

## Phil 3:1-9, summit church 2015

### Intro

- Man I am so pumped to be here...having gone out from here 3 years ago...and now to be sending our folks out to other church plants, we are blessed...
  - o Summit I will just tell you that God's grace has been incredible to us in the Triad...both in terms of what he has done in us, and through us...
  - o And all of it began right here...thank you for your example, thank you for your willingness to hold all things with an open hand, thank you for thinking Kingdom before you think Summit...so thank you
- I could go on and on but I want to go ahead and dive in today because I need to move...alright
- At Mercy Hill we have been working through the book of Philippians and that's where we are going to be today...so turn with me there...
- And as you are getting there I want to go ahead and give you the punchline for today...so you will know exactly where we are heading...
  - o In the life of a believer...*when righteousness is received it is valued above all*
  - o There is a link between the way we believe we get righteousness...and how much we value it, and by extension how much our lives reflect that value
- The problem is...for many of us, righteousness isn't received it is worked for...
  - o It isn't seen as a gift to be accepted but rather a status to be achieved...
- Many of us spend our lives building a resume...building an argument that we are acceptable<sup>1</sup>
  - o That's what a resume is...my argument for acceptance...
  - o Illustration: For example, if you wanted to get a job at MHC you submit a resume and based on the resume we decide if you are acceptable for the position
    - ...people think its about seminary and ministry experience...but you may actually at mercy hill we are looking for any competitive ping pong experience, do you have an iphone, how much do you eat at chipotle, do you know who Ricky Bobby is...this is what we look for...
- Many of us spend our lives building an argument hoping that in the end its enough for God to accept us based on our awesome resume...

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<sup>1</sup> Keller's sermon

- And this is what I need you to see today...when we believe righteousness can be earned it won't have immense value...
- It won't have the type of value that radically changes us...
- But when we realize we have received what could ever been won on our own we will value it above all...
  - That we have been given an unspeakable gift it will carry unimaginable value to you, and will change you...
    - I want to spend some time walking through this text...and then we will come out with those two big rocks, righteousness received and righteousness valued

### Scripture

**3 Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you. <sup>2</sup> Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh.**

- Now just to get our bearings, Paul is saying there are people who are working to earn righteousness and they are trying to convince others in the church to do the same...
- And Paul calls these people dogs...
  - We as Americans don't hear this the right way...because we live in the world of bark parks, and doggie day care...and dogs who wear sweaters...
    - Illustration: Illustration: I remember seeing our one of our staff guy's dog for the first time...
      - And she is wearing a sweater which I am naturally going to make fun of...and so I said, real classy clay...dogs wearing clothes
      - To which he replies, na man...its a vet prescribed stress vest for her anxiety...
  - So I am not sure dog translates real to American culture...
- See this is ironic, because the Jews would call the gentiles dogs in disdain because of their uncleanness...
  - Because they weren't part of God's people...
  - So what does Paul do, he reverses the metaphor and labels the Jews the dogs, because now they through unbelief aren't in the flock...watch...

**<sup>3</sup> For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh—**

- We are the circumcision...now if you are new to church, talking about dogs and circumcision, this is all getting very weird, I understand that...
- But its pretty simple...the Jews would say, we follow the laws like circumcision and that gets us in God's good graces...
  - o But Paul here says, we are what they are trying to be...
  - o Through the flesh...circumcision, keeping laws, being good Jews as a gateway to Christianity...they are trying to be righteous before God
    - But righteousness only comes through faith alone by grace alone in Jesus
    - In the end it isn't a mark on the body it's a mark on the heart...one that produces worship and confidence in Jesus alone
  - o Now it takes a turn here...but is really building to that same idea about confidence in Jesus alone

<sup>4</sup> 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: <sup>5</sup> 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; <sup>6</sup> as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

- Ok this is Paul's resume here...
  - o <sup>8th</sup> day, not a convert
  - o Tribe of Benjamin...Jacob's favorite son
  - o Pharisee, educated
  - o Zeal involves loved the law, hated Christians<sup>2</sup>
- He had everything he could achieve in his system but guess what...
  - o He lacked the one thing that he knew he needed...righteousness
  - o So he says in verse 7...

<sup>7</sup> But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.<sup>3 8</sup> Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.

- Please don't let the familiarity of this verse sanitize it for you...

