The Christian and His Behavior

Philippians 3:4-11

Introduction:

I. Paul’s Accomplishments in the Flesh - 3:4-6

A. Paul’s Comparison – 3:4

“though ﻿﻿I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I ﻿﻿more so:”

Paul would put his record up against anyone. It was that impressive. The Judaizers were trying to impress the Philippians with their works under the Law. Paul’s attack on their confidence in the flesh was not merely academic.

He had been where they still were. He sat where they still sat. He thought as they still thought. He had done what they still did.

Then he met Christ on the Damascus Road and one glimpse showed him where his religious zeal had brought him. He discovered that not only were those things worthless, they were wicked and made him an enemy of Jesus Christ.

B. Paul’s Confidence – 3:5-6

1. Confidence in a Rite – Circumcision – 3:5a

“circumcised the eighth day,”

a. An Initiatory Rite into the Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 17)

“eighth day” he was born a Jew. Not a proselyte.

b. Israel and the Church are Two Separate Entities

This is the key to understanding the relationship of the church to the Law.

c. Circumcision is Not the Same as Christian Baptism.

This idea was taught by R.C. and carried on by the reformers and the into covenant theology – Lutherans, Presbyterians, et.al.

New Testament Baptism is for believers, not babies.

2. Confidence in a Race – Israel – 3:5b

“of the stock of Israel” ﻿﻿– (National)

*“of* the tribe of Benjamin,” (Tribal) King Saul, stayed with Judah at the rebellion in 931 BC.

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“a Hebrew out of Hebrews;” (Parental) His parents were both Jewish

3. Confidence in a Religion – Judaism – 3:5c

“concerning the law, ﻿﻿a Pharisee;”

The Pharisees were the fundamentalists of their day. They believed (rightly) that the Torah was God’s Word. The Sadducees did not believe in spirit beings, after-life or the resurrection. The Pharisees were the enemies of Christ in the Gospels and Acts. That’s why Saul, a Pharisee, was persecuting the Church. But they were easier to reach with the Gospel. The O.T. told of the Coming of the Messiah in detail.

4. Confidence in a Record – Zeal – 3:6a

“concerning zeal, ﻿﻿persecuting the church;”

He is not proud of that now, but it is in keeping with his beliefs at that time and that made him a zealous worker for the Law.

5. Confidence in his Righteousness – Law – 3:6b

“concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.”

Saul was blameless, (not sinless) blameless. He followed the law. When he failed, he offered the proper sacrifice. (Jesus kept the Law perfectly. He never sinned. He never offered a sacrifice. He challenged His avowed enemies, the Pharisees, to point out any sin He had committed and they could not name one.)

Those were Paul’s accomplishments in the flesh. Between v.6 and v.7 of this autobiography, something happened, Paul’s Damascus Road experience. Acts 9

II. Paul’s Attitude toward the Flesh – 3:7-11

A. What He Discarded – 3:7-8

1. His Human Religion – 3:7

“But ﻿﻿what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.”

“Gain” (κέρδη) is the same word he used in 1:21 “to live is Christ; to die is gain”

“loss” (ζημίαν) is used by Paul to describe the “up-coming” shipwreck on the 4th missionary trip, “Sirs, I perceive that the voyage will be with injury and much loss,” (Acts 27:1).

Paul used the same words to describe his (perceived) gains and losses as a religious man. All that he had accomplished under the law was wiped out when he gained Christ. On the Damascus Road Paul learned that he had one huge debt that wiped out all of his gains. Until he had gained Christ he was actually spiritually bankrupt.

2. His Human Resources – 3:8

“Yet indeed I also count all things loss ﻿﻿for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ.”

Paul had given up everything for Christ.

* His home in Tarsus.
* His family (except his sister’s son - Acts 23:16)
* His Jewish religion
* His health for hardships (floggings and perils and shipwrecks)
* His freedom

Ask him about his loss. He would say, “What loss?

