

## **GOING DEEPER STUDY NOTES** (For July 4, 2021)

For Community Groups or Personal Study

Over the course of our lives we fill out resumes, job applications, school forms, credit checks. We go through each process in order to prove who we are and why we are worth hiring, worth being admitted to a particular school, why we are a good investment for a financial advance.

From our earliest years we are often defined, in the eyes of others and our eyes too, by the job we have, the school we attend, the car we drive and the home we live in (we are rarely asked about the outstanding mortgage or the ongoing car payments).

Are we more than the sum of our diplomas, paychecks, zip code, and school pedigree? The word from above, from God Himself, is a resounding "Yes!"

Paul spoke about this in the passage we are studying this morning. In the opening verses of Philippians Chapter 3 (the city of Philippi was at the north end of the Aegean Sea) Paul listed all of his accomplishments and then compared all of them collectively, all he had worked for, to knowing and loving Jesus. For him, me too, there was/is no comparison. If true it provides us with an identity that can never be taken from us. Jobs come and go. Schools change. Cars and houses rust and fall apart. Jesus does not.

Who are we? God's word for us today will provide an answer, a good, freeing, life-giving answer!

### **PHILIPPIANS – OUR IDENTITY IN CHRIST**

SERMON PASSAGE: PHILIPPIANS 3:1-11

<sup>1</sup> Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you.

<sup>2</sup> Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. <sup>3</sup> For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh — <sup>4</sup> 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: <sup>5</sup> 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; <sup>6</sup> as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. <sup>7</sup> But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. <sup>8</sup> 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 <sup>9</sup> 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 — <sup>10</sup> that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, <sup>11</sup> that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead."

### **WHAT DOES IT SAY?**

1. Who is Paul speaking about when he writes about "dogs, evildoers, those who mutilate the flesh"?
2. List Paul's accomplishments. How important are they to him?

### **WHAT DOES IT MEAN?**

3. What does Paul mean by, "put no confidence in the flesh"?
4. Why would Paul consider his accomplishments as "rubbish"?
5. What does Paul mean when he writes, "For His sake I have suffered the loss of all things"?
6. How would you define "righteousness" and where does (according to Paul) his righteousness (and ours) come from?

### **WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU?**

7. Provide examples of things that get added to Christian faith, distorting it today, by "dogs, evil doers, mutilators of the flesh"?
8. List (by writing down) all the things you consider to be your main accomplishments (things you are proud of)?
9. What do you mention when you describe yourself to others?
10. Which of your accomplishments can never be taken from you?
11. If you are a Christian, how has your identity changed because of Jesus? If you are not a Christian, what is the most important part of who you are?
12. How do you, "share in Jesus' sufferings"?

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Spend time in silence, praying (even if just for a moment or two). Prayer is simply a conversation with God. Be honest. If you don't know how or what to pray admit that and ask God to help you pray. Ask God to help you honestly look at all of your accomplishments. Ask God to help you realize that your true value and identity comes from Him and Him alone. Ask God to help you see the true value in everyone you meet. He will help you because He loves you.