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<sup>2</sup> Philippians, MacArthur

<sup>3</sup> *The Holy Bible : English standard version*. 2001 (Php 3:1–7). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

- The point of this entire message really hinges I believe on the weight of these verses hitting us as hard as they are supposed to...
- Some of these popular verses in their popularity lose their power...
  - o Very poetic in nature and engender good feelings about faith...
  - o Wrong...this is a bloody raw real verse in the Bible...
  - o And I fee that having heard it so much, over the years, it loses its punch...and we need the punch if we are to make sense of any of this...
    - Let me tell you a story...
- Illustration: about a year about me and my dad were working on a fence all day...but there isn't power out there...
  - o Have to get a solar panel...because that's what the horse respects...
  - o Blade grass...barely feel it, on a strong fence its ticking...
  - o So I say...touch it! He said, man its your horse...you touch it!
    - I was like ok...
    - Didn't hurt...
- So we realize...man we actually need to know the output. So then we decide yea, we actually have to figure out what it feels like to the horse...
  - o So we can either...go to the store and buy a meter
  - o Or I can simulate what it means to be a horse...boots off, been raining all day
    - Hit me like a 9 pound hammer...I went running through the pasture taking my shirt off and putting it back on
    - Strip off the layers...you get to the power, you strip off the layers you get to the rawness...
- Strip off the layers...the years of hearing it, the fact that this verse is on coffee mugs for crying out loud!
- And when you get down to the power...Y'all this is a verse about seeing something that is worth trading for your everything...
  - o And I am willing to trade my identity, my history...my comfort, my relationships...
  - o I am willing to suffer...and will gladly trade my life...
    - The rawness the power here is in creating the question...Paul what is worth all that?

For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish (very close to saying a word here that I can't say from the stage), in order that I may gain Christ<sup>4 9</sup> 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<sup>5</sup>

- The question was...what is worth your everything? Its righteousness and what righteousness leads to...
- The key word in this text is righteousness...
  - o two major things come out of this passage concerning righteousness, first...

### **Christians receive righteousness**

- That's the first thing...because if we miss this, then we will miss the value of it...
- What Paul is talking about here is the righteousness he received, not worked for...
  - o In fact...working for our own righteousness is something to be repented of really....
  - o When we talk about repenting, it is almost always for having done something wrong...
    - Stealing, hating, adultery, lying, pride...repent of these things
- But is repenting of these things what makes you a Christian? Not totally...
- See religious people repent of sin like this...
  - o Think of the Pharisees like Paul...look at my resume, look at all I do and don't do...I run the other way from sin
- *You can repent of sin and still be far from God*
  - o Let me tell you a story that was told by my good friend JD Greear's good friend Tim Keller...
  - o And he told a story that I thought was incredible...Illustration: Keller's story on the tribesman and the missionary...
- See the problem is, its not repentance from killing and stealing alone that makes you a Christian...
  - o repenting of self righteousness makes you a Christian<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> *The Holy Bible : English standard version*. 2001 (Php 3:8). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

<sup>5</sup> *The Holy Bible : English standard version*. 2001 (Php 3:9). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

<sup>6</sup> Keller's sermon

- Think about this...Paul didn't have to change his attitude towards sin to become a Christian, he had to change his attitude towards righteousness...towards what makes him acceptable to God, that's what had to change...
- He had to come to the place in his life where he realized...righteousness is received not earned...
  - He had to repent of this formula he had been working off of his entire life that said I will do XYZ and then God you will have to give me salvation and make me righteous...
- Paul had to repent of submitting to God his own spiritual resume...that he built
- Paul is saying here there are two fundamental ways to view your relationship with God, to get in, to be found acceptable...<sup>9</sup> 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<sup>7</sup>
- Either we will trust a resume that we have built over our life through works, or we will trust that God has given us a new resume in Jesus...
  - Gospel...
  - Your resume was failing, rebellious, sinful, not worthy, separated...not gonna get hired in a million years...
  - But Jesus came for you...his resume was perfect...your resume fails his succeeds...
  - and Jesus on the cross submitted his resume on your behalf...
    - And until we stop furiously trying to build our own, and go ahead and receive his...we don't get it and we aren't Christians...
    - And we certainly won't value what God has given us in a way that changes us...
- Two questions, first... in what ways today are you furiously building a resume, rather than trusting the one God has given you in His son?
  - Some of you on the macro scale of your life are building a resume...and I don't know how to say it other than to say it...
    - You will never get there...
    - The fact you are trying is an affront to God because it disregards the sacrifice of His son...Trust another resume today

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<sup>7</sup> *The Holy Bible : English standard version*. 2001 (Php 3:9). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

- But Christian...are there areas of your life that you are still building a resume?
  - o Illustration: I have learned for me in the biggest stressors...the issue isn't the issue, the issue is that I feel like I made a bad decision and haven't led well...
    - And you know where all the stress comes from? Leading well is such a big deal to me...that it's a resume thing
    - Its like I know in my head that leading well doesn't give me more worth or love from God, but somehow in my everyday experience I am viewing it...as if it does
      - It's a resume thing...
  - o What are some things that are causing you immense stress now...have the ability to crush you.
    - Hanging on to a marriage, older children not walking in the faith, financial uncertainty...
    - Could it be these things are on your resume...
- If so then we need to revisit an old truth today...
  - o That in Christ I am as worthy before God whether I made a good decision or not...
  - o whether my adult children walk in the faith or not,
    - In other words...I don't define whether I am worthy by my resume, Jesus does so for me with His...
- And secondly, isn't it good news church that our resume isn't what counts? What I mean is...none of us are Paul, none of us had his upbringing, and spiritual heritage, few of us have his zeal...most of us aren't even Jews for crying out loud...
  - o Were just exciting that someone invited us to the party! That we are grafted in...
  - o Here is my point...if its Jesus that gets you in, not an awesome resume, then don't fret that your resume isn't that awesome...
- Is Satan beating you up over a past that you regret?
  - o Look to Philippians 3 and realize, even if you didn't have that tough past...you would still be in the same place before God...a sinner needing grace

**Christians value righteousness above all**

- It is the receiving of righteousness that creates the value of righteousness in our hearts...
  - o Creates an ability in our hearts to count everything else as rubbish...