* I have seen Jesus face to face. Now that is all I can see.” (That spoiled the world for me)
* I have heard His voice. Now that is all I want to hear. I want to hear Him again, saying, “Well done, Paul”.
* I saw His Face. I look forward to seeing that face again and not being ashamed before Him.

B. What He Desired – 3:9-11

1. A Complete Appreciation of Salvation Truth

a. A Position to Enjoy – 3:9a

“and be found in Him” - a justification term.

b. A Possession to Enjoy – 3:9b-c

 1) Discarding False Righteousness – 3:9b

“not having ﻿﻿my own righteousness, which *is* from the law,”

Paul could go through the commandments one by one and check them off as kept them.

1. Other gods

2. graven image

3. Take His name in vain

4. Sabbath

5. Father and Mother

6. Murder

7. Adultery

8. Steal

9. False witness (lying)

Until he came to # 10, “Thou shall not covet” That one tripped him up. See his struggle in Rom. 7. Did he keep them perfectly? NO!

James reminds us that, “To break one is to break them all.”

(Jesus kept the Law perfectly. He never sinned. He never offered a sacrifice for sin. He challenged His avowed enemies, the Pharisees, to point out any sin He had committed and they could not name one.)

 2) Discovering Flawless Righteousness – 3:9c

“but ﻿﻿that which *is* through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;”

This is imputed righteousness. It is given to the believer by faith in Jesus, Who has kept the Law perfectly and as the sinless sacrifice paid the price for the sin of the world, every individual. He Included me and he included you and you can assure any person you meet and give a witness that (s) he was included also.

2. A Complete Appropriation of Sanctification Truth – 3:10-11

a. The Private Gain – 3:10a

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“that I may know Him” – a sanctification term.

Remember:

* Being found in Him (v.9) in salvation truth.
* Knowing Him (v.10) is sanctification truth.

How do we get to know Him? Spend time with Him,

 Listen to Him

Respond to Him

Talk to Him

We will begin to be like Him.

Think as He thinks

Act as He acts.

Say what He says.

Then, one day, we will be like Him, for we will see Him fully as He is. (I John 3:2)

See also II Cor. 3:18,

“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding ﻿﻿as in a mirror ﻿﻿the glory of the Lord, ﻿﻿are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as ﻿﻿by the Spirit of the Lord.”

b. The Progressive Gain – 3:10b

1. “and the ﻿﻿power of His resurrection,”

“and the ﻿﻿power of His resurrection,” - The power which brought Christ forth from the dead now operates in believers’ lives since they have been “raised with Christ” (Col. 3:1).

“Power” δύναμιν means “ability to overcome resistance.” Do you need power to overcome resistance in your witnessing?

It is also used in:

Acts 1:8

“You shall receive power after the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you shall be my witnesses.

Romans 1:16

“the Gospel is the power of God to salvation to everyone who believes…

1. “and ﻿﻿the fellowship of His sufferings,”

Paul is not speaking suffering on the cross (that cannot be shared). But suffering because of the cross. God had used Ananias to tell Paul that this is precisely what he would do as a servant of Christ

(Acts 9:16).

“For ﻿I will show him how much ﻿he must suffer ﻿for the sake of my name.”

3) “being conformed (συμμορφιζόμενος) to His death,”

“Being conformed” (in this context) has the idea of “being conformed inwardly in one’s experience with Christ death.” As Christ died for sin the believer is to die to sin (Romans 6:2) and exhibit that by being set apart daily from sin. (Romans 6:1-4)

c. The Prospective Gain – 3:11

“if, by any means, I may ﻿﻿attain ﻿﻿to the resurrection “out from” the dead.”

This “out-resurrection” raises some questions,

Question: Did Paul or anyone have to do all of these things in order to be a part of the resurrection?

Answer: No, the resurrection is not earned and there is no such thing as a partial resurrection.

Note: Paul may be hoping to be a part of the Rapture which is a special “taking out” of the church including those who have died in Christ,

1 Cor. 15:51

“Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed…”

1 Thess. 4:16-17

“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.”

Conclusion: