

We are continuing in our series going through Philippians. We've now made it all the way to chapter 3. We're going to be looking at Philippians 3 verses 1 through 11. If last week was a mundane missionary agenda that we had to push down into the details to see how beautiful and wonderful and applicable that piece of text was, this is like a summer blockbuster. It is non-stop action. In fact, this little piece on righteousness that we'll see as we get to verses 7 through 11 might be one of the most succinct and best short texts on righteousness. And it's only eclipsed in this entire book probably by the Christ hymn. That's how beautiful this text is. It actually falls out into two separate parts. The first part is verses one through six. One through six, Paul's beginning to make an argument and he says, who are these people that you should watch out for? Who are we? And then he kind of in a cheeky way says who he is. And then, in verses seven through 11, he answers. He says, this is who we are really. And in that moment, he talks to us about justification, he talks to us about sanctification, and he even talks to us about glorification. You could easily do two separate sermons. Don't worry, I'm not doing two separate sermons in one night. You're gonna be able to get home in a reasonable time, I think. But we are gonna do something a little different. Typically we read through the entire text. I'm actually gonna stop at verse six and then teach through those verses and then come back and read seven through 11. I think it probably mirrors Paul's rhetorical maneuver and device better. It leaves the question hanging for you and I to consider for a moment. and then we get to come back and see the answer. Well, before we read God's word, let's go to him and ask for his help in prayer. Heavenly Father, Lord, we thank you for what this text has to tell us about the righteousness that you give to us, a righteousness that we can't earn, though we would try, we would fail. A righteousness that is graciously given and given through your Son. A Son who chose to suffer and to die that many might live and have eternal life. Lord, we ask that the beautiful truths at the center of this text, that it would live in our hearts and help to orient our lives. that we, as Paul says here, might be those who rejoice and rejoice regularly. Would you do all of this in a way that brings you and you alone all the glory and honor? We love you and pray this in the precious name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, amen. So Philippians 3, verses one through six. Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you. Look out for the dogs. Look out for the evildoers. Look out for those who mutilate the flesh. For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh, though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more. circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews, as to the law, a Pharisee, as to zeal, a persecutor of the church, as to righteousness under the law, blameless. Let's stop there. I just want that to hang for a minute. Where does Paul start? He makes kind of a turn here. He's already told the people of Philippi to rejoice when Epaphroditus comes to them, and then he makes this statement again. Rejoice in the Lord. As a preacher, you know what's fantastic? What's fantastic is when a preacher who is more educated, experienced, and eloquent than you preaches your same point the same morning. So on joy, see Steve Nichols this very morning. I will try and touch it a little bit though. because it's been a common theme in Philippians. Paul seems to say that joy is an essential part of the Christian experience. If you were to look back just at where he's used this before, you would see he's used it in chapter one, verse four, that I'm praying

with joy because of you, the Philippians. He's used it in verse 18. He rejoices that Christ was preached. It doesn't matter why they're preaching Christ, if they're doing it out of spite or envy. He rejoices merely that Christ would be preached. Then, verse 25, chapter one, Paul continues in this life, why? For their progress and joy in the faith. And then the very reason for the Christ hymn, complete my joy, he says. And then 17 and 18, that if he is to be a sacrifice, it would be joy to him and he would rejoice. And then 18, you should rejoice and it should be a joy to you if I'm a sacrifice for Christ. And then verse 28 and 29 about receiving Epaphroditus with joy. Joy is at the center of who we are as Christians. We have an unshakable joy because of what has been done for us and who Christ is. Yes, there's suffering. In fact, he's going to mention suffering yet again. And yet in this suffering, you and I have access to a joy that the world doesn't know and cannot know. And by joy, I don't mean that fleeting feeling of happiness. I mean that eternal fount of security and safety. Maybe the events over the past two days, 36 hours or so, have begun to rock a little bit for you, your sense of safety and security. Maybe they've brought up questions for you about where we're headed and you find your heart and your mind beginning to ruminate on where it is that we might go. And in the midst of that, what you have is a king sitting on his throne in heaven who cannot be removed by vote, by person, or bullet. He is there. He is yours. And more than that, he's your brother. He's waiting to welcome you into his kingdom as an inheritor. And you have access to all of that. That very truth then should create for you a foundation by which you can go through all of life with a tangible joy. Now that's not to say that you should never be sad, that you don't ever have some worry, some concern. Actually, didn't we see just last week that the commending attribute for Timothy to the church was his concern, his worry for them. So having this base, this foundation of joy that allows you to rejoice doesn't preclude the negative part of