

ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

(Philippians 3:2-9)

Series: "Philippians: The Joyful Letter" (Part 17)

...If you are like me, you hate to lose something. Through the years I have lost my wallet, my contact lens, camera, money, books, tools, and more. Furthermore, one day I lost my son at the mall...and later found him. Losing something valuable makes you kind of sick on the inside...all the while you look and look for it.

...One of the common reasons people miss heaven is that they are unwilling to lose their religion. People hold onto their religion, the good things they've done to be accepted by Jesus, only to discover too late heaven's door is closed to them. In a manner of speaking, all must lose their religion to find salvation.

...Like most religious people today, Paul had enough morality to keep him out of trouble, but not enough righteousness to get him into heaven. It was not bad things that kept Paul away from Jesus...it was good things. All of us, like Paul, must "Lose our religion" to find salvation. QUESTION: Are you trusting in your own goodness and good efforts to make you acceptable to God? If so, you are with the majority, but still far from heaven.

TWO KINDS OF "RIGHTEOUSNESS" (GOODNESS), YET ONLY ONE PROVIDES US WITH SALVATION...OPENING HEAVEN'S DOOR.

...All must lose forever their "works righteousness" and be found in Jesus through "faith righteousness."

I. Works Righteousness: Thinking Your Good Works Win Favor With God. (vv.2-6)

...Many think God is like a bookkeeper, keeping track of their good deeds versus bad...No!!!

A. Paul warns of great danger. (v.2) 3 times he tells us to "Beware"... "Watch out for..."

1. "Beware of the dogs"...Figurative, this denoted wild, vicious homeless animals that roamed the streets and attacked passersby. Jews used of Gentiles. Jesus used...
...Here Paul turns the figure back upon the false teachers.

2. "Beware of evil workers." These taught that sinners were saved by faith plus good works, especially the works of the Law. These works were in the flesh and glorified the workers and not Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 2:8-10, Titus 3:3-7)

...A Christian's good works are a result of his faith, not the basis for his salvation.

3. "Beware of the mutilation." Here Paul uses a pun on circumcision. These taught that circumcision was essential for one to be saved. Faith was not enough.

B. Paul contrasted true believers with the false teachers. (v.3)

1. Paul joins with true believers and tells that "We are the true circumcised."

...The Old Testament rite of physical circumcision was not only a sign of covenant relationship, but it was also intended to be a spiritual circumcision of the heart.

2. "We worship God in Spirit." We don't depend upon dead works. (John 4:19-24)

3. "We boast in Jesus Christ." Not ourselves, but in our Lord and His finished work.

4. "We have no confidence in the flesh." By the flesh he means the old nature.

C. Paul's example: He tells us that all his good works "Assets" were worthless before God. (vv.4-6)

...If anyone could have confidence in doing deeds, then he could have more than anyone. Audited:

1. His inherited assets: He was circumcised on the 8th day. Born in the covenant nation. Benjamin tribe. Both parents were Jewish. What huge advantages!!!

2. His earned assets: A Pharisee. Zealously defended Judaism. Before Law: Blameless

II. Faith Righteousness: Receiving The Gift Of Christ's Righteousness As Your Own.

...To do this, you must lose any and all of your own efforts to please God in attempting to earn salvation.

A. Paul tells us of his losses. (v.7)

1. He lost whatever was gain to him apart from God. He now counted his former assets as rubbish. This word can mean food scraps or dung. (Liabilities!)
2. He did so because when he measured these treasures against what Christ had to offer, he realized that all he held dear was really nothing but "dung" when compared...

B. Paul tells us of his gain. (vv.8-9)

1. He has now come to know Christ Jesus. Not a religion, but a person. (Acts 9)
...Christianity is Christ. Salvation is: knowing Jesus in a personal way.
2. He now has the gift of righteousness through faith alone in Jesus. (v.9)
...Paul had been striving for this all his life through his efforts...and now has it.
"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose." (Missionary Jim Elliot)

SO WHAT? WHAT DIFFERENCE SHOULD THIS MAKE IN MY LIFE?

1. Are you tempted to think the Lord will accept you into His heaven based upon your good works? God tells such thinking is deluded and wrong and will never provide you with an entrance into heaven. When seen from God's throne, all of your "good deeds" are really nothing more than dung. Come to think biblically about this all-important matter. It is the difference between heaven and hell.
2. Certainly we, like Paul, are born with advantages for which we thank the Lord. But advantages can never provide you with salvation. (Your family, your church, your country, your education, your given abilities) It is right to thank the Lord for such advantages, but never ever allow them to keep you from the gift of righteousness that is offered in knowing Christ. Don't rest upon your inherited or earned assets; it is only the righteousness of Christ that will save you.
3. Know that only when a believing sinner responds in faith to the Spirit's work in his heart, he is clothed in the righteousness of Christ. Only this makes you accepted, and thus robed the believing sinner stands complete in Christ.
4. Today, will you bow your heart before the Savior, confess your sin, and receive Him as your Lord? If so, He will save you from your sin.