

Philippians 3:1-11

Our right-standing before God is based on Christ's works and not on ours.

Paul expresses his disgust in "righteousness through works." Paul calls believers to stay away from people who teach this doctrine. Judaizers were Jewish "Christians" who taught that someone must follow the Old Testament for right-standing with God. Dogs were despicable animals and what Jews called Gentiles. Evildoers - Paul hated when people distorted the gospel that he loved. Do we love the gospel of grace as much as Paul?

Paul's indicates his departure from the thought that "righteousness comes through works."

If anyone had the ability to boast in works, it was Paul, and even he knew you couldn't earn salvation. Paul had all of the things needed in the mind of a Judaizer to earn salvation. He had the identity. He had passion for the LORD. He also had obedience to the law.

Are you relying on any of these for salvation? Paul knew that salvation couldn't be attained through those means. In Galatians 2:15-16 (ESV) he wrote, "We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified." In Galatians 3:11 (ESV) he also wrote, "Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for "The righteous shall live by faith."

Paul's embraced righteousness through faith in Jesus. Paul saw the beauty and treasure of Jesus and His righteousness Verse 4 "...glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh." Verse 7 "But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Verse 8"...everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord." And "....count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ."

The righteousness of Jesus was better than the FALSE righteousness of law abiding. This now moves us to what happens to us at the cross. Theologians call this The Great Exchange. 2 Corinthians 5:21 (ESV) "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." Jesus takes my sin.

Jesus' death was my death on the cross. Jesus became my sin in the cross and suffered my punishment. Mark Driscoll says this about 2 Corinthians 5:21, "'For our sake he [God] made him to be sin who knew no sin.' The great Protestant Reformer Martin Luther rightly declares that at that moment Jesus became the most grotesque, ugly, and hideous thing in the history of all creation. In what Luther calls "the great exchange," the sinless Jesus so thoroughly took our place that he became the worst of what we are - rapists, thieves, perverts, addicts, liars, gluttons, gossips, murderers, adulterers, fornicators, homosexuals, and idolaters. Importantly, Jesus' work on the cross was not just a bookkeeping transaction in the divine economy. Jesus actually took to himself

our sin with all its horror and shame...it was our sin and our condemnation, but it was Jesus, the sinless one, who took our place and in so doing took our sin and condemnation so that we could live a new life with a new nature by a new power free from sin and condemnation.”

We take on Jesus’ righteousness. Remember, God requires us to not only be forgiven (Jesus’ death in our place) but also innocent (righteous). Jesus’ obedience is credited to us so that God sees Jesus’ righteousness, not ours. John Piper says, “This is Christ’s righteousness. It is imputed to me. That means Christ fulfilled all righteousness perfectly; and then that righteousness was reckoned to be mine, when I trusted in him.” ESV Study Bible puts it this way. “Paul had trusted in a righteousness of my own based on obedience to the law rather than the right standing before God that comes through faith in Christ. God ‘imputes’ Christ’s lifelong record of perfect obedience to the person who trusts in him for salvation; that is, he thinks of Christ’s obedience as belonging to that person, and therefore that person stands before God not as “guilty” but as ‘righteous.’”

The lyrics of “Cornerstone” by Hillsong say, “When he shall come with trumpet sounds, Oh may I then in Him be found. Dressed in his righteousness alone, Faultless stand before the throne. (Paul would love that song!)

We see here that God requires righteousness. We were unrighteous and deserved death. Jesus lived a perfect righteous life and died our death in our place. Jesus gives his righteousness FREELY to all who turn from sin and trust in His work for them on the cross. Therefore, it is not our works that gets us “in” with God, but Jesus’ work that gets us “in.”