

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. *Enjoy discovering more about Him!*

"NOTHING COMPARES TO CHRIST" | PHILIPPIANS 3:1-11 | PASTOR BRIAN BELL

WARM-UP QUESTION:

- **What is easier for you: to achieve something or to receive something?**

"3 Warnings – 3 Differences" Philippians 3: 1-3

Paul warns people of legalists who did harm instead of helping spiritual growth. True believers focus on God, not their works.

- **What are ways people struggle with legalism today?**
- **What are ways to glory in Christ and not put confidence in your own morality?**

"Paul's Religious Resume and Its Loss Compared to Christ" Philippians 3: 4-9

Paul had lived a very moral, religious life and considers it worth nothing now that he has a relationship with Jesus.

- **What are things people put on their spiritual "resume" in our culture today?**
- **What helps someone to let go of their resume and receive Jesus' love and grace?**

"Knowing Christ Deeply" Philippians 3:10-11

Paul's goal is to know Jesus and His power deeply, willing to partner in His suffering.

- **What kind of relationship goals do you have with Jesus?**

"Christ Connection: Jesus Is Worth More" Matthew 13:44

Jesus said the kingdom of heaven is worth giving up everything for because nothing compares to Him.

- **What would it look like in your life to treasure Christ above all?**

REFLECTION AND APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

Paul warns people not to have confidence in religious acts and heritage. He used to live that way and had an impressive resume. But he changed, considered it nothing in comparison to knowing Jesus and putting his confidence in Him.

- **Have you been building a relationship with Jesus or a religious resume?**
- **What are ways to glory in Christ instead of your efforts this month?**
- **Ask God to strip away your self-reliance and false identity and to build your life in His grace.**

Nothing Compares to Christ

I. Announce:

- A. Welcome to those watching online 10am.
- B. Slide1 Jasmine: VBS.
- C. *Missions Prayer Next Sunday at 1:30pm in the Agape Room.
- D. Slide2 Jason Bell Ordination. (read)
- E. Slide3 Clear up the *Motherhood of God* statement (read)
- F. Prayer:

II. Slide4 Intro: Nothing Compares to Christ

- A. Big Idea: Everything is loss, compared to knowing Jesus.
- B. Theme: Letting go of religious confidence, for real relationship.
- C. Paul moves from: External religion. Achievement. Credentials. and Performance.
To: Intimacy with Christ. *This passage is deeply personal.*
- D. Paul essentially says: Everything I once built my identity on I gladly laid down for Jesus.
 - 1. Paul is going to answer a very important question: Is life about what we achieve or what we receive? - What we've done or what He's done?
- E. Illustration: Imagine someone spends their whole life building a trophy room. [Degrees. awards. accomplishments. titles. recognition]. Shelves full of things they're proud of. Then one day they meet someone they deeply love.
 - 1. Suddenly: the trophies don't disappear. they just stop being ultimate.
 - 2. What once defined them, now feels small compared to relationship.
- F. Paul is about to open the doors to his own "trophy room". Let's peek in and listen for the next thing to Rejoice in.

III. Slide5a 1 REJOICE IN THE LORD (1a)

- A. 1 Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord.

- B. **Rejoice** (be glad in God) Esp when you **cannot rejoice** in *your circumstances*.
1. You can always **rejoice in the Lord** who **controls your circumstances**.
 2. **Slide5b** Fix your attention on Him. Warren Wiersbe said, "*He may not change your situation, but He will change you, and that is even better.*"
 3. **Not:** rejoice in accomplishments. **Not:** rejoice in morality. **Not:** rejoice in status. **But:** rejoice in Christ.
- C. **Religion** says rejoice in what you've done. **The gospel** says rejoice in what **Christ** has done.
- D. What do you naturally build **your identity** on? - What gives **you** a sense of **worth** apart from Christ?

