

VBC
Keith Thomas, Special Guest Speaker
Philippians 3:1-11
August 11-12, 2007

“Complete in Christ”

Finding a Treasure

Introduction – verse 1 – Final advice. Rejoice in the Lord. Warning: Beware of the dogs – they’re loose!

I. **The Problem** – We find out who these “dogs” are in verse 2. Tempting to place confidence in self and not Christ.

A. **Verse 2** – “dogs” – term of reproach used by Jews for gentiles. Explain

Two Questions:

- Why is Paul so ticked?
- Is this relevant for us today? We don’t have Judaizers tempting us to be circumcised to be right with God or to be a part of his people. But they were simply expounding what the world declares we must do to be o.k., to be accepted. They taught one of many point based systems to gain approval that appeal to our sinful pride.

II. **How to win points in Paul’s time.** He knew how to impress others and win favor in the circles that he walked in. You were “in” if you either had certain background credentials or acted in certain ways.

A. Heritage – great lineage. Circumcised, Israelite, from the honored tribe of Benjamin.

B. Even Paul recognized that simple pedigree wasn’t enough. He joined the elite, devout religious group called the **Pharisees. God’s Marines.**

- Memorized Pentateuch. (Like the whole NT) // He sought to stamp out evil. // He kept the law. Blameless

Application: Do you ever feel tempted to feel superior for your outward righteousness? You’re not like the **pew warmers**. Not like those who never **stand up to social evils**. Not **enslaved by vices** (at least outward ones). You’re a disciplined, upright, fervent, active Christian. The real kind that gives performance results. // And that ought to be worth something

All these things were to my credit. Example: A bank account before God. Paul had tons of points before God and man.

Whatever was to my profit, I now consider loss. And not just these things related to my Jewish background but everything – verse 8

C. This little word “everything” is important. You’re tempted to think that Paul’s little religious world of building points is not your world. You don’t care about **pedigree** and you don’t feel you’re tempted to be a **Pharisee**. You’re not disciplined enough for that. But Paul broadens the categories of temptation to place confidence in something other than Christ. He says not just my Jewish pedigree or religious activism. But “**EVERYTHING**”

To find out what this everything might be for you, think of the things that you take pride in. The things that make you feel deep down good about yourself.

- Wealth...Security is in Christ alone. Oh, but the stock market just crashed and you’re world is rocked. Your investments are going south and you suddenly feel depressed or insecure.
“I consider knowing X a loss in comparison to the surpassing greatness of financial security for the sake of which I have lost everything.”
- Performance. Personal example. My idol.
- Or perhaps you take pride in your power or status. app. for men.
- Perhaps you take pride in your looks and being fashionable.

Where have you placed confidence in your flesh? Where are you proud? Where are you seeking to gain approval of others based on your lineage, looks, performance, works, etc? Gaining points in your account.

*This is how the world operates & it is our natural default mode as fallen humans. **Return to Garden**. We all want approval and believe the lie that the way to get it is to **EARN** it.*

So what’s the problem? It doesn’t work with God. You’re not good enough. You have no grounds for pride based on anything in yourself. YOU CAN’T WIN GOD’S FAVOR as a fallen creature.

III. **But you Can HAVE it – all of it.** *You can be totally righteous. How do you get it?*

A. Abandon your Pride. Realize you are bankrupt before God. Paul puts it this way – verses 7-8

1. All the things we esteemed as giving us worth, naturally take pride in that the world applauds, consider them a “loss” and “rubbish” – dung, refuse.

Why?

- They count for nothing in your acc't before God.
 - Keep you from X & complete dependence on Him.
 - They are refuse ***in comparison*** to something infinitely greater – knowing Christ Jesus our Lord. This is the treasure you search for and need.
2. The second thing is, after abandoning all hope based on yourself, to place your faith in Christ alone – v. 9
- Expression – “found in Him” refers to our union with Christ. We, in ourselves, cannot hope to attain to a righteousness that pleases God (though we can do that with man). But Christ does possess a righteousness that is totally pleasing to God. He kept the law inwardly & outwardly & then died for all our faults, sins. What you need is what He has – perfect righteousness. He has all the points, there are no more to gain. He gained all the points God has to gain.

How can you get those points accredited to your account?

Verse 9 – faith in Him unites us to him. It's like we share the same bank acc't. Marriage example.

3. This union with Christ is not just theological or judicial. It is a present reality that shapes our life. **verse 10**
- Christ suffered and died but He also was resurrected. That was the ultimate victory. He came out winning. And we are united to Him. Here is one thing we still do not have in our union – but we will have it. If we are united to Him we will be resurrected in triumph.

Conclusion: Example of Auction.