

# Philippians

## Reminders [3:1-21]

- **Put No Confidence in the Flesh [3:1-6]**

- In addition, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.  
Τὸ λοιπόν, ἀδελφοί μου, χαίρετε ἐν κυρίῳ.
  - The word “Finally” is from λοιπός (loipos) which means “beyond that”, “in addition” or “finally”.
  - Paul uses this word to introduce a new topic.
  - Paul uses this word again in Phil 4:8, so this does not mean finally here.
  - As he did back in Phil 1:12, Paul refers to the Philippians as his brethren.
  - He then echoes the exhortation from the previous section to rejoice, but this time specifically ties the rejoicing to their relationship with Christ.
- To write the same things to you again is not tedious for me, and it is a safeguard for you.  
τὰ αὐτὰ γράφειν ὑμῖν ἐμοὶ μὲν οὐκ ὀκνηρόν, ὑμῖν δὲ ἀσφαλές.
  - The word “again” is not in the original text, but is implied by the phrase “the same things”.
  - There is a word ὑμῖν (humin) which means “to you” or “for you” and is not translated for some reason.
  - The word “trouble” is from ὀκνηρός (oknēros) which means “be reluctant”.
  - This word can mean “lazy” [Matt 25:26] or “lag behind” [Rom 12:11].
  - Paul is using this word here to indicate that writing these things is not a task which is going to induce reluctance in him (i.e. it is not tedious).
  - The word “safeguard” is from ἀσφαλής (asphalēs) which means “stable”, “firm”, “safe” or “secure”.
  - These reminders will be a safeguard for the Philippians by stabilizing them spiritually.
- Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision;  
Βλέπετε τοὺς κύνας, βλέπετε τοὺς κακοὺς ἐργάτας, βλέπετε τὴν κατατομήν.
  - The words “beware of” are from βλέπω (blepō) which means “see” or “look”.
  - As an imperative this word can mean “beware of” or “watch out for”.
  - The word “dogs” is from κύων (kuōn) which literally means “dog”.
  - Figuratively, this word refers to an unclean person just as the dog is an unclean animal.
  - Paul is turning the tables on the Judaizers who were trying to convince the Philippians to observe the Law and loved to call the Gentiles dogs.
  - The phrase “evil workers” is a term Paul uses to describe those who distort the gospel.
  - These Judaizers added works to faith in Christ for both salvation and Christian living.
  - The phrase “false circumcision” is from κατατομή (katatomē) which means “mutilation”.
  - The Judaizers’ emphasis on circumcision was a mutilation of the true gospel and Christian walk.

- for we are the *true* circumcision, who worship by means of the Spirit of God  
 ἡμεῖς γὰρ ἐσμὲν ἡ περιτομή, οἱ πνεύματι θεοῦ λατρεύοντες
  - The phrase “true circumcision” is from περιτομή (peritomē) which simply means “circumcision”.
  - Given that this is contrasted with the κατατομή (katatomē), the NASB correctly adds “true”.
  - The word “worship” is from λατρεύω (latreuō) which means “serve” or “worship”.
  - This is a cognate of λατρεία (latreia) which is the “worship” mentioned in Rom 12:1.
  - The phrase “in the Spirit” is the dative of πνεῦμα (pneuma) which means “breath” or “spirit”.
  - This is a dative of means which should be translated “by means of the Spirit” here.
  - The phrase “the Spirit of God” is a reference to God the Holy Spirit.
- and boast in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the *righteousness of the* flesh,  
 καὶ καυχόμενοι ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἐν σαρκὶ πεποιθότες,
  - The word “glory” is from καυχάομαι (kauchaomai) which means “boast”, “glory” or “pride oneself”.
  - This is the word used twice in 2 Cor 10:17 which teaches us that our boasting is to be in the Lord.
  - The phrase “put ... confidence” is from πείθω (peithō) which means “persuade” or “convince”.
  - As we saw in Phil 2:24 it means to become so convinced as to put confidence in something.
  - The phrase “in the flesh” is used here to describe the human good side of the sin nature.
  - As we will see, this refers to the idea of achieving righteousness through human credentials.
- although I myself could put confidence even in the *righteousness of the* flesh.  
 καίπερ ἐγὼ ἔχων πεποιθήσιν καὶ ἐν σαρκί.
  - The phrase “might have” is a participle of ἔχω (echō) which means “have” or “hold”.
  - The context makes it clear that this is a view that Paul could have, but does not.
  - Again, the phrase “in the flesh” refers to the idea of achieving righteousness through human credentials.
- If anyone else might consider putting confidence in the *righteousness of the* flesh, I far more:  
 τοῦτον μὲν οὖν ἐλπίζω πέμψαι ὡς ἂν ἀφίδω τὰ περὶ ἐμὲ ἐξαυτῆς.
  - The phrase “has a mind” is from δοκέω (dokeō) which means “think” or “suppose”.
  - The root meaning of this word is “consider as probable” which has a subjunctive flavor.
  - A good way to translate the essence of this verse is “...might consider putting confidence...”.
  - Once again, the phrase “in the flesh” refers to the idea of achieving righteousness through human credentials.
- circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin,  
 περιτομῆ ὀκταήμερος, ἐκ γένους Ἰσραήλ, φυλῆς Βενιαμίν,
  - The word “circumcision” is from περιτομή (peritomē) which is the word we saw for “true circumcision” in verse 3.
  - Paul begins explaining why he could claim to be “righteous” in the flesh by stating his list of credentials as a Jew.

