

Phil Ch 3 Vs 2-3

Beware, Beware, Beware!

Last week I sought to simply encourage you to rejoice in the Lord, not in your circumstances or in your treacherous situations, but in the Lord. Because that's where the scriptures call us as believers to find our joy, in the Lord, but the bible gives us multiple reasons *to* rejoice, several things that we are to rejoice and be rejoicing over. and Because I told you I'd mention some of those things this week I will, but we're not going to camp out on these things I'm just going to give you a small multitude of scripture references that you can write down if you're quick enough and look up to verify later.

These scriptures will be the vs that state specifically the words like, "rejoice" or "glad" the same word that's been translated as "rejoice" here in Phil ch 3 vs 1, but you may have to read a couple vs before them and after them to determine the context. and If you have a Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words you can find these references listed in it, it states, The following are grounds and occasions for "rejoicing," on the part of believers: in the Lord, Phil 3:1 Phil 4:4; His incarnation, Luke 1:14; His power, Luke 13:17; His presence with the Father, John 14:28; His presence with them, John 16:22; 20:20; hearing (or having heard) the gospel, Acts 13:48; their salvation, Acts 8:39; their enrollment in Heaven, Luke 10:20; their liberty in Christ, Acts 15:31; (And I might add the entire book of Gal) their hope, Rom 12:12 (cf. Rom 5:2; Rev 19:7); their prospect of reward, Matt 5:12; the obedience and godly conduct of fellow believers, Rom 16:19, 2 Cor 7:7,9; 13:9; Col 2:5; 1 Thess 3:9; 2 John 4; 3 John 3; the proclamation of Christ, Phil 1:18; the gospel harvest, John 4:36; suffering with Christ, Acts 5:41; 1 Peter 4:13; suffering in the cause of the gospel, 2 Cor 13:9; Phil 2:17; Col 1:24; in persecutions, trials and afflictions, Luke 6:23; 2 Cor 6:10; the manifestation of grace, Acts 11:23; in meeting with fellow believers, 1 Cor 16:17, Phil 2:28; receiving tokens of love and fellowship, Phil 4:10; the "rejoicing" of others, Rom 12:15; 2 Cor 7:13; and learning of the well-being of others, 2 Cor 7:16.

Now you may be wondering what was the point in running through all of these references, because I wanted you to see the overwhelming emphasis of the scriptures that we amongst other things are to be a joyful and rejoicing people. Does God have a plan for us? Yes, does He have a burden for us? Yes, (be it in the lost or the taking of the gospel to a people who haven't heard, or to faithfully teach His word, or any and all of the above, the Lord has a burden for us). Will our lives to some greater or lesser degree, at various times involve suffering? Yes, are your circumstances to some how dictate or influence the joy of the Lord in your life, no. Because we're not speaking here of happiness, happiness is determined by circumstance, it's a variable, but joy is a constant, because we're to joy in the God of our salvation

Since we spent considerable time on that last week, you can get that tape, but Paul said he didn't consider it a burden to be repeating himself because it's safe for us to be reminded of these things. Because we're so quick to forget them, I would almost bet that between last week and today something happened in most of your lives that if even for a moment it robbed your joy. You allowed your circumstance to affect your relationship with the Lord rather than allowing your relationship with the Lord to affect your circumstance. and So we need to be reminded, don't focus on your circumstances focus on the Lord, joy in the Lord. Peter got his eyes off the Lord and on his circumstances and it almost sunk him, literally.

So the reminder to rejoice in the Lord, how often we need it, we're not established in it Peter wrote and said, *"For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease."* 2 Peter 1:12-15 You see because he didn't want believers to be barren and unfruitful, he wanted to remind them of some things even though they were established in them.

Now, if they were established in brotherly kindness, and perseverance and self-control and all the things he mentioned making their calling and election sure and they needed a reminder. How much more do we, who are so far from being established in so many things, need to be stirred by way of reminder to trust in the Lord, or to rejoice in the Lord, or whatever it is that we may need to be reminded of scripturally speaking? I find myself encouraging people to maintain eternal perspective quite often, because we so easily become short sighted, we get distracted and we start getting ripped off because other people don't care about God, or doing right by people, and they seem to do just fine in life. Here you are trying to lead a godly life and nothing is going your way, things keep getting worse, Asaph found himself in that same position and he almost slipped. and If that's you this morning jot down Ps 73 and read it later, because when he went into the sanctuary of God, when he went back to church in modern vernacular, he regained eternal perspective and God straightened everything out in his heart. Which is another reason we need to fellowship corporately as we are this morning, to help keep our minds on things above, to maintain eternal perspective because this life is but a vapor and our trials are at best temporary and working in us an eternal weight of glory. and We need to be reminded of these things.

Paul says rejoice in the Lord, and he says it over and over again, so if it ever seems like I'm always repeating myself, it's because I am, because the word repeats itself, and when we get it all, I'll have nothing more to say, but we never will. So if come to hopefully hear of something more than the cross of Jesus Christ or the blood of His redemption, or the grace and mercy of God and our need to desperately cling to Him then you're going to be sorely disappointed. Because there is nothing more.

Paul said in 1 Cor 2:1-5 *“And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.”*

As a Pastor that continually ministers to me more and more, I don't want you to come here because I'm always giving you some new thing, or because he sure is some kind of smooth articulator of the gospel. Or he's always got an interesting story, I don't want you to be impressed with me, I want you to be impressed with Jesus Christ I don't want you to awe over human wisdom, but over the power of God, through the word of God, by the Spirit of God. Because He's the One you're to place your trust and your faith in, and so by coming here you can count on simply being pointed back to Jesus and the study of His word, there is nothing more.

To be reminded of these things is safe for us, it keeps us in the safety zone, we don't enter in to questionable doctrines and heresies, which is what Paul leads into next, he's writing to them things that are safe. But he wants to exhort them not to be ignorant of the subtleties of the enemy, rejoice in the Lord, but don't be ignorant of His word or what it is that He desires of our lives. Don't fall prey to deceiving doctrines but rather beware of them, pure and gentle as doves, but wise as serpents.

Vs2-3

So here Paul sort of turns the page and seems to go off on a tangent he's speaking about joy, and rejoicing and then out of nowhere (seemingly) comes the warning, beware, beware, beware. The bible is full of warnings; God loves us so much that He wants us to be aware of the pitfalls of life. Things that aren't healthy for you spiritually or eternally, now I'm not saying that there aren't those who are called to cultic exposure, investigating certain movements and bringing heresies into the light for all to see, because there are those who have such a call on their lives.

We often refer to them as apologists, defenders of the faith, but it's a delicate area that you need to be certain you're called to, because what can happen is, is that through your intrigue you can justify a “call” that God never put on your life. and Through that you start spending more time researching things that are false, and reading heretical books more than you do this one. and It can be hazardous to your spiritual health, the bible says be wise concerning what is good, and simple (or innocent) concerning evil.

People are like well I want to know what they believe so I can be a better witness to them. If you want to be a better witness, than get to know your bible better, it's not a knowledge of what they believe that's going to convert them, it's the knowledge of Jesus Christ and Him crucified and the knowledge of the word of God that's going to do that, faith comes by hearing and hearing by the what? The word of God, if you know the truth you can refute the lie, "you know really Jesus was Michael the ark angel." Really, Hebrews ch 1 says, "*to which of the angels did He ever say: "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You"?* And again: "*I will be to Him a Father, And He shall be to Me a Son"?*" But instead He says, "*Let all the angels of God worship Him.*" "Have you got a minute, I'd like to share with you another gospel of Jesus Christ that was told to Joseph Smith by some angels?" Really, Gal Ch 1 says, "*if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.*"

You see you don't need to know what *they* believe to be an effective witness; you need to know what *you believe*. The word of God has given to you all things that pertain to life and godliness, you don't anything more, "well, if I know what they believe, I'll know what to look out for so that I won't be deceived." Hey, the bible tells you what to look out for, it's full of warnings, you heed these warnings and you'll be alright, you won't be deceived, you won't be brought into that bondage because you'll know the truth and the truth, (Jesus said) makes you free. God warns us of all kinds of pitfalls in His word, be it over cultic deception, or things to avoid concerning unhealthy body life, or how to discern the efforts of the flesh vs the work of the Spirit, how to handle things gone awry in the church or whatever.

There are things to beware of, Jesus said, "*Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.*" That's a healthy warning for us today, be careful that you don't get confused as to what life is really all about. Luke 20:46-47 again Jesus said, "*Beware of the scribes, who desire to walk in long robes, love greetings in the marketplaces, the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts, who devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation.*" What's the warning? Don't fall into the pitfall of self-righteousness and false humility, which is the worst type of pride you could fall into. 1 Cor 8:9 "*beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak.*"

Don't take advantage of the grace of God in your life at the expense of a weaker brother or sister, love being the higher law over that of liberty, something that I soberly exhort all the servants here over. Gal 5:15 "*But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!*" A warning against backbiting and gossip, in Heb 3:12 we read, "*Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.*" I think that's pretty self explanatory, it correlates nicely with Deut 6:12 which says, "*beware, lest you forget the LORD*" who brought you out from the house of bondage.

You see when things were bad you were crying out to God, but now that everything is ok, hey, who needs God, and you forget about Him until you need to pull Him down off the shelf again in your day of distress, the bible says beware that you don't do that. The bible warns against those who cause divisions and says to reject them after the 1st and 2nd admonition, in 2 Thess ch 3 Paul said, "*And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed.*" You see the warning against disobedience to God's word.

So God sends out the warnings to us, He didn't leave us with out a road map, or an instruction manual, there's a way that seems right to a man but the end thereof is death. Don't do what seems right in your own eyes, how many times you put something together with out reading the instructions only to your own demise. I'm amazed at how many people treat life the same way. God's given us the instruction manual, don't try to work things out on your own, consult the manual, it will save you much grief. Paul is speaking here of what are known as the Judaizers, and they were a constant pain in Paul's backside, always following him around trying to combat the doctrine of grace, seeking to bring his converts under the yoke and bondage of the Law.

Now they were pro Jesus, just not the same Jesus you know, the Jehovah Witnesses are pro Jesus, the Mormons are pro Jesus, but listen the Jesus they speak about isn't the same guy that you know, don't be deceived. They were teaching that you had to keep the law (especially the rite of circumcision if you were a male) along with believing in Jesus to be saved. You had to become a Jew more or less, but what does the bible say, Rom 2:28-29 "*For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.*"

But you see these guys were legalists, and they sought to bring others under that bondage of legalism, you have to knock on so many doors to be right with God, you have to ride bikes around town and wearing suits and witnessing to people to really be right. One day Jesus was talking to the Pharisees and He said, "*Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.*" You subject them to a legal code of righteousness, which in reality works in direct opposition to the finished work of the cross. In Col 2:20-23 we read, "*Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations-- Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle," which all concern things which perish with the using--according to the commandments and doctrines of men? These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.*"

Or to understand it another way, these things don't crucify the flesh, if anything they indulge the flesh because they give you a false sense of righteousness, a righteousness that you acquire by means of your own works, that's why Paul calls them here, "evil workers." Because the works look real spiritual but they're of the flesh, they're carnal, and in reality evil because they strive against the righteousness provided in the cross saying that it wasn't enough, Jesus didn't satisfy the righteous requirements of the Father, I have to make up where He left off by doing this and this and this. Be careful, there are things we can do that look so spiritual, but they're wicked to the core because they're inspired of the flesh, and there is nothing good that comes from the flesh, the bible says that in me, that is in my flesh no good things dwells.

Jesus said, "*Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.*" He said you'll know them by their fruits, the things that they speak of or that they do, the things they seek to subject you to, do they line up with the word, to they point you to Jesus Christ. Or do they bring you into some form of bondage, legal righteousness that causes you to gain God's favor by the works that you do, Paul says that they're evil workers, beware of them. (Now that's the 2nd one the 1st thing he says is beware of dogs.) Now nowhere in the scriptures that I'm aware of do dogs carry a positive connotation. Prov 26:11 "*As a dog returns to his own vomit, So a fool repeats his folly.*" Matt 7:6 "*Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.*" Rev 22:14-15 "*Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.*" But this isn't speaking here of your little house pet, it's speaking of those scavenger dogs who run around in packs, and they're nasty, no one owns them, and often times they're dangerous and diseased. and That's what the Jews used to refer to the Gentiles as, Gentile dogs. It was about the worst insult you could receive.

Many Jews believed that the Gentiles were created to simply fuel the fires of hell, but it's interesting that Paul now turns this stigma, or this insult back on the legalizers who were deceiving his converts, he says they're dogs, good for nothing scavengers full of nothing but danger and disease and so beware of them lest they bite you with their false doctrine and you become infested with it as well. and Finally here he mentions "the mutilation" or the "cutting" maybe your bible says "concision" it's a pun or a play on words in regards to circumcision. Again in reference to their specific teaching on the need to obey the law, and become a Jew outwardly in practice and religion in order to secure their salvation. I mean Jesus is good and all, I'm not denying your need for Him but you also need to do this and this to be saved. and We experience the same type things today, Jesus is good and all but until you're baptized you're really not saved, until you're a church member and tithing regularly you're really not right.