- Verse 7 starts the “essence of Pauline theology”<sup>8</sup> **But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.**<sup>9</sup>
  - o Why? Because in Christ...I have all gain!
    - A relationship with the creator God, an identity that can never be stripped from, the promise of a God filled glorious eternity...
- Paul isn't a guy who is in to losing things for the sake of losing them...he is trading them for something better!
  - o Illustration: It's the Parable of the hidden treasure...I find a treasure of immense worth in a field...
    - its not loss that I give everything I have for the field...whats in the field is worth more than what I have...
- Paul is saying I am losing much, but look what I get...
  - o I am as sure of heaven now as if I was Christ<sup>10</sup>...that's arrogant, no, it's the Gospel. We traded places...
- In valuing righteousness Paul has learned to redefine the categories of profit and loss in his life...
  - o **Christianity radically changes the way we count profit and loss in our lives**
  - o The things we use to value we can lose...things that we saw no value in, now are our prize...
- Y'all this is how stingy people become generous people...
  - o For much of their lives they have held on to money...
  - o Money gives them status, money gives them security, money they believe brings them happiness...
  - o But then we are declared righteous in the Gospel and in our relationship with God we have...our status, our security, or joy eternal is set...I can count money as loss
- This is how harsh rule following people become gracious people
  - o And I think this really the point here...because they believe that doing right things leads to right standing before God...
  - o They want to do right things and look down on others who do wrong things...
  - o But then in receiving righteousness they realize

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<sup>8</sup> Baker EC, Silva

<sup>9</sup> *The Holy Bible : English standard version*. 2001 (Php 3:1–7). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

<sup>10</sup> Greear's sermon



- My works were rubbish, they aren't better than anyone else...
  - everything they have from God is by His grace, and so they begin to look at others with grace...
- The value of righteousness...This is how mankind who is naturally vengeful can forgive...
  - Illustration: When an evil man prays upon the kindness and acceptance of a church in Charleston they are knocked down, but not destroyed...
  - If you saw the judge allowed them families to address the murderer...what did they all say, to a T...
    - And not in some unrealistic pie in the sky...I am a Christian so I have a silly smile on..
    - No in tears and grief...
  - This is hard, but there isn't enough room in our hearts for hate...we forgive you
- Church that only happens if we believe that righteousness eventually produces a resurrection...and as such, we value righteousness above all!
  - Christians live and die differently than other people...because in righteousness they have hope in the next life...
  - Think about Paul...Illustration: You just can't get to Paul...Beat him he sings, put him in jail and he converts the jailer...
    - Do you know why? Because in clinging to and valuing righteousness and all that comes with it...
    - he believes in a coming resurrection...a day in which all that is sad comes untrue... the next life...*When you gain in death what was the object of your affection in life, then even dying is gain...*
  - And you know what? When dying is gain...I believe righteousness has reoriented your profit and loss categories...
    - It changes you on the deepest level which then changes you on every level...
- Do you value righteousness, in a way that changes everything about you...
  - If not...is it the real thing?

## Conclusion

- Illustration: I am not a food snob...its well documented and constantly brought up by my mom that my dad had me eating gas station hotdogs by about age 5...

- So I don't have to have name brand name...
- But Anna and I have had an ongoing disagreement in our marriage...
- And I am gonna tell you something right now...crispy rice is not the same thing as rice crispies...amen? Cinnamon toast squares are not the same as cinnamon toast crunch, that's just a fact...
  - When you really dive into the real thing, the imitation is evident...
- For much of his life, Paul lived in an imitation righteousness...but when he saw the real thing, it changed everything for him...
  - Are you building a resume? Accept the one that is offered...
  - Do you value righteousness in a way that changes these profit and loss categories in your life?

## Bullpen

- Illustration: Exactly 2 amens at Mercy Hill...
- Illustration: Daddy camp out...I would take the scrapped knee if I could, she said but then you would be the one crying...I said thanks
- Illustration: All dogs go to heaven
- Illustration: AP resigned himself to blindness...
- Illustration: I keep hearing ted talks and NPR specials about people doing research about extending life span...
  - People talking about how within 20 years with science and technology we could be living to 200 and all this...
  - The question for me isn't is this stuff a possibility, the question is why do we want it to be? See in all of these talks people start with the premise...everyone wants to live longer but nobody answers why, I want the answer...
  - I think the answer is, we don't know whats on the other side and we are scared of it...
  - But for the Christian, and obviously we believe in the sanctity of life and that longevity is a blessing, but we are convinced of what is on the other side making dying gain...