- a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee;  
Ἑβραῖος ἐξ Ἑβραίων, κατὰ νόμον Φαρισαῖος,
  - The phrase “a Hebrew of Hebrews” could be a reference to his “pure” Jewish ancestry.
  - This could also refer to his knowledge of the Hebrew language which many Jews of the Diaspora did not possess.
  - Paul then cites his former position among the Pharisees [Acts 23:6].
  - The Pharisees were very conservative, rigidly legalistic Jews who religiously followed the Law.
  - In contrast, the Sadducees were more liberal Jews who denied the resurrection and were often at odds with the Pharisees [Acts 23:7-8].
- as to zeal, a persecutor of the church;  
κατὰ ζῆλος διώκων τὴν ἐκκλησίαν,
  - Paul made it clear that he was not a lukewarm follower of the Jewish religion.
  - His zeal as a Pharisee was evidenced by his intense and relentless persecution of Christians [Acts 8:3; 22:4-5; 26:9-11].
- as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.  
κατὰ δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐν νόμῳ γενόμενος ἄμεμπτος,
  - Paul concludes his explanation by pointing out that he diligently followed the requirements of the Law.
  - If righteousness could be obtained through human effort, then no one had a greater claim to such righteousness than Paul.

- Principles of Philippians 3:1-6
  - No matter what we might be going through in our lives, we can always rejoice because of who we are in the Lord [Ps 32:11; 37:4; Rom 5:11; Phil 4:4; Jas 1:2-4; 1 Pet 1:6-8; 4:12-13].
  - It should be joyful, not tedious, when we are reminded of the things we have learned from the Scriptures [Rom 15:14-15; 2 Pet 1:12-15; 3:1].
  - When we hear the precepts of God's word taught over and over again it solidifies our understanding of God and is a safeguard for our souls [Jas 1:21].
  - This is an integral part of the process of maturing in the faith which should result in a renewal of our mind and transformation of our lives [Rom 12:1-2].
  - The Philippians were being disturbed by Judaizers who were trying to convince them that they needed to conform to the strict requirements of the Law.
  - These men went so far as to preach that physical circumcision is a requirement for salvation, but the true circumcision – the one that really matters – is the circumcision of the heart [Rom 2:25-29].
  - These men were evildoers who were preaching legalism rather than grace [Rom 4:13-16; 6:14].
  - We should beware of such false teachers today [Ps 119:115; 2 Cor 11:13].
  - As an example, there are denominations today that falsely teach that water baptism is a requirement for salvation.
  - The true baptism – the one that really matters – is the baptism of the Spirit [Acts 11:16; 1 Cor 12:13].
  - It is by means of the Spirit that we are able to truly worship God in holiness [Rom 8:1-8; Gal 5:16].
  - Whatever “righteousness” we might think we have in our humanity, it does not measure up to God's standard of righteousness [Isa 64:6; Phil 3:7-9].
  - Paul had a very impressive list of human credentials such that he, of all people, might even put confidence in his human abilities.
  - But Paul was actually a very humble man who knew that human effort alone was vain and that human wisdom could not possibly compare to God's wisdom [1 Cor 3:18; 8:2].
  - Paul knew that he must labor for the Lord, but could not accomplish anything meaningful apart from His power [Col 1:29].
  - Paul understood the grace of God and conducted his life in accordance with that grace [1 Cor 15:10; 2 Cor 1:12; Gal 2:19-21].

## ● **Count All Things As Loss [3:7-11]**

- But whatever things were gain to me,  
[Ἀλλὰ] ἅτινα ἦν μοι κέρδη,
  - The phrase “whatever things” refers to everything in Paul’s list in verses 5 & 6 as well as anything else that might give Paul reason to put confidence in the flesh.
  - The word “gain” is from κέρδος (kerdos) which means “gain” or “profit”.
  - Paul used this word in Phil 1:21 to refer to spiritual gain, but here it is used in reference to gains in the worldly realm.
- those very things I have appraised as worthless because of Christ.  
ταῦτα ἡγημαι διὰ τὸν Χριστὸν ζημίαν.
  - The phrase “those things” refers back to “whatever things” from the first part of this verse.
  - To best translate the meaning here, it is better translated “those very things”.
  - The word “counted” is from ἡγέομαι (hēgeomai) which means “think”, “consider” or “regard”.
  - This is expressing the idea of estimating the value of something as in “appraised”.
  - The word “loss” is from ζημία (zēmia) which means “loss” or “forfeit”.
  - That which is deemed to be an asset in a worldly view is actually worthless from divine viewpoint.
  - The phrase “for the sake of Christ” is literally “because of Christ”.
  - It was because of Christ that Paul was able to see that his fleshly credentials were worthless.
- More than that, I appraise all things to be worthless  
ἀλλὰ μενοῦνγε καὶ ἡγοῦμαι πάντα ζημίαν εἶναι
  - Again, the word “count” is from ἡγέομαι (hēgeomai) which means “appraise” here.
  - The phrase “all things” takes Paul’s valuation beyond the things that were “gain” to him.
  - Again, The word “loss” is from ζημία (zēmia) which means “worthless” here.
- in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord,  
διὰ τὸ ὑπερέχον τῆς γνώσεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ κυρίου μου,
  - The phrase “surpassing value” is from ὑπερέχω (huperechō) which means “be better than”.
  - We saw this word translated as “more important” back in Phil 2:3.
  - We will see this word again in Phil 4:7 where it is simply translated as “surpasses”.
  - In this context, it clearly refers to something of surpassing value.
  - The word “knowing” is τῆς γνώσεως (tēs gnōseōs) which means “the knowledge of”.
  - The knowledge of Jesus Christ is the greatest asset we will ever possess.
  - Paul refers to Jesus Christ as “my Lord” here.
  - This is the only time Paul refers to Christ in this very personal way implying that Jesus is Paul’s Lord because Paul has come to know Him.
- for whom I have suffered the loss of all things,  
δι’ ὃν τὰ πάντα ἐζημιώθην,
  - The phrase “suffered the loss” is from ζημιόω (zēmioō) which means “forfeit” or “suffer loss”.
  - This is a cognate of the noun ζημία (zēmia) which we have translated as “worthless”.
  - This verb indicates that, although Paul considers all of these things to be worthless, the process of losing these things was painful [2 Cor 11:24-27].

- and appraise them as excrement so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, καὶ ἡγοῦμαι σκύβαλα, ἵνα Χριστὸν κερδήσω καὶ εὑρεθῶ ἐν αὐτῷ,
  - Again, the word “count” is from ἡγέομαι (hēgeomai) which means “appraise” here.
  - The word “rubbish” is from σκύβαλον (skubalon) which is a vulgar word meaning “excrement”.
  - The word for “gain” here is the same word Paul used for “whatever things were gain to me”.
  - This creates a direct contrast between everything else and what he had gained in Christ.
  - The word “found” is from εὐρίσκω (heuriskō) which means “find” or “discover”.
  - Those who have “gained” Christ through faith in Him are positionally “found” in Him [1 Cor 1:30].
- not having my righteousness come from *the* Law, μὴ ἔχων ἐμὴν δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ νόμου
  - The phrase “a righteousness of my own” is literally “my righteousness”.
  - The word “derived” is not in the Greek and was added by the translators.
- but that righteousness which is through faith in Christ, ἀλλὰ τὴν διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ,
  - The word “that” is that is a singular feminine pronoun.
  - This word refers back to “righteousness” which is a singular feminine noun.
- the righteousness which comes from God at the moment of faith, τὴν ἐκ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει,
  - The phrase “the righteousness which comes from God” is literally “the from God righteousness”.
  - Given that it is contrasted with righteousness that “comes” from the Law, this is a good translation.
  - The phrase “on the basis of faith” is literally “upon faith”.
  - This could mean “based upon faith” or even “upon believing” as in the moment we believe in Christ.
- and I want to know Him and the power of His resurrection τοῦ γινῶναι αὐτὸν καὶ τὴν δύναμιν τῆς ἀναστάσεως αὐτοῦ
  - The phrase “that I may know Him” is an articular infinitive meaning “to know”.
  - This construction indicates a goal or desire on the part of Paul.
  - The word “power” is from δύναμις (dunamis) which means “power” or “strength”.
  - This word describes power which has the potential to bring about some result – i.e. our resurrection.
- and the sharing of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; καὶ [τὴν] κοινωνίαν [τῶν] παθημάτων αὐτοῦ, συμμορφιζόμενος τῷ θανάτῳ αὐτοῦ
  - The word “fellowship” is from κοινωνία (koinōnia) which means “fellowship”, “participation” or “sharing”.
  - Here it is the idea of sharing in Christ’s suffering.
  - The word “conformed” is from συμμορφίζω (summorphizō) which means “same form as”.
  - This is describing being united with Christ in the likeness of His death [Rom 6:5].
  - There are two articles in this verse which are included in some manuscripts, but not others.
  - As with almost all text questions, it does not change the meaning of this verse.