living in a fallen world. It's tough. There's pain. Where there's sin, there's pain. And yet, that will go away. You and I are headed to a place where there is sin no more. You and I are headed to a place where we will be exactly as we are designed to be, given exactly what we were designed to need. And we'll be in that place forever, with no end. That allows us to rejoice and be those who are joyful in the midst of all things, even in the midst of suffering. Haven't you met somebody who seems to have that resilience? There's a nice buzzword for you for the culture right now, resilience. Have you ever met somebody who has that sort of joy that just resides? And it doesn't seem to matter what exactly is going on in their life and they're not faking it. You and I know some Pollyannas, right? And Pollyannas are just, they're always happy no matter what. It's named after a character in a movie called Pollyanna. Always happy, seeing the best of every circumstance, right? It's kind of a comedic figure. And you and I know people like that. That no matter what seems to happen, they just seem to put on the bright, shining, happy face. That's not what this is. This is a joy that is resilient in the midst of suffering and doesn't fake joy, but has hope and comfort in the midst of suffering. And so that's Paul's first exhortation to the Philippians and to you even this evening. Finally, my brothers rejoice in the Lord. It seems like Paul's kind of shutting things down. If you were to write a letter and you put in finally, you would have a sense like, okay, great, this is the last point. No, not for Paul. Paul's like one of those preachers that like takes off his watch and puts it down. And then like he puts it back on there, but it's like, whew. He's done. We're about to go home and then takes it back off again. Harry Reader had a great story about this. He did that exact thing. And as

soon as he took his watch back off, a little kid said, no, he's gonna go even longer. That seems to be a sort of what Paul is doing here. He says, finally, but then he goes off on this whole other He says to write the same thing to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you. He's probably addressed this issue about the Judaizers we're about to get into right now. He probably addressed that with them when he was with them in his missionary journey and has probably written it to them again and again. Remember Acts 15, the very first Jerusalem council, what was the first council of the church, the Jerusalem council, what was it about? It was about this issue. The church was so bothered by it, it was about this issue. So what is the issue? Well, we see that in verses two through six. Paul gets angry, very heated. And he does this here and in Galatians. Galatians 1 through 3, he's addressing this exact same issue. And you wanna see him heated for longer. You wanna see him really kind of go after a group, go back and read Galatians 1 through 3, especially Galatians 1 and 2. And you'll see Paul go after this group, and not only this group, but he also goes after Peter. Remember, he said, I opposed him to his face. And what did he oppose Peter to his face about? Well, it was very similar things to this. There's a group called Judaizers, and these Judaizers believe that yes, the gospel, and. The gospel and circumcision in order to show that you are the people of God. The gospel and food laws. We don't eat pork. And could you imagine a church picnic without bacon? That would be terrible. But they believe that it's all this old demarcation of the old nation along with the gospel itself. Paul hates this. He hates it. If you remember, Derek would call this, and I believe he got this from the Reformers, though I'm not sure, the damnable plus. The adding on to something. Do you trust the gospel? Well, yes, and I trust this. You're not really a part of God's people if you're not circumcised. You're not really part of God's people unless you're keeping the food laws. And they would worry people's consciences. They would burden them unnecessarily, and it would undermine the very power of the sacrifice of Christ himself. That somehow his death wasn't sufficient. That it needed to be his death plus some other things. Now, how do we know that Paul's angry? All you gotta do is look at the words. He uses three words that all show that he's heated. Dogs, evildoers, and mutilate. Those are nice words. Those aren't the sort of words you use about people that you hold in high esteem. You and I, we kind of like dogs. Some people a little bit more than others with their dogs. They're still dogs. But for some people, they're more than that. And as a nation, we love dogs. That's not where Paul is. That's not the time and date of Paul Dogs would have been unclean, filthy animals. Oftentimes, dogs and pigs were both used as sort of the trash people of the ancient Near East. They roamed the streets eating all the trash, including the refuse. That's what they did in order to try and keep the city somewhat clean. And Jews often called Gentiles dogs. Those who would eat anything, those who were dirty, and those who couldn't come near us. It's about as low an insult as you could give to someone. It's like a Tiger fan calling someone a, well, you know. Or a Gamecock fan calling someone a, you know. That's what this is. So it's as dirty as it can be. He's angry. Actually, later in Galatians, he will say, I wish that they would emasculate themselves. Oof, oof. In other words, if they're gonna mutilate that part of their body, you might as well just finish the job. That's what Paul is saying about these people. They're evil doers. getting people's consciences riled up about whether or not they are acceptable based on anything other than faith in Christ. Assurance is already one of those things that people seem to either have too much of or never enough of. It's hard to find the balance. And these people are just assaulting assurance.

Adding and adding. When you add for yourself, it's foolish. When you add for others, it's dangerous. And Paul sees the danger. And he's angry. Now let's talk about this anger for just a second. Is it okay for Paul to be angry? Yeah. Now he'll tell you in Ephesians 4, 26 I believe, be angry and sin not. there's such a thing as being angry and not sinning. I don't know that I've ever done that. I don't know that I've ever seen that in person, but I know that category exists. And here is Paul seeming to express that sort of anger, a righteous anger. What is anger? Anger is an energetic and destructive emotion. Anger is meant to destroy. That's what it does. And he is protecting those whom he has been given authority over who are trying to destroy their hope in the gospel. So notice, one, these people, they are heretics. They are attacking the very nature of the gospel that the church has already decided, Acts 15, is a heresy. Secondly, it is a group for whom and to whom Paul is responsible. His anger is justified. So before you go out and say, oh, Paul was angry, Twitter fingers. go out there on social media and start firing it up. Are you responsible for this group? Are you responsible to that group? Is the group the person that you are getting angry with and trying to speak out against? Are they heretics? Are they making a claim about the gospel that the church has clearly denied? And probably most importantly, Do people see your energetic destruction at your own sin more than they see it at others? Paul, when you see him angry, is more often angry at his own sin than anything else. And if people experience us as angry and only ever angry at other people's sin, and never angry at our own, than what they experience in us is hypocrisy. What we've definitely done is we've transgressed the splinter and log, and we are dangerously close to transgressing Paul's do not be quarrelsome. in Titus 3. So is anger okay here from Paul? Yes, of course, it is okay for Paul to be angry. Is it okay for us to be angry? Yes, of course, especially at our sin and when anyone we are responsible to or for is under attack, especially under attack in their confidence in Christ. Okay, so he's angry. Who are the Philippians or who are we? Well, we are the circumcision. Now again, we could go deep here, we don't have time. But basically circumcision was the demarker that you were the nation of God. And what he is telling you now is that that physical thing is no longer the demarker of the people of God, but instead it is right worship. For we are the circumcision who worship by the spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh. The flesh doesn't do anything for us. True circumcision, true demarcation as God's people comes in this, which you are doing right now if you worship God in spirit and truth. This lets a watching world know that you put Christ first and that you are his. That is the activity of demarcation. Now, Paul tells you who he is in a very playful way. He's playing to the strengths of his opponents. Okay, so the opponents are telling you, you need these things. You need to be circumcised, and you need to keep the food laws, and you need to do all these things that are very Jewish, as well as believe in Jesus. in order that you might be genuinely his and you might genuinely be justified. Keep in mind they are saying that this is what you need to be acceptable before God. And so Paul says, oh yeah? That's what you think? Let me give you my qualifications. And his qualifications are, he was circumcised exactly when it was prescribed. on the eighth day. Sometimes that didn't happen. By the way, circumcision was not new in the ancient Near East when it was adopted by the Israelites. Other cultures did that. What was new was the timing. It had always been a rite of manhood, something that happened between 11 and 13 as a part of transition into manhood. Doing it as a baby was new and giving it new meaning, which is inclusion. He says, I was circumcised exactly when the law

prescribed. I come exactly from the people you're talking about. An Israelite, a Benjaminite, I'm a Hebrew. You see, the Galatians had this triplex view of themselves. They had Roman citizenship. They had citizenship as Philippians in the state or city of Philippi. That was its own thing. And then they had a clan. And that's how they thought of themselves. And Paul's using that exact same methodology and saying, look, you can't get more pure than me. I'm an Israelite, I'm a Benjaminite, and I'm a Hebrew. As to the law, by that he means scripture. I was a Pharisee. The Pharisees were the ones who held to the scriptures most purely. They were considered those who, like us, actually upheld scripture. As to zeal, willing to kill. That's what he's saying. I had so much energy for this, I was willing to persecute the church and kill it. because I thought it needed to die for being blasphemous. As to righteousness under the law, if the law could grant righteousness, I am blameless. He's not saying he's sinless. No one in the Old Testament thought they were sinless, but they thought by keeping the law, it would help them to attain righteousness. He is blameless. He has as much righteousness as the law can afford. Okay, so that's where we stopped. Let's pick back up now. Verse seven. But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith, that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. Praise be to God for his holy, inspired, and inerrant word." This is one of those texts you just want to shut up and let it do its work. I don't know that I can preach and do any better a job than just reading and sitting down. but I'm gonna try, because I'm Presbyterian and a preacher. So you have all three aspects, like primary aspects here, justification, sanctification, glorification. And he starts by this loss and gain motif. All this that I had, all of this that made me the pristine candidate For the Judaizers, I count as loss. More than that, rubbish. That word rubbish is as close to profanity as Paul ever gets. It means dung. Except maybe according to some, it means the bad word for dung. Like that's Paul right now. Paul's saying, you look at all of this thing. I was born an Israelite. I was trained a Pharisee from my earliest days. I had so much zeal. I was willing to kill people. I memorized and loved the word. And all of it is dung compared to knowing Christ. None of it means a thing. When it comes to actually having righteousness, it's all loss. And I don't care. I could lose it all as long as I have Him. The surpassing excellence, worth. of knowing him. He'll come back to that exact same word, that I may know him, verse 10, and the power of his resurrection. That word know doesn't just mean information. You and I, from a very Western perspective, when we think of knowing and knowledge, we think of this information exchange. It means knowing the details. That's not what knowledge meant for Christ. Knowing meant something relational. It meant something powerful. When you talk about being known, from the top of your head to the tips of your toes, known. Known intellectually. Known affectively. Known behaviorally. Every nook and cranny, known, that's what he means. Doesn't his word say that he numbers every hair on our head? Have you ever done that? Have you ever numbered all the hairs on your head? That would be incredibly depressing at this phase of life. Most of them are beginning to get gray and there's a lot less of them than there used to be.

I've never done that. I don't even know myself that well. And he knows me. Completely. There's nothing hidden from him. There's no space in my life where I am lonely or alone. He is with you through all of it. He knows exactly where you are. And he says, I love you. And I'm there with you. That's what Paul is talking about here. The exceeding worth of being known by Jesus. having this transformational relationship. There's a reason why in Hebrew, when Adam and Eve come together in order that she might get pregnant, what's the verb that's used? Know. Adam knew his wife. There's something incredibly relational about it. So how do we get to this point where we are known then? If it's not through our own effort, if it isn't through being a Jew of Jews or keeping the law or being circumcised or the food or all the things, how can we get there? And he answers that for you. He answers it for you in verse nine, being found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law. Notice he mirrors that perfectly with verse six, righteousness under the law, blameless. Actually, there's no righteousness that comes from the law. It's empty. Instead, that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith. There is one thing and one thing only that makes you right with God, and it is faith in Jesus Christ. If anyone ever tells you you need anything other than that, they're a liar. What does that mean? What does it mean to have faith in Jesus Christ? Especially you young people, as you're grappling with, what does it mean? Do I have this faith? Well, typically, what we've said are the elements of faith are knowledge, assent, and trust. Those three pieces. Do you know the gospel? Knowledge. Did you know that when I took my ordination exam, And you stand up there and you're there for like an hour and people get to ask you any questions that they want to, not to freak any of my interns out right now. And there are questions from the floor and you're going through Bible and you're going through the catechism and you're going through like theology and history and practical matters in the church, and you're going through governance in the church, there's just all this stuff. And then from the floor, in front of 150 or 200 of your peers, peers, these people have been ministers and I haven't even been ordained yet, they get to ask any question they want. Terrifying. Here's the question I got from the floor. Can you explain the gospel to a five-year-old? It was the best question. Because if you can explain the gospel to a five-year-old, you know the gospel. It's one of the reasons why we have our interns come up and do the children's catechism, to get them into that routine. In seminary, we think so highly sometimes, and you need to be able to take what's up here and make it have traction down here, especially for a five-year-old. You have a severe problem. You're full of sin, and God is holy, and you can't get from here to there. But God, because he loved you, decided to send his son in order that you might be saved. He took on what you deserved. You deserved death. You deserved hell forever. And he took that so that you could have joy and life eternal and never be alone. That's the gospel. I preach it to myself every single day in some way or another. That was a Dr. Thomas thing. He used to tell us that we need to preach the gospel to ourselves every single day, and he was right, as he was about so many things. If I go a day without preaching the gospel to myself, I feel it. My soul feels it. If I don't preach the gospel, knowledge, assent, do you believe? Do you say, yes, I agree to this? Or are you still in that place where you're evaluating? I don't know. You're doing the daisy game. I love him, I love him not. I love him, I love him not. I trust him, I trust him not. Or you're trying to pick through the gospel. Yeah, I kind of believe this part, but I don't like that part over there. There is none of that. There is just the gospel. And you get to choose

to agree or not agree. And then the last is the hardest. Trust. Do you actually trust it? You actually do all sorts of activities of trust every single day. When you came and you sat down in these seats, you trusted the seat. Unless you have recently or tragically had an experience where a chair just let go on you, then you don't trust chairs and you may like poke it a little bit. But for 99.9% of us, Our experience of chairness is relatively secure. I put my booty in the chair and it supports me. And so you come and you just sit down. You don't have to push it. You don't have to prod it. You don't have to make sure in every single way, well, give me a dummy that weighs exactly what I do and put it on there and then see if it's okay. Well, but maybe that time was the time that it was going to be broken. So let's do it one more time. And like, okay, well, that's well, okay. Why don't I just half sit on? Nope. You just sit. That's the sort of trust in the gospel. I just trust. He died for me. I know what I deserve, but for whatever reason, for reasons that are only known to him, he died for me. I don't have to push it in all the various ways. I just know and trust that it's true. One of the things that this does is it makes us ask the question, what do we trust? when it's time to get to heaven. It's that EE question. I mean, you know, there are various evangelism methodologies out there and I'm not sold out to one or the other. So don't, don't take this as me telling you run out and go get EE training evangelism explosion for those of you who don't know. And evangelism explosion used to ask that one question. If you died tonight and you met God and he said, why should I let you into my heaven? What would you say? And the answer, if at any point the answer is I, fail. Everything is He. He did it. On my behalf, for whatever reason, it's Him, it's He, it's not me. I put the I in fail and He puts the He in heaven. Right, and everything is directed to him. It's him and him alone that I trust. And that's what Paul is telling you. That when you have faith in Christ, you get righteousness from him. Now somehow in two minutes I need to get through sanctification and glorification. Let's talk about them both very quickly. sanctification. Notice that he gives you the character and shape of a Christian life in verse 10. that I may know him in the power of his resurrection. And then there's an and here, but that and is probably more through. How? By what methods? Through sharing in his suffering and becoming like him in death. As much as Paul has told you that there is joy, and there is in the Christian life, and as much as he has told you that righteousness is not yours, it comes through faith in Jesus Christ, this is no easy believism. This is no just believe and have nothing that you have to do, nothing that you have to persevere through. No, Paul is very clear. The Christian life is a life of suffering. The road for Jesus, the Son of God, the righteous one who never sinned, was a road of suffering and death. If that wasn't too good for him, what do we think about ourselves? Like the master, so like his pupil. If that's his road, it's our road. Now, some of you may say, yeah, but Josh, I've never suffered like Paul suffered. I've never been in a prison and not had food and all of this good stuff. Yes, but you know what it's like to suffer under the effects of sin. You should know what it's like to try and kill your own sin and how terrible that is. And how it feels like death. And how sin is so resilient. And how our hearts, like that perpetual idol factory that it is, keeps pumping them out. And by the way, a perpetual factory doesn't stop. That's why it's perpetual. Again and again and again. And there's two ways, there's two ways to kill an idol. You chop it down or you let it rot. You go and you kill it. Or you get so enamored with Jesus and you put so much attention on Christ that it can't help but seem like decay and dirt as compared to the beauty of the gospel. That's the life of sanctification.

Towards what end? Ultimately, and then this is where we end, that I may attain the resurrection from the dead, glorification, that there is a day yet coming when all things will be remade. when you and I will live in the domain for which we are created with the very thing we are created with for and by. That is that you and I will have bodies here on this earth where any fall or effects of the fall will no longer be or remain. We don't have to worry about disease. We don't have to worry about death. We don't have to worry about internally struggling with sin. All of that is taken away. What will seem like perfect freedom for us will look like perfect obedience to Him in all things. forever. As wonderful as heaven's gonna be, right? And Paul's already told you, to be asked in the bodies of the presence of the Lord, that's actually where he wants to go. And yet, as wonderful as that is, there is one thing yet more wonderful, and that's Christ's return. We will be reunited with him in glory, in those glorified bodies, in the new heaven. Well, I told you, I told you, this was like a summer blockbuster. There was so much here to cover. I would encourage you, during the week, go back with your favorite study Bible. There's about a bajillion of them. Go find a study Bible, go back through this passage, and see all the richness that's there, both in contrast to that which seems wise, but is foolish, and death, and that which is amazing, that which is loss, and that which is gain. May those around us, and especially as we pour into those that we work with, live next to, live with our own spouses and children, may they see in us that sort of joy, a joy that only comes in a resilient hope through Christ Jesus. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, again, we thank you for such a rich and wonderful text. A text that we and man could not just come up with on his own. In fact, it takes you, the very real historic setting of you choosing to live and then to die on our behalf, revealing yourself to one as Paul, who was a zealot and a Pharisee, and yet was converted by you and by your spirit to be one of the greatest missionaries ever. Lord, This text, we ask that you would use it to renew our minds, our hearts, our hands, that people through us might see you and that you would get all the glory and all the honor. We love you and pray this in your son's name. Amen.