IV. **Slide6 2, 3 WARNINGS - 3 DIFFERENCES (1b-3)**

- A. **1b** 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 —
- B. **Safe** - remember everything which we **commit to Christ** is **Safe** [in fact nothing is safe outside of Him]
1. **No Child, no Job, no Romance, no Friend, no Future, no Dream** is safe outside of Him. [playing it **safe** isn't necessarily **bad**, it just isn't **faith** anymore]
 2. **Need some proof?** Abraham w/his son Isaac. *Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.* Gen.22:2
 3. Abraham had to open his hands wider than any earthly man ever had to.
- C. Is there one **person** or **object** you need to **loosen your grip on**? [Jim Elliot, *He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose.*]
- D. **Slide7 3 Warnings:** look out for the dogs, the evildoers, those who mutilate the flesh.
- E. Look out for these: *Joy stealing, evil working, ankle biting legalists, always fast at Paul's heals*, barking **legalism** wherever he taught **Grace**.

F. **Dogs** (not Fefe, **but** a mutt w/mange). **Evil workers** (in contrast to **good workers**. Some working **for** their salv, others working **out** their salv). **The mutilation** (play on word's for a botched circumcision. *Ouch!*).

1. Paul moves from the word **peritoMay** (**circumcision**, cut around) to **katatoMay** (mutilation, cutting to pieces). [the preposition **kata** giving it the **pejorative** sense]
2. **The mutilation** meant - *the circumcision on which **they** insisted was **harmful rather than helpful** to **spiritual well-being**.* [circumcision once **the badge** of obedience to the law, **NOW a pin of pride** for these Judaizers].

G. **So**, beware of *self-imposed religion* (Col.2:23) and *religious* people.

1. **Self-imposed Religion** basically shouts, "clean up your act." **But**, they **don't tell you how to**, **don't empower you to be able to**, and **don't give you any time to work through your former life/ways**.
2. ***Jesus says**, I would like to *clean up your act*. I would like to *empower you* to do so. **And I** will *be patient with you* as you grow.

H. **Slide8 3 Differences:**

I. **Worship by the Spirit of God** - focus is on **God**, **not** on **your** own achievements.

J. **Glory in Christ Jesus** - not boast in **your** works, **but** glory in **the work of Jesus**.

K. **Put no confidence in the flesh** - you can't trust in your own works for **salvation** - Only confidence in **Jesus**.

V. **Slide9a 3 PAUL'S RELIGIOUS RESUME (4-6)**

A. **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.

B. Rabbi Paul says **you want to talk confidence in the flesh?** - Let's go. **Check out my wall of Degrees & Plaques, Certificates & Trophy's.** I called it *Greek Trash Talk*, think you can match me religiously, bring it on.

1. **Circumcised the 8th day**-he bore in his body **the badge** of the chosen people
2. **of the people of Israel** - a member of the nation in covenant w/God.
3. **of the Tribe of Benjamin** - The only tribe that aligned with Judah & remained faithful to King David's dynasty.
4. **a Hebrew of Hebrews** - He had *the pure-blood line* of his fathers. [He was a Hebrew National]
5. **as to the law a Pharisee** - He was more than a devout Jew, he was a **"separated one"** keeping the Law **Blamelessly**.
 - a) When Paul was Saul, he was a proud Pharisee. **The best of the best.** **Then** Saul ran right into *The Yard Stick/the Plumline*, **Jesus himself**. [that changed everything]

C. In modern language: If anyone *could earn righteousness*, it was Paul.

1. This was **Pedigree. Morality. Achievement. Religious performance.**

D. Important Insight: **None** of these things were bad. They simply *could not save him*.

1. **Slide9b** The danger is not only **bad things** keeping us from **Christ** - sometimes it's **good things** becoming *substitutes* for **Christ**.

