

LOSING TO WIN - PHILIPPIANS 3:1-11

¹⁻³ Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you. Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh -

- Rejoice - *to be in a state of happiness and well-being, rejoice, be glad.*
- Not tedious for Paul and safe (*pertaining to being in someone's best interest, safe, secure*) for them. The NASB translates it "is a safeguard for you." Perhaps a continuation of what he began in [1:27-30](#).
- We'll see from context that Paul has Jews in mind, but it seems to be Judaizers in particular from the context. Jews - followers of Jehovah. Judaizers - Jewish-Christians who forced obedience to the Old Law (in particular circumcision) in addition to belief in Christ.
- **Dogs.** It was used in a derogatory manner. You can see this in Old Testament passages such as [Psalm 22:16](#) "For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet". It was used by Jesus as well in the sermon on the mount ([Matthew 7:6](#)) and the Canaanite woman ([Matthew 15:26-27](#)). Apparently, from what I've read, Easterners were not fond of dogs. They were scavengers. It paints the picture of false teachers waiting to prey on the weak.
- **Evildoers.** Though they viewed themselves as righteous and holy, they were in fact evil. Relying on their own performance of the Law.
- **Mutilate.** Because at this point that's all it was. It no longer carried the sign of the Abrahamic covenant which was commanded by God. Now it was simply a cutting - a mutilating the flesh.
- **Circumcision:** carries the idea of a cutting away. You know what circumcision is, so I'll not go into that. However, God has always required a circumcision of the heart and that is precisely what Paul has in mind.
 - [Deuteronomy 10:16](#) Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn.
 - [Deuteronomy 30:6](#) And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.
 - [Colossians 2:11-12](#) In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. (Also see [Romans 2:25-29](#)).
- **Two groups:** those who put confidence in the flesh (circumcision; the Law; their own righteousness) and those who worship by the Spirit of God. Those who boast in the Lord.

⁴⁻⁶ 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: 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; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

- Circumcised according to the Law (**Leviticus 12:3**) and from Benjamin (faithful tribe to Judah and contributor to the first King of Israel). Pure bloodline . . . the real deal.
 - Of course all off these were out of his control, but it was something none the less.
- Pharisee (known for their strict approach and observance of the law) and zealous (yes, he did more than talk the talk when it came to persecuting Jesus' people). So, under the law, he was blameless (not perfect, but the idea that he was obedient and kept the precepts).
 - These he pursued, but relying on your own knowledge, zeal and obedience doesn't get the job done, does it (**Romans 10:1-4**)? It's faith in Christ that God is looking for!

⁷⁻⁸ But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 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

- **Matthew 10:38-39** And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.
- **Matthew 16:24-25** Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."
 - In order to win, you've got to lose. Winning requires you to let loose of whatever is necessary.
- What do we have to let go?
 - I wonder if this is harder to pinpoint when you compare the time and culture. Yet, the principle doesn't change, so surely it has application, does it not?
 - Consider that Paul lost: his family ties to Israel and personal work among the people.
 - Family: Sometimes we've got to let go of the things we were taught. Sometimes families let go of us because of our commitment of Christ. At times we have to, unfortunately, go our separate ways. This is hard, because it's one of the key "security blankets" we have in life. Our families, backgrounds, etc. are what define us.
 - Career: Is Christ worth your career if it came to that? Does your work, or for that matter, any hobby or talent we have, come first? Who do you want to know more than Christ? What do you want to know more about than knowing Jesus?
 - What are we zealous about? If someone observed you for a short while - what would they learn about you? What are you about? What's incredibly sad is that most people don't even have that great of position or standing to begin with, but they still won't give anything up for the Lord. Many people struggle to give up vices for the Lord, struggle to give up harmful habits for the Lord.
- What is Satan's goal?
 - He wants you to think he's blessing you. Giving you the life God is selfishly (for some reason) holding from you. He's like the thief Jesus speaks about: he only steals, kills,

and destroys. Listen, if he attempted to dupe Jesus, do you really think he doesn't go after you . . . and win many times!

- What is Christ's goal?
 - That you may come to know Him. That you may "gain Christ." You don't know what you don't know. Do you know Christ?

⁹⁻¹¹ 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—that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

- Brethren, if we're not found in Him, then we're going to be found out by God, because nothing is hidden from His sight. If we don't have faith in Jesus . . . we're putting faith in our selves and that doesn't end well.
- Our goal is to follow the footsteps of the one with power. The power to save. The power to resurrect - not only Himself, but you. Paul says he looked to attain it "by any means possible." So, what are we willing to do or go through for Jesus? That's the focus today.