

Life Group

Leader Guide

March 17, 2024

Philippians 3:1-11

Pastor Connor Miller

Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you. ² Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. ³ For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh— ⁴ 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: ⁵ 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; ⁶ as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. ⁷ But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 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.

Intro

Continuing our series in Philippians, Paul tells them to “rejoice in the Lord” (3:1). But something might stand in the way of their joy in the Lord—what is it? The answer is self-righteousness, self-sufficiency, and a kind of self-reliance that turns inward rather than outward to God. In our passage this week (vv. 2-13), Paul outlines the foolishness of putting our confidence in ourselves rather than in God. A right relationship with God can never come by our own efforts or status; instead, we can only be right with God through Jesus Christ who makes us righteous. Therefore, we abandon all attempts to ‘be good enough’ on our own (i.e. count them as loss) and throw ourselves on Christ, trusting him alone, and in this way we grow to know Jesus more and to become more like him. All this is toward the end that God would raise our bodies from the dead to be with him forever.

Quick Note: While every question listed below is available for discussion, don't feel pressured to get through every question in your group. Use wisdom to pick the relevant question(s). Lastly, be intentional to allow every person in your group to contribute to the conversation in some way. God bless you all!

Study Questions

1. What do you think is the connection between v.1 and the rest of the passage? Why?
2. What does Paul mean by “we are the circumcision” in v. 3? Why does he use that term?
3. How does Paul define who true followers of God are in this verse? Why does Paul distinguish them in these ways?
4. Describe how each of Paul's listed credentials might (theoretically) give him a reason to boast in vv. 5-6?
5. What does it mean to count these things as loss for the sake of Christ in v. 7? Why 'loss'?

6. What is the connection between “suffering the loss of all things and count[ing] them as rubbish”, and gaining Christ (v. 8)? How does one lead to the other?
7. What is the connection between v. 9 and v. 10? How does righteousness through faith in Christ lead to knowing him and his power, sharing in his suffering, and becoming like him in his death?
8. In what sense does Paul hope to attain the resurrection from the dead? Aren't all people going to be resurrected from the dead anyway? Explain.

Application Questions

1. It's easy to fall into the bad habit of trying to impress others or God with our credentials or accomplishments, hoping somehow to gain the approval of God and/or others by making ourselves 'good enough' for them. Have you fallen into this trap? How so?
2. Paul makes a list of his possible reasons to boast, only to dismiss them all as rubbish or 'loss' at the end (vv.4-8). What accomplishments or status credentials tempt you to rely on yourself rather than on God?
3. How might our pride get in the way of our joy in God? How do you think your pride kills your joy? (vv.1-3).
4. Paul writes that he counts everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ (v.8). Is knowing Christ worth more to you than anything else? Why or why not? Bonus question: And how do you know?
5. Paul not only aims to know Christ in v. 10, but also to share in his sufferings and become like him in his death. Why do you think that is? Isn't that a bit morbid? Explain.

Prayer Guides

Prayer Points: (Note: Try to specifically shape your prayers around the theme of the passage and in light of your conversation!)

- Pray for yourself
- Pray for the church
- Pray for others (family, friends, etc.)
- Pray for the world