E. **What** are you tempted to trust in spiritually?

F. **Where** do you subtly think, "God must be pleased with me because _____?"

VI. Slide10 **4 LOSS COMPARED TO CHRIST (7-9)** or Paul's P&L statement

A. **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— [the day Paul ran into perfection!]

B. **Paul uses accounting language.** Everything once in the **profit** column, moves to **loss**.

1. **Why?** Because of the surpassing worth of *knowing Christ Jesus my Lord*.
- C. **Loss, let's go back:** It wasn't the **bad** things kept Paul from Christ, **but** the **good** things:
1. **My family heritage, my social status, my biblical knowledge, my religious activity, my moral lifestyle. My good things, my best things.** (Let's go deeper now) **Can you say:** my bible readings, my Sun attendance, my bible studies, my family life, my moral life ... **I count as loss for Christ** (7). **Listen**, if you're counting any of them as a type of *your own righteousness* (9). **Then you're sunk!**
 - a) **Can you say this list you count as loss? or** do you keep them in the profit side of your P&L? (here's how you know if you do) You say or have said, God how can yo do this to me when I'm a good person, I do my devotions, I've gone on mission trips, etc. [**again these are all great for your sanctification, but detrimental to salvation*]
- D. **Vs.9** is one of the clearest gospel statements in **Philippians**. **Not having a righteousness of my own.**
1. **Our righteousness does not come from:** Effort. Morality. Religion. It comes through **faith in Christ**.
 2. Which the church in the 1500's defined **3 of the sola's:** **Sola scriptura**, **sola fide**, and **sola gratia** (scripture alone, faith alone, grace alone) [**as a reminder scripture over** tradition; **faith over** works; and **grace over** merit]
- E. **This Is the Heart of the Passage** - **Christianity is not merely:** believing facts. adopting morals. or joining religion. **It is:** knowing **Christ**. [**not knowing about Him only - but knowing Him personally**]
- F. **Paul did not lose everything because Christ was worth less.** He lost everything because Christ was worth more. [**Paul traded a resume for a relationship**].
1. **The greatest tragedy is not losing everything - it's gaining everything except Christ.**
- G. **The gospel** is not about **achieving** righteousness - it's about **receiving** righteousness.

- A. **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** (arrive at a destination) **the resurrection from the dead.**
- B. Vs. 9's Salvation naturally leads now to **Sanctification.**
- C. **Slide11b** Here lies **3 Secrets of a Holy Life:** *This is deep discipleship.*
1. **That I may know Him** - Paul already **knows Christ**, yet he longs to know Him more. [Paul wanted **not just Christ's benefits**, but **Christ Himself**].
 - a) It's having a **progressive relationship** where each person reveals himself to the other (both listen, both talk, both respond).
 - b) Real Christianity is not using **Jesus to get things** - it's **wanting Jesus Himself.**
 2. **The power of His res** - is a **dynamic power** which operates in the life of the individual Christian. Think of how the Res changed **Peter's** life.
 3. **May share his sufferings** - Know Him more personally.
 - a) Paul seems to recognize that **suffering** (especially for *the gospel's* sake) **brings deeper fellowship with Christ.** [Paul sees his ministry as an *extension* of **Jesus'**]
 4. **Slide11c** So, Paul's end-all: to **Know Christ personally** (more/more; deeper/deeper). To **Experience His Res Power Dynamically** (in motion, changing, growing). **and To Partner in His Suffering Willingly.**

VIII.Slide12 **6 CHRIST CONNECTION**

- A. Jesus is the treasure hidden in the field. *The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.* Mt.13:44
1. The man sells everything - not because he hates what he had - but because he found something greater.
- B. **Christ** is **not an addition** to life. **He is the treasure of life.**
- C. Christ is **not one treasure among many** - He is **the surpassing treasure.**
- D. **Prayer:** Lord, teach us **to treasure You** above everything/everyone else. **Help us not merely know about You**, but truly know You **personally and deeply.** Strip away

pride, self-reliance, and false identity, and ⁷root our lives fully in **Your grace**.

E. Keywords: Christ alone. Gain. Loss.