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Philippians 29

Profit and Loss account of Salvation

Privileges of Paul- Because of Birth!

Philippians 3:4-11, *though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so:⁵ circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee;⁶ concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.*

⁷ *But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. ⁸ Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ⁹ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; ¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, ¹¹ if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.*

This is one of the greatest testimonies of how salvation has happened to Apostle Paul. Very powerful statement. In Acts 9 we see what happened to Paul on his way to Damascus but here he gives us the details of what was happening to him inside. It gives us the details of where was he in attaining favour with God internally. It also exposes us to see how things happen in the life of a sinner.

You must have noticed from the title what I have kept this is literally like a transaction happens in Salvation.

Paul uses accounting terminology used in Businesses.

V7, the word gain is translated from '**Kerdos**' which means profit. If you know little bit accounting, then this is under profit column.

V7, the word loss is translated from '**Zemia**' which means 'loss' this is in your loss column.

V7 and 8, the word counted translated from '**hegeomai**' which means account or reckon.

We could see from this passage that Apostle Paul kept certain credentials in the profit column before meeting Christ. When he met Christ what he kept it in the profit column he needs to move it to the loss column.

V7, But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.

What we see here is a transaction!

All through his life he had collected certain merits so that his profit column can be healthy, and he can earn salvation but when he met Christ, he understood that those accumulated credentials are loss.

So here Paul has his profit column filled up by which he hopes to earn salvation.

He encounters Jesus Christ.

Upon the encounter of Lord Jesus Christ, a righteousness not his own, but righteousness which comes through faith in Christ.
(V9)

Instantly Paul counts everything that he once saw as profit as loss and gives it all up in order to gain Christ.

He realizes that everything he had been accumulating to buy his way into the Kingdom was rubbish.

Salvation then was a transaction.

Paul was the ultimate Jew with all of the credentials assumes that he has gained entrance into the Kingdom and impressed God greatly because of those merits. Only to find out in the

encounter with the living Christ that all of that which he assessed as profit was in fact garbage, loss, detriment, negative. Paul willingly gives it all up for Christ, exchanging a righteousness which he thought he could earn but couldn't for a righteousness which God gave through faith.

This is the theme of this great passage.

What is the message Paul's testimony?

He willing to give up trusting what was once valuable to him as a means of salvation to trust Christ instead. It is an exchange! That's what salvation is.

It is self-denial!

Matthew 16:24, *Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.*

Consider all that you have attained as useless, worthless and follow Me this is what Jesus repeatedly told His disciples.

Jesus beautifully illustrated in His teaching of the Parables.

The Parable of the Hidden Treasure

Matthew 13:44, *"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.*

Now the phrase "the Kingdom of heaven" means the sphere where God rules. That is the sphere of salvation. We could even use the word "salvation,"

So, we can read it this way.

"Salvation is like a treasure hidden in the field,"

"Christ the Saviour is like a treasure hidden in the field."

"Which a man found and hid and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field."

- You have a man who has accumulated wealth.
- He has accumulated a certain profit.
- He has certain possessions.
- But he stumbles across a treasure that is so valuable that he will gladly give away everything that he must get that treasure. That's the exchange.
- He will sell everything, liquidate it to gain that true treasure.

The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price

Matthew 13:45-46, *"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, ⁴⁶ who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.*

- Here is a man who is going around seeking fine pearls.
- He has accumulated many possessions.

- He may have many pearls.
- He discovered great value of pearl.

But he sees it as worthless when compared to the great value of the pearl that he discovers.

- A man with many possessions finds a treasure, gives up all his possessions for the treasure.
- A man with many pearls gives up his pearls for the one pearl of great price.

This is the exchange.

We accumulate a lot in our life, and we assume that it has value and we tag it with certain value. But when compared with Christ it is rubbish.

- ✓ Such was the teaching of Jesus
- ✓ Such was the experience of Paul.

The attitude of a sinner at the crux of salvation is "I will give up everything I have depended on to earn my favour with God for Christ. I will give it all up gladly."

Paul considers everything that was in the profit column as rubbish.

V8, *Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered*

the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ

Rubbish is the word from '*skubalon*', the word refers either to human excrement or to garbage thrown away, something useless, waste, rejected, filth, refuse.

Some translated it as dung, or manure or rubbish or garbage or waste.

Paul is saying all of my profit column I saw to be manure, useless, waste, get rid of it. It has no value.

Paul is giving his personal testimony starting in verse 4.

Why?

