

PHILIPPIANS 3 vs 1

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¹ **Finally, my Brothers, rejoice in the Lord** / Paul has a **HALLELUJAH** moment.... and what follows all the way to chapter 4:4... is thought the longest digression or possibly an insertion of Paul as if he was about to close the letter, and suddenly remembered the proverbial elephant in the room.

To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe.

² **Beware of dogs** / Paul is not talking about our tail-wagging house pets; he's talking about wild dogs that are more like wolves, which can encircle and go for the jugular vein, and destroy you in a minute,

beware of evil workers / these words are foreign to our genius generation... a generation that isn't even sure **evil** exists; this vocabulary is not found in any august hall of academia... maybe in theoretical discussions, punctuated with a few jokes about those primitive thinking religious folks. Yet the incalculable destruction of communities and lives... all that smashing and destroying is (we're told) for peaceful purposes, done with lots of tax payer dollars -- so are the tax payers co-conspirators in these non-evil works? Certainly.

beware of the faulty circumcision / pharisaical people who don't really love others, but they like to critically sit in judgment over others, and cut and slice up others.

³ **For we are the circumcision** / of the heart,

who worship God in the spirit / the only way God is approached is through our spirit where love and joy and peace are supposed to abound; some in our very scientific minded generation are not sure if **heart** and **spirit** really exist. So, let's agree: perhaps that does not exist for them, so are they heartless?

and rejoice in Christ Jesus,

and have no confidence in the flesh / we see those who have great confidence in their efforts: Greece, Libya, Yemen, Ukraine... how about that welcome reception given all those coming to the EU...

Paul gives his credentials, a respectable resume, with a proud parentage and honorable peerage:

⁴ **although I might also have confidence in the flesh** / so even as Paul writes, he no longer believes the drama found in the next 2 verses. You can almost hear him laughing at himself as he writes.

If anyone else has a mind to trust in the flesh, I far more:

⁵ **Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee** / WOW! no doubt Paul was genius of immense capacity and moral character, even if misguided. Thank God he got slammed down on the Damascus road;



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6 Concerning zeal, persecuting the church / this phrase is in the present tense; these words of a misguided zealot... haunted Paul all his days... as if he saw his terrible error happening; the Lord did not erase from Paul's mind destroying the faith of those he wronged. Some things we need to never forget;

touching the rightness which is in the law, blameless.

Many decades ago, Jack and Sarah Coleman gave me a book by A. W. Tozer: **That Incredible Christian**. They could see I had 1,000 questions; and Sarah always had about 2,000 answers. Often, with a full schedule... when Billy Graham couldn't make an event, Sarah would go speak.

In my little apartment on Kester Avenue, Van Nuys, CA... I got up one morning and started reading, from A.W. Tozer, ©1964, Christian Publications: **The Inadequacy of Instant Christianity**:

It is hardly a matter of wonder that the country that gave the world instant tea and instant coffee should be the one to give it instant Christianity. trying to pack all of salvation into one experience, or two...

Undue preoccupation with the initial act of believing has created in some a psychology of contentment, or at least of non-expectation.

God seems too far away, the world is too near, and the flesh too powerful to resist. Others are glad to accept the assurance of automatic blessedness. It relieves them of the need to watch and fight and pray; and sets them free to enjoy this world while waiting for the next.

Instant Christianity...

I wonder if the man who wrote Philippians 3:7-16 would recognize it as the faith for which he finally died. I am afraid he would not.

Reading that last line, I wondered too! And I remember sitting at the table in the quietness of the moment... closing the book... pausing, even looking left and looking right. Wow!

And I simply prayed: Lord, would you show me, where he would recognize it as the faith for which he finally died? Well, the Lord heard my prayer that morning; And thankfully He led me, marking out 5 places... where we walked; and though at times it was a handful... I clearly learned the answer. But let's hear Paul tell the answer... because what he discovered, is what I discovered too; yet he tells it so much better:

7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ / quietly moving it all, -- item by item, to the waste basket, it's okay.

8 Yes, doubtless, and I count all things but loss

for the exceeding value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung / in Greek: **skybalon**... only used here in the NT, as Dr. Gene Scott pointed out: bovine skybalon, you know: BS, is what we flush down the toilet.

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that I may win **Christ**,

9 And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness / Isaiah wrote these beautiful words, too often overlooked: [when we will make His soul, our offering for sin... He will see and be satisfied](#) -- **Isaiah 53**,

which is of the law / not on account of doing little rules and regulations, and checklist items, so I can say: Look at what I did! Only to hear him say: **I never knew you**,

but that which is through the faith of Christ / the heavy lifting; what He endured for us,

the righteousness which is of God by faith / it's not my little surface performance; it's radical surgery on the heart, my heart, I have one:

10 That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection / He arose from the dead, according to the promise of the Father,

and the fellowship of His sufferings / it's okay to carry in our minds... a cross, to daily confound my comfortable state. There is a world that suffers terribly for our Lord Jesus... cruelly tortured even today. Do you not know? I need to remind myself... there is a heaven to gain... or lose; I am not home yet,

continuously being transformed when I consider His death / why He came and died; seriously folks, would you die for someone like yourself? I freely admit; I would not die for me! Someone who was a fool might die for me. Why He did is beyond my ability to grasp. He died for me... simply I can thank Him. Why? I still can't figure that one out! I will ask Him when we sit down together... someday over there.

continuously being transformed when I consider His death,

11 If by any means I might attain to the resurrection of the dead / the redemptive work of Christ Jesus begins on earth... but it is not finished until the dead are resurrected; to discover... [what no eye could imagine, what no thought could have considered](#)... all that God has prepared for those who love Him.

12 Not as though I had already attained, or am already perfect / Paul says, folks, I'm not home yet:

but I follow after if I may seize that for which also I am seized of Christ Jesus / I'm not lagging behind; I'm fast running a race... leaning into the course.

13 Brothers, I count myself not to have seized it all: but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind / forget the past; drop it; who cares about it? let it go,

and reaching forward to what is ahead / leaning forward, running the race of faith... and faithfulness; don't stop; don't quit; keep going... we'll cross the line soon... keep Christ in view,

14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

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15 Therefore, let us, as many as are perfect, be understanding what I'm going to tell you next / and isn't that funny?! The Spirit of God has a great sense of humor, doesn't He?! 3 verses earlier, Paul said: that ain't me! But Paul is a realist and he knows there are lots of normal people in this congregation, like the rich young ruler who confidently came to Jesus, wanting to know what else he needed to do to inherit eternal life – having kept all the commandments:

and if in anything you have a different understanding / Paul says, regarding what points I make next; if you have a difference of opinion, a different thought, a different perspective; who are running the race with me; who think you've already arrived,

God will reveal even this to you / Paul let's God deal with things like the hard heads.

16 Yet, where we have already attained / Paul says, this is where we are,

let us walk by the same rule / in Greek: **kanon**; and what is this rule? to the Corinthians Paul says, God distributed to us: the Gospel of Christ. What does this measure? **the rule of God's love and love for one another** **seen clearest in Jesus Christ**, who sought the well-being of others; Paul says, be generous,

let us mind the same thing / and what is this same thing? Simple, already mentioned earlier: **the mind / the understanding of Christ Jesus** who is a man's best Teacher: get to know what Christ Jesus knew, His words, His ways, His information about the kingdom of his Father.

17 Brothers together **imitate me** / the word is: **sym** = **with** + **mimetes** = **imitate**... Paul says,

As far as what we accomplished learning: how we walk... what we think about... Brothers together imitate me / do what I do; climb out of legalistic traditions, there were no great disciples of Jesus whose faith was tried in the fires of life, for Paul to reference: no Polycarp, no Augustine, no John Wycliffe, no Jan Huss, no John Tyndale, no Martin Luther, no John Calvin... and all the others who loved the Gospel of Christ; no commentaries, not a single page of correspondence to open and study,

Brothers together imitate me / only in the letter to the Ephesians do we find a form of this word: Paul writes: **imitate God**... and then he spells out 2 ways: **1.** how we **forgive one another** as God in Christ freely forgave us; and **2.** as we **walk in love** step by step, as Christ also has loved us; that's it! **No** repeat after me: I know that I'm a sinner; **no** 4 our father's and 3 hail Mary's. **No** hocus pocus of any kind!

and mark them who walk / take note; notice... **so as you have us for an example.**

18 For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and I now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ / Paul already gave warning, turn backward or forward 1 or 2 pages and see Paul's fair warnings of deceivers who will come; vicious as rabid wolves, which can attack and destroy you in a minute; those once thought pillars of faith and trust became peddlers of deception:

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¹⁹ whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly / Dr. Dallas Willard points out, some people worship their flesh and feed their unruly feelings, they are lovers of self; and become their own god, master of themselves; enslaved to their appetites-- the thin wrapping paper of life, their spirit is dead,

and whose bragging is their shame, their mind / stuck, fixated on... earthly things.

²⁰ For our behavior is in heaven; from where we also look for the Savior / soter, deliverer; a title taken from Rome -- government playing god; the people looked to Rome... but neither Paul nor Peter found their savior in Rome; all the disciples of the Lord Jesus... are running a race of faith... and they are not running to the hell hole of Rome. Paul says eagerly, in anticipation,

for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ

²¹ who will change our vile body, that it be fashioned like His glorious body / there is a Day that we've all read about; and we've wondered greatly about: A glorious Day that Paul wrote about in his first letter to the Church, and says, Brothers, I would not have you ignorant... the Lord will step from heaven with a shout that sounds like a trumpet... [the dead in Christ will rise first... and we, the living, scattered all over the world... before we can blink twice will be safely grabbed up together](#)... to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever , -- **1 Thessalonians 4**,

who will change our vile body, that it be fashioned like His glorious body, by exerting His power whereby He is able to subject all things to Himself.

[Salvation is Your Name](#) | [This is My Father's World](#)

Check out: Our Brothers and Sisters Around The World Singing GOD'S Praise:  [The Songlist](#)

[I Can Only Imagine](#) | [I Could Sing of Your Love Forever](#)

[The Sheep Hear His Voice And They Follow Him](#)

[O Come Let Us Adore Him](#)