- if perhaps I may *even* reach the Rapture.

εἴ πως καταστήσω εἰς τὴν ἐξανάστασιν τὴν ἐκ νεκρῶν.

- The phrase “in order that” is εἴ πως (ei pōs) which means “if perhaps”.
- This is a third class conditional meaning maybe yes, maybe no.
- The word “attain” is from καταντάω (katantaō) which means “arrive at”, “reach” or “attain to”.
- This word means to reach a goal or destination.
- The word “resurrection” is from ἐξανάστασις (exanastasis).
- The word for “resurrection” in verse 10 is from ἀνάστασις (anastasis).
- The ἐξ (ex) prefix means “from”.
- The word ἐξανάστασις (exanastasis) is not used anywhere else in the N.T.
- The use of ἐξανάστασις (exanastasis) in the phrase “resurrection from the dead” indicates that Paul is talking about something in particular.
- I believe he is referring to the Rapture event.

- Principles of Philippians 3:7-11
  - The greatest thing we have accomplished on our own in our lives is nothing when compared with the things that God has accomplished in our lives.
  - The sum total of all of the things we have accomplished on our own in our lives is nothing when compared with what Jesus Christ did for us on the Cross of Calvary.
  - At one time in his life, Paul had taken great pride in the myriad of things he had accomplished in the power of the flesh.
  - But on the road to Damascus, Paul realized that Jesus was indeed the Messiah and that he had been persecuting the followers of the true Lord [Acts 22:1-10; 26:1-18].
  - Because his eyes had been opened, Paul came to view all of his fleshly accomplishments as worthless (even excrement) compared to knowing Jesus Christ his Lord.
  - As he followed Jesus and proclaimed Him to others, Paul suffered the loss of everything that had previously been valuable in his estimation.
  - Paul knew that the real gain in his life was his relationship with Jesus Christ and possessing God's righteousness through faith in Him [Rom 4:5-16; 9:30-33; Heb 11:7].
  - Paul wanted to truly come to know Christ as he matured in the faith [Eph 4:11-16] and shared in His sufferings [Rom 8:16-18; 1 Pet 4:12-14].
  - We, too, need to understand that all of our worldly credentials and all of our good works do not gain us anything in regards to our relationship with God.
  - All of those things may have value with family, friends, co-workers, employers, etc., but in order to be saved we must humble ourselves and realize that none of that is able to reconcile us to God.
  - God Himself had to accomplish that reconciliation through Christ [2 Cor 5:18-19; Col 1:19-20].
  - Likewise, we must humble ourselves and realize that our daily walk will be righteous before God only as He accomplishes His work in and through us [1 Cor 12:4-6; 15:10; 2 Cor 3:5; Phil 2:13].
  - Paul wanted to fully understand the power of Christ's resurrection, knowing that he would one day be resurrected in His likeness [Rom 6:5].
  - He even hoped that he might live long enough to experience the power of Christ's resurrection while still alive by being transformed in the twinkling of an eye [1 Cor 15:50-53; 1 Thess 4:15-18].
  - There is nothing wrong with hoping to be alive at the Rapture, but we should not discount the blessing of experiencing dying grace [Ps 116:15; Acts 7:55-60; Rev 14:13].