At the end of verse 3 he said that,

- True Christians put no confidence in the flesh.
- True Christians do not trust in anything they do to earn salvation.
- They put no confidence, zero confidence in the flesh.
- True Christians, those who have the true circumcision.

The flesh provides nothing even when it acts religiously. There are people in the world, who live under the deceptive illusion that they can work their way to God.

By doing their, religious duty and ceremony through that they can earn their way into God's presence. They can acquire the

privilege of eternal life. That is nothing but having confidence in the flesh.

Paul says true believers have none of it.

Paul wants none of that illusion.

The Philippians were being assaulted by Judaizers. These were Jewish people or people in the Jewish religion who believed in Christ to some degree, but also believed that in order to be saved you had to be physically circumcised and keep all the laws of Moses.

They came into the church at Philippi and they said, "You people who are believing in Christ and thinking that's enough for salvation are wrong, you must be circumcised, and you must keep all the Mosaic law."

So, they were imposing upon these believers this two-fold emphasis.

Circumcision and the Mosaic law.

Paul said about them as

- Dogs,
- Evil Workers, and
- Mutilators.

Paul said the opposite about the true Christians.

- Worship in the Spirit of God,
- Glory in Christ Jesus and
- Put no confidence in the flesh.

Christians are the true covenant people and these Judaizers are not.

Then the obvious question comes to their mind was this. What about the richness of being a Jew? After all they are doing something towards God. So, Paul wanted to put to rest this argument.

Therefore, Paul recounts all his Jewish credentials.

Paul has every reason to have confidence in the flesh because before he became a Christian, he was a Jew and every Jewishness I have.

Every advantage that these Jews could claim, he could claim the same thing.

V 4, *though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so:*

Paul is not saying this to build his ego and to convince people of his spiritual superiority.

- He is simply saying it for the sake of argument.
- He doesn't really want to boast in his flesh.

- He doesn't really have any confidence in his flesh.

Paul knew what it was to be a Jew, to be a Jew in the highest sense of the term and yet he deliberately knowingly willingly abandoned it all for the sake of Jesus Christ.

In verses 4 to 7 he tells what loss was

In verses 8 to 11 what was gain.

In the middle is Christ.

He says this is what was loss, verses 4 to 7, and this is what was gain in Christ. I gave up all this stuff and this is what I gained.

Next lesson we will look at verses 8 to 11 and see what was gain in Christ.

It didn't start out as loss; it was all in his profit column.

His credentials, his Jewish achievements, privileges, and rights all are credit. But he saw Christ and he understood the gospel and he realized it was useless.

What Paul is not saying?

He isn't saying it's of no value socially,

He is not saying it's of no value educationally,

He is not saying it's of no value historically,

Paul is saying how foolish it is to boast in your religious credits.

Most of the people in the world still believe they will attain eternal life by accumulating religious credits.

The only people who don't are Christians, the rest do. They are deceived.

It is particularly true among Jews because there is Old Testament precedent for their religion.

So, they believe if they live by the Jewishness, they are amassing in the profit column the credits that impress God and by which He will grant them salvation.

Paul says not so, it is manure, it is waste, it is garbage, worthless. Because I have discovered in my encounter with the living Christ that salvation is by grace through faith. It has nothing to do with what you have received by way of heritage, human effort, religious duties, and it has all to do with Christ alone.

So, here is his list of things once considered profit, now considered loss. They are all his Jewish credentials.

V5, *circumcised the eighth day*,

1. Salvation is not by ritual

What was profit to Paul and he came to count as loss was. Paul was circumcised the eighth day.

Now the literal Greek reads this way, "With respect to circumcision, an eighth dayer."

What does he mean?

God institutes circumcision, that physical operation as a sign of His people. God said it is to be done on the eighth day after a male child is born. That was a strict Jewish rite.

Genesis 17:12, *He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not your descendant.*

Genesis 21:4, *Then Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him.*

Leviticus 12:3, *And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.*

As per the Mosaic Law Paul was circumcised on the eighth day. Paul is saying that I went through THE basic ritual of Judaism, the rite and ceremony by which you are initiated into the covenant people.

The other side of this testimony is that Paul is saying that I am not Ishmaelite.

Ishmael wasn't circumcised till after his thirteenth year.

Genesis 17:25, *And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.*

Paul is saying that,

- I am no pagan who proselytes to Judaism and in adulthood is circumcised.
- I am a legitimate Jew by birth, circumcised the eighth day, faithful to the cardinal ritual at birth, a true blