner in the final stretch of a race when all of his or her attention is focused on the finish line. Consistent with the figure of self-correction Paul adopts a more conversational style that includes direct address as well as several instances of ellipsis. Formally, the self-correction of 3:12-14 consists of two antithetical sentences (v. 12 and vv. 13-14), while the exhortation of 3:15-16 doubles as a *conclusio* to all of 3:2-16.

(Hermeneia - Philippians: A Commentary.)

MY THOUGHTS & NOTES FROM THE EXEGETICAL STUDY:

DEEPER STUDY #3: (PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL STUDY)

(Write a brief personal summary at the end of the following article noting the clear dangers in trusting in our own righteousness.)

**Trusting in Our Own
Righteousness is a Thing Fatal
to the Soul**

*Jonathon Edwards, vol. 18 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000)
pages 163-170.*

TRUSTING IN OUR OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS for justification or acceptance with God, or the having the ground of our expectation of God's favor in a high and false apprehension of our own excellency, as related to God's favor, is a thing fatal to the soul, and what will prevent salvation. This is evident,

I. By Romans 9:31–32. “But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law.” Here 'tis evident,

1. That this that Israel did that is here spoken of is fatal, because 'tis said they attained not to the law of righteousness for this reason; this is given as the main reason of their missing of it. And then it's evident by the context, for that is what the Apostle is speaking of, viz. how the

greater part of that nation miss of salvation and shall be vessels of wrath; and indeed, this is what he is upon throughout the whole chapter.

2. That by seeking or following after the law of righteousness by the works of the law, is meant seeking justification by the works of the law. For what is here expressed by following after the law of righteousness, is in the preceding verse, where the Apostle is evidently speaking of the same thing, called following after righteousness, by which is doubtless intended a becoming righteous in the sight of God, or to his acceptance. When it is said, Israel sought or followed after the law of righteousness by the works of the law, 'tis as much as to say, Israel sought and expected to be found in God's appointed way of justification by performing the works of the law.

3. 'Tis evident that by the works of the law here is meant not only a conformity to Jewish ordinances of worship, but our own moral righteousness or excellency, consisting in our obedience to the laws of God in general, whether moral, ceremonial or whatever; because what is called here the works of the law, is called in the Romans 10:3 their own righteousness, where the same thing is evidently intended by the reference the Apostle has there to what is said here. And doubtless by the works of the law is meant the same as the Apostle means by the righteousness of the law in the Romans 10:5, where that expression is evidently used as synonymous with our own righteousness (Romans 10:3), and so they are used as synonymous (Philippians 3:6, Philippians 3:9). But doubtless by their own righteousness is meant the same as their own goodness or moral excellency, and not only that part of it that consisted in their obedience to the ceremonial law. And again, we often find the works of the law set by this Apostle in opposition to the free grace of God, and therefore thereby must be intended our own excellency. For wherein does grace appear, but in being bestowed on them that are no more excellent, that are so unworthy, so far from deserving anything? Romans 3:20, Romans 3:24, Romans 3:27, Romans

3:28; and Titus 3:5, where, instead of works of law, the Apostle says works of righteousness; Romans 11:6 and Romans 4:4; Galatians 5:4; Ephesians 2:8, Ephesians 2:9.

And then where the Apostle speaks of the works of the law, when speaking of this matter of justification, he evidently means not only works of the ceremonial, but also moral law, as Romans 3:20 with the context; and in other places where this matter is treated of, which it is needless to mention.

4. Seeking or following after justification by the works of the law or by our own righteousness, is fatal, as it is a self-exaltation, and upon the account of that high opinion there is of, and dependence upon, our own excellency in it. For doubtless 'tis fatal to our salvation upon the account of that in it, wherein it is especially opposite to God's design in the way of our salvation. This way of man's seeking his own salvation is fatal to man, doubtless because of that in it by which it is contrary to God's way, or to his aim in the way that he has contrived; which is that salvation should be wholly for Christ's sake, and that free grace alone should be exalted, and boasting be excluded, and all glory should belong to God and none to us (Romans 3:27, Ephesians 2:19, Romans 4:2, 1 Corinthians 1:29–31). Doubtless, therefore, seeking justification by the works of the law is fatal upon the account of the boasting that is included in it. The end of the law is that men may be sensible they have nothing of their own to plead. Romans 3:19, "That every mouth may be stopped."

And then 'tis evident that this was the error of the Jews, that are those that are here spoken of, by the accounts we have of them, viz. that they had a high conceit of their own righteousness, and looked upon themselves as very acceptable, and highly valued in the sight of God upon that account. This kind of pride and self-dependence, is what the Pharisees are so often found fault with for, who were the leading sect among the Jews, and were heads and leaders in the Jews' opposition to

the gospel (Matthew 6:2, Matthew 6:5, Matthew 6:16; Matthew 7:3–5; Luke 16:15; Luke 18:9–12). And this is mentioned as the fault of the Jews in general (Romans 2:17–23). And this is prophesied of as that for which the Jews should be rejected, when the gentiles should be called (Isaiah 65:6, with the context).

II. Again, it is evident that trusting in our own righteousness is fatal to the soul by Romans 10:3, “For they, being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.” This is evidently spoken as a thing fatal to them, by the manner of the Apostle’s introducing it, having said that it was his heart’s desire and prayer for them that they might be saved, then shows how they fail of it. ‘Tis evident also by the last verses of the preceding chapter, where the Apostle is speaking of the same thing in those forementioned words, which occasion these. ‘Tis evident also by the Romans 10:16–21. And here, by their going about to establish their own righteousness, is not merely intended going about to establish a way of justification of their own devising, but going about to establish something as the matter of their justification that was their own or that was of themselves. And so by their being ignorant of and not submitting themselves to God’s righteousness, is meant that they were ignorant how they were entirely dependent on God, and on his imputation, in this affair of justification; did not understand nor believe this doctrine of imputed righteousness, or righteousness from God; did not yield to be justified by righteousness merely from God, as imputed by him. I look upon it that ‘tis here called God’s righteousness, not chiefly because ‘tis the righteousness of Christ, a divine person, but rather as ‘tis wholly and immediately received from God, or as ‘tis righteousness of, or from, God (Philippians 3:9); what is not at all from ourselves, but merely by God’s imputation. See Romans 4:3–6 ff. But that by going about to establish their own righteousness, is meant going about to establish something of their own as the matter of their justification, is

evident by the connection with the Romans 9:32, compared with the Romans 10:5. 'Tis evident that here, by their own righteousness, is meant the same as works of the law there. Again, 'tis evident by the meaning of this phrase, of [their] own righteousness, when used elsewhere by this Apostle, as Philippians 3:9.

III. Again, it is evident by Galatians 5:2–4, “Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever is justified by the law, is fallen from grace”; together [with] Galatians 4:10–11, “Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain.” Now the Apostle could not mean that merely the being circumcised would render Christ of no profit or effect to a person, for we read that Paul himself took Timothy and circumcised him because of the Jews (Acts 16:3). Therefore, 'tis a being circumcised under some particular apprehension, or notion, or with some certain view, that must be the thing that is fatal; and the Apostle must mean that Christ shall profit them nothing if they are circumcised under that notion or with that view that those Jews were, that were zealous for it and urged the necessity of it to them. But they were zealous of it as a thing that gave them great dignity, and on the account of which they were highly esteemed of God as something to be boasted of or gloried in, as Galatians 6:12–14 and Galatians 5:26 and Galatians 6:3; that which they sought praise by (Romans 2:29). They looked upon themselves as holier and more acceptable to God upon that account than other men. They trusted in it. They held it absolutely necessary to salvation, “And certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved” (Acts 15:1). They looked upon it necessary, not merely as obedience to any plain command of God is necessary to salvation, but in the same manner as it was necessary to any person’s admission into

the Jewish nation, or his being of Israel according to the flesh. It was the very qualification that admitted them; the principal thing by which they were made Israelites, and by which they challenged a right to the privileges of an Israelite. Circumcision was a type of regeneration and admitted men into the outward Israel, in the same manner as regeneration does to the kingdom of heaven.

Therefore, the Apostle says in the Galatians 6 of this epistle, “Neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.” The Jews put circumcision instead of regeneration, instead of that faith that is wrought in regeneration, or instead of that righteousness of Christ that faith has or that is virtually in faith, supposing that they were justified by works and not by faith. And therefore it is said in the Galatians 5:6 of the context of the place we are upon [Galatians 5:6], “For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.” It was a greater manifestation of self-ignorance and a self-exalting disposition, to make so much of so little a matter, such a trifle in themselves, than if it were some considerable matter.

Again, 'tis evident that this is spoken of as fatal, not merely as a piece of superstition, as it was a part of the ceremonial law which was abolished, but as they trusted in it as a part of righteousness or moral excellency; which is evident by the whole epistle and by the words immediately following, where the Apostle explains himself, “Christ is become of no effect to you, whosoever of you are justified by the law, are fallen from grace” [Galatians 5:4]; where 'tis evident that the thing that the Apostle testifies is seeking justification by the works of the law, as opposite to justification by mere grace, which can be no other than seeking justification by the righteousness of the law, as containing some excellency or dignity in it.

And when the Apostle says in the Galatians 5:3, “For I testify to every man that is circumcised, he is debtor to do the whole law,” the

argument is this: if ye seek to be justified by this or any other work of the law, you are obliged to perfect obedience to the law of God in order to your having your aim, i.e. justification, because the law appoints that as the condition of justification. For that is the language of the law, “he that doth them shall live in them” (Galatians 3:12). The Apostle don’t mean only that he is a debtor to do the whole ceremonial law: and this is evident by the same argument used by this Apostle to the same persons against the same error in this very epistle, as Galatians 3:10, “For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them”; and Galatians 3:11–12, “But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, the just shall live by faith. But the law is not of faith: but the man that doth them shall live in them.” ‘Tis against seeking justification by the works of the law in this sense that the Apostle writes in this epistle, as is evident by Galatians 2:16–19. It appears by the objection the Apostle there proposes and answers, viz. that seeking to be justified without the works of the law, would be an encouragement to sin. Now what is the opposite of sin but a moral righteousness or goodness? Seeking justification by the works of the law in this sense, was the error that the Galatians ran into; that was the occasion of the Apostle’s writing this epistle, as is evident there by the context, especially the beginning of the next chapter. That it was the whole law of God that the Apostle meant when speaking of justification by the works of the law, is evident also by Galatians 3:10, Galatians 3:12–13, Galatians 3:19, Galatians 3:21–22.

So it was upon the same account that the Apostle was afraid of the Galatians, lest he had bestowed upon them labor in vain, because they observed “days, and months, and times, and years” (as Galatians 4:10–11), viz. because he feared they did it, as trusting in those performances as a righteousness, or in the moral excellency of them to commend them to God. This is evident by the context and by the

forementioned passages of the epistle. The observing these things in itself was no sign that they trusted in them as a righteousness, because God once required them; but they were a sign of it under their circumstances. For it was now revealed with sufficient evidence that they were abolished; and those that were not over fond of them, and did not make much of them as placing the essence of religion much in them, and did not think them to be acceptable to God upon their own account, generally were easily persuaded that they were abolished. It was only those who were very zealous of them, or chiefly they that yet observed them. And observation will show that those that set much by ceremonies and outward forms and trifles in religion, and spend their zeal much about them, do ordinarily make a righteousness of them, are proud of them and depend upon them to commend them to God. The looking on such outward rites and forms as highly acceptable to God in themselves, they betray a mean thought of God and a high thought of man. They that are truly convinced of sin, they see so much of the evil of those things that are in themselves sinful and do more immediately flow from the wickedness of the heart, and of their obligation to moral and spiritual duties, that they see these to be of immensely greater importance, than mere external ceremonies. The beggarly elements of the world, they see that the flesh is not worthy to be gloried in. Thus David, when convinced of sin, was sensible of the worthlessness of ceremonies in comparison of heart holiness. Psalms 51:16–17, “Thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.”

And then probably the Apostle feared that the Galatians made a righteousness of these observances, because he knew the character of those false teachers that endeavored to lead them into it, that they were a proud, pharisaical, self-righteous sort of persons. There were some that observed days and times that the Apostle had charity for. Romans 14:5–6, “One man esteemeth one day above another: another

esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it to the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it.”

IV. It appears to be fatal because 'tis the direct contrary of that humiliation and self-abasement for sin that we are so often taught to be necessary in the word of God. See many texts enumerated in the papers of Scripture Signs of Godliness.

V. 'Tis opposite to and inconsistent with that in faith, which is one ground of its being made the condition of our justification, viz. that it gives the glory of our acceptance with God to Christ. See No. 632 [that is, to remind himself that he wrote about this in miscellany 632].

VI. It is a confirmation of this, that God took so much care that the children of Israel should not entertain any such conceit, that it was for their righteousness that God bestowed such and such favors upon them (Deuteronomy 9:4–6, Ezekiel 36:22–32).

VII. It appears also by the parable of the Pharisee and publican. Luke 18:9–14, “And he spake this parable unto certain that trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray,” etc. “I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other,” i.e. this and not the other. Here 'tis evident, first, that the trusting in themselves that they were righteous, is intended the same as trusting in their own righteousness or moral goodness for justification and acceptance with God. For 'tis his moral goodness is what the Pharisee rehearses over before God in his prayer. And he depended upon it for justification, as is evident by the expression, trusted in themselves that they were righteous, or had matter for justification; and 'tis evident that this is the thing that was sought by both Pharisee and publican, by Christ's conclusion at the end of the parable: “I tell you this man went down to his house justified rather than the other.” And [that] it was trusting to their righteousness for acceptance with God that Christ has respect to, is evident by the

Pharisee's aim in his prayer in representing his goodness before God, which is evidently to commend himself to God's liking. Secondly, 'tis evident that the trusting in their own righteousness is that trusting that carries pride, or a high conceit of their own excellency in it, in that 'tis said they "trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others."

VIII. Self-sufficiency in religion is fatal to the soul, as is evident by Revelation 3:16–17, "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayst, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." This here mentioned is doubtless the direct contrary of that poverty of spirit that renders blessed.