

10-4-20 Worldwide Communion Sunday

Sermon- Getting Right With God

Scripture- Philippians 3:7-21, CTW- PS 19:1-7

Hymns- 271, 64, 436

Theme- Paul did not depend on his deeds to please God, because even the most impressive credentials fall short of God's holy standards. What are you depending on? Credentials, accomplishments, or reputation cannot earn salvation. Salvation comes only through faith in Christ.

### **Introduction:**

What a joy it is to come together with millions of Christians across the world today as the body of Christ to worship Him and to study His word, and to be refreshed at His table!

Regardless of where we are or where we come from, there are three things that are essential for us all to 'be right with God':

#### **I. Knowing Christ (vs. 7-8)**

#### **II. Believing in Christ (v. 9)**

#### **III. Becoming like Christ (vs. 10-11)**

If we are to be united together in Christ today we had better take a look at what that really means!

How often do you think about the meaning of righteousness? It is generally defined as "the quality of being morally right or justifiable." In biblical terms, righteousness is defined as "being right with God."

Now the question is, how can we become righteous or be right with God? I would like to answer that question with a good news and a bad news scenario.

Let us begin with the bad news: The bad news is that... it is not possible for us to 'be right with God' on our own. Why? Because

the Bible says that all of us have sinned and fall short of God's standard of righteousness (Romans 3:23).

Let me ask you...Have you ever stolen? Lied? Cheated? Taken God's name in vain? Thought bad thoughts? God is Holy and His standard is simply too high for us to achieve.

However, the good news is...it is possible for us to 'be right with God.' How? Through faith in Jesus Christ! So, let's take a deeper look at three essential things for all Christians: First...

## **I. Knowing Christ (vs. 7-8)**

Paul says "But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ."

**A. These are some intense statements by Paul.** He was probably screaming at the top of his lungs, "My heritage, reputation and religious accomplishments were gains to me before, but now I consider them loss."

In verses 5-6 we see the list of reasons he could consider himself great and worthy of praise:

He was circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.

All those things that were gains to him before, now he calls them a loss. The things that were once his source of pride, now he considers them loss. Why did Paul say that? Because he realized that none of the items on his resume were sufficient to make him 'right with God.' Paul thought he had attained righteousness by keeping the Law. But when he saw Christ in His glory on the

'Road to Damascus', his whole perspective changed. In fact, his entire being changed.

Paul knew that all his self-righteousness, all his religion, all his good works, all his efforts to please God were trash. That's why he says, "Whatever things were gains to me, now I consider them loss."

Paul declares that his past religious accomplishments were absolutely nothing. Then he goes on to say, "I consider everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord."

Think about your own situation...what would you say about your past accomplishments in regard to Jesus Christ?

Paul realized that all his religious success is worthless. The reason he considers everything else worthless is because there is nothing more valuable than knowing Christ. Knowing Christ is the highest value.

**B. The greatest treasure you can have is, knowing Jesus.** Paul's contrast between 'gain' and 'loss' is very clear in this passage. His religious accomplishments, were a "loss" compared to the "gain" of knowing Christ.

What are some of the things that you consider valuable to you?

A house? A car? A wardrobe full of expensive clothes?

A business or company you have established? A nice-sounding job title?

A certificate of doctoral degree? A respected position in the society? A wall in your office covered with awards?

Now, all of these things are valuable things to have or to desire to have. But, the question is, are there things in our lives that we value more than God?

Again, they might be good things, but they may have taken a position in our hearts that was originally made for Christ. Take some time to reflect and examine about those things or areas in our lives, we may have the tendency to prioritize above God.

We need to make 'knowing Christ' the most valuable thing in our life. The second essential aspect in the process of 'being right with God' is...

## **II. Believing in Christ (v. 9)**

Paul says "And be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith."

**A. In verse 9, Paul goes one step further and suggests that our knowledge of Christ should lead to our faith in Christ.** He makes the comparison between 'legalistic righteousness' which is to try to 'be right with God' by following the law; and the 'righteousness through faith in Christ' which comes from God.

And he says that the righteousness by the law is worthless, but the righteousness through faith in Christ has ultimate worth. The righteousness that comes from God is the only true righteousness.

So, Paul renounced his attempts to make himself right with God, and believed in Jesus to be right with God.

Righteousness of our own is what we achieve when we try not to violate the law of God in our own strength and wisdom. But, even if we lived a perfect life from this moment onward, we have not been perfect in the past.

So, for us to 'be right with God,' He has asked us to believe in Jesus Christ. In other words, our salvation does not depend on any of our religious accomplishments. It really depends on our faith in Christ Jesus. The New Living Translation puts it this way:

“I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God’s way of making us right with himself depends on faith.”

**B. So, when we believe in Jesus, we have acted righteously, but even this righteousness comes from God.**

We read in **John 19:30** where Jesus said, “It is finished!” Indeed, our salvation is not based on our human achievements, but the ‘finished’ work of Jesus on the cross for sinners like us.

This righteousness comes through faith in Christ, and not by doing things for God. It is a free gift that we can accept only through faith in Jesus Christ. We do not and cannot earn this free gift, we can only receive it with gratitude.

We can see how different Christianity is from other religions in the world. In other religions, you have to do the work...you actually work your way into heaven!

In Christianity, Christ did the work. In fact, we cannot become righteous by our own efforts, we need to believe in the finished work of Christ on the cross.

Let us be found in Him, not having a righteousness of our own that comes from the law, but the righteousness that comes through faith in Christ. However, if you have not believed in Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior yet, this is the best time for you to begin your relationship with Him.

And you can do so right now, by asking Him to forgive your sins and invite Him to come into your life. Because the only way for us to ‘be right with God’ is through faith in Jesus Christ!

**III. The third essential aspect in ‘being right with God’ is Becoming Like Christ.**

I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

Verses 10-11 are extremely important for us to understand what we should pursue in our daily Christian life.

**A. Christianity is a personal, growing relationship with the risen Lord that results in us becoming more like Him.**

So, our main goal in life should be to know Him more, so we can become more like Him. J.I. Packer said: "Once you become aware that your main business here in life is to know Christ, then most of life's problems fall into place."

What do **YOU** think your main **PURPOSE** in life is? Making money? Getting married? Being entertained? Becoming successful? Brothers and sisters, everything in life flows from this fountain of knowing Christ. We can only believe in Him if we know Him well. And if we believe in Him, we should become more like Him.

**B. Here is an Illustration To Think About:**

Several years ago, The New York Times, reported a study showing that couples who are happily married for a long time eventually begin to look alike. Even if they had no resemblance at their wedding, they showed noticeable resemblance later in life.

The more marital happiness a couple reported, the greater the increase in facial resemblance. The change apparently is due to decades of shared emotions and similar lifestyles. In other words, couples tend to become more like each other as they spend a long time together. That should give us Christians a clue...

Billy Graham stated that "**Christians should resemble Jesus, as we are His bride.**"

**2 Corinthians 3:18** says that the Holy Spirit transforms us into the image of Christ. Let us spend more time with Jesus in prayer and in His word so we can become more like Him. (Quote by Billy Graham on PPT)

**Think about what Paul said in Romans 3:22-** "We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ, and this is true for everyone who believes."

Folks as we approach His table today, let us all be resolved to really know Jesus, not just know about Him. And believe in His 'finished work' on the cross to 'be right with God.'

Our salvation is not based on our human accomplishments, it is only through faith in Christ.

The Bible warns us says that when we stand before Jesus, some people will expect to enter heaven based on their good works, and He will say, "Depart from me, I never knew you."

Brothers and sisters, I hope and pray that all of us will be able to hear Him say, "Welcome to heaven." But, as long as we are here on earth, let us continue to know Jesus and be more like Him.

**Amen?**

**Let us come to the table He has set for us!**