**Week of February 3, 2019**

**Philippians 3:1-16**

1 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe. 2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. 3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. 4 Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: 5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; 6 Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law\*, blameless. 7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. 8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for\* the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, 9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: 10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; 11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. 12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also, I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. 13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. 15 Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. 16 Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. **Understanding the Scriptures**

In today’s scripture the Apostle Paul claimed that there is joy in knowing Christ. He takes time here to warn the Philippians against false teachers who would hinder them with false doctrine. A group of Jews in Paul’s day attempted to misrepresent the Gospel by teach that the requirement in addition faith were needed for salvation. The Jerusalem Council denounced their teaching and affirmed that that true salvation was by faith in Christ alone. Paul believed the matter to be settled, but now, false teachers were again teaching that circumcision was needed for salvation. Paul clarified his position regarding the matter by pledging his loyalty to the church and not to the Jews. In, other words, Paul placed no value on the Law but expressed that Christians believers are the ones who have been truly “circumcised”, because they have cut away their old heart and replaced it with anew heart that is sensitive to Christ.

Prior to knowing Christ, Paul practiced Jewish laws and customs. In fact, Paul had once taken pride in the fact that he was never accused of wrongdoing. Unlike the false teachers, Paul had every right to brag about his accomplishments because he received them honestly. But when Paul met Christ, he realized that all he accomplished up to that point was useless. His relationship with Christ was far greater than anything he received as a result of his Jewish background.

Paul was determined to keep pressing toward the goals of knowing all he could about Christ. Paul wanted to know Christ, be like Christ, and be all that he be to honor Christ. Paul’s unwavering pursuit of reaching his goal to win the prize for being faithful for the cause of Christ. The prize suggests the heavenly reward that will be given to Christian believers who remain steadfast in the faith. The eternal prize that Paul is speaking of will never fade away.

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