

**Confidence in the flesh, vv. 4-7**

- I. Judaizers persistently buffeted the NT church insisting that the Gentile converts to Christianity had to be circumcised in order to be saved. Paul boldly rebuked them in several of his Epistles (e.g. Galatians, Colossians, Philippians, Romans). This passage is a warning to the Philippian church that they need to watch out for these false teachers.
  - A. They're to rejoice in the Lord, glorying in a salvation that is all of God, v. 1
  - B. They're to watch out for the Judaizers who advocate the evil of adding one's own works to the work of Christ and mutilate the flesh, demanding circumcision, v. 2
  - C. They're to know for certain that they're God's people by faith, who put no confidence in the flesh. v. 3
- II. To prove the error of the Judaizers Paul reminds them in vv.4-7 that if anyone had reason to put confidence in the flesh, *he did*. And yet, it all profited him nothing.
  - A. Before he was saved, Paul stood at the very pinnacle of moral and religious development.
    1. Consider his inherited advantages
      - a) Circumcised on the eighth day, Gen 17
      - b) Of the people of Israel, Rom 9.4-5
      - c) Of the tribe of Benjamin, 1Kgs 12.21
      - d) A Hebrew of Hebrews, Acts 22.3
    2. Consider his personal advantages
      - a) He was a Pharisee, a strict observer of the law.
      - b) He was so zealous for the law that he persecuted the Christians, whom he took to be blasphemers.
      - c) His pharisaic observance of the law was blameless.
- III. But, he realized on the road to Damascus (Acts 9) that he'd made a tragic mistake trusting in all these things to make him right with God. All that gain was really a loss, and a loss of the greatest magnitude—it prevented him from ever being right with God. He therefore counted it all loss for the sake of Christ, v. 7

**Confidence in Christ, vv. 8-9**

- I. Refusing to place any confidence in the flesh (i.e. in himself), Paul now placed all his confidence in Christ and His work.
  - A. He originally thought of his “self worth” as sufficient for a righteousness before God.
  - B. And he originally thought of Jesus of Nazareth as offering his disciples a “self worth” of zero value before God.
  - C. But, when he saw that his credit was actually a debit and that the “worthlessness” of Christ was actually the only true worth and asset before God, he abandoned *everything* he'd once hoped in and clung in self-abandoning faith to Christ alone.
  - D. The result?
    1. He was found “in Christ” before God, v. 9
    2. He had a righteousness of which God would approve, a righteousness which came from God Himself and was received by sinners by faith in Christ, v. 9
    3. He gloried in Christ alone, v. 8
- II. The conclusion? The gospel of God consists precisely in this: that we can do nothing to earn our salvation and that we can add nothing to make it better. God in Christ does it all. Salvation is a free gift of God's grace to all who abandon their hope of saving themselves and rest entirely on His promise of salvation in Jesus Christ.
- III. Are you at peace with God through faith in Christ?
  - A. If you're still trying to save yourself, know this: it *will* prove a vain and damning effort. No man will be justified before God by the works of the law, Gal 2.16. You must abandon all hope of self-saving and rest alone in the saving Christ, Jn 14.6; 1Cor 1.30; 2Cor 5.21
  - B. If Christ *is* your righteousness before God, then do as Paul says and rejoice in the Lord (v. 1)! Give praise to God with both your voice and your life. Glory in Christ and in His cross and live every day as one who is righteous before God, Gal 2.15-16