Listen, the only thing that makes you right with God is knowing Jesus Christ There's nothing that you're going to do that's going to add to, or perfect that which He has already done

on the cross, through His death and resurrection. and Paul writes the entire letter to the Gal over such matters and he says who has bewitched you, having begun in the Spirit are you going to be made perfect in the flesh. It's a rhetorical question; you aren't going to somehow improve on anything that the Holy Spirit has done in your life through mean of the flesh. and He says to those who are so big on circumcision, if the cutting off of your flesh there makes you spiritual why stop at the foreskin? Just go for it, be really right with God and just castrate yourself, check it out for yourself Paul got pretty radical with these guys.

In reality here in this text this word "mutilation" carries with it the connotation of the pagan ritual of the cutting of their flesh, and the mutilating of their flesh that they would do to themselves to try to somehow please or gain the favor of their pagan gods. and You can see some of that in 1st Kings Ch 18 around vs 28, something that the Lord expressly forbidden in Lev 19:28. and Paul is really putting the act of circumcision on that same level in that they're looking to that outward act to bring them some type of favor or right standing with the Lord. But God doesn't get into people cutting themselves or mutilating their flesh. Nowhere in the bible did God ever seek to infer that circumcision constituted salvation. It was the sign of the old covenant, and if we had time we'd research it and you would see that it was simply to be the outward expression of a inward covenant of the heart between God and His people. Even back in Gen 17 when God established the right of circumcision with Ab we read there in vs 10-11 *"This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised; and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you."*

You see it was the sign, not the substance, the substance went much deeper, it was concerned with the heart, God has always been concerned with the inward condition of the heart of man, not the outward condition of the flesh. and He points it out very clearly in Deut 10:16 where He said to Israel, *"circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer."* You see circumcision was a ritual which simply symbolized a cutting away, or severance from the life lived after the flesh, that you might be wholly(from the heart) dedicated and consecrated over to God. No longer living your life after the drives and the lusts of the flesh, but now setting yourself apart to God to live after those things that are pleasing to Him, and the desires of the Spirit for your life.

Again Deut 30:5-6 *"Then the LORD your God will bring you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it. He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers. And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live."* So circumcision isn't simply a matter of physical mutilation it was a matter of the heart, and the Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul makes that clear in multiple places through out the NT.

Time forbids me to share too much but I'll give you 1. Col 2:11 *"In Him (that is Christ) you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ."*

It's much like baptism for us; Paul would have the same fervency against the false doctrine of baptism for salvation as he did circumcision for salvation. Because it's not the removal of the filth from the flesh that saves anybody, that's simply the answer of a good conscience in obedience to the Lord, but the act itself does nothing for you. Or else we'd just go grab heathens off the street by force and take down to the creek and baptize them all, but it won't do any good if God hasn't dealt with their hearts 1st. and Once He has your heart, you want to please Him, what's one of the things that please Him? That we publicly identify with the death and resurrection of our Lord through water baptism, showing outwardly what God has done inwardly in our hearts. But that isn't what saved you; you were saved before you ever hit the water, if you had given your heart to Christ. So beware of those who try to disease you with false doctrine, evil workers, who seek to glory in your flesh.

Vs3

He says that "we" are the circumcision (circumcision inferring those who are rightly related to God), and who are those, who are the "we" he's referring to? Those who do these 3 things, he gave us 3 warnings regarding a certain type of person, a deceptive person, a dangerous and diseased person.

Now he gives us 3 discerning elements to aid us in discerning those who are true believers, those who are right on in they're relationship with God, and they are those who #1 worship God in Spirit, as opposed to through the efforts of the flesh, from the heart. Now we know that right works spill out from a right heart, but one seeks to justify, the other is a simple result (do you see the difference?) So those who worship in Spirit, Jesus said in John 4:23-24 "*The hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.*"

#2 Those who rejoice, or glory, not in their flesh or the works of their flesh, what they do and don't do, but in Christ Jesus, those who make their boast in the Lord. Paul said, "*God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.*"

Finally #3 those who no confidence or no reliance, no trust or assurance in the flesh. But rather have crucified the flesh and place our trust or our confidence in Christ. Jesus said with out Me you can do nothing, Paul wrote, "*And we have such trust through Christ toward God. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our*

sufficiency is from God.” Not with in ourselves but from God, so beware, beware, beware, be on your guard against the flesh and those who would have you place confidence in your flesh, because those who sow to the flesh reap corruption, but those who sow to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap eternal life. (Close)

But if you're here this morning and you don't know what it means to live beyond the sufficiency of yourself, you've never placed your confidence in Christ, listen you're here because God wants to give you that opportunity. He wants the fact that His Son died on the cross, shed His blood for the remission of your sin and rose again 3days later so that you might stand justified before Him in Christ to become real to you. That you might place your confidence in Him thereby receiving everlasting life by simply inviting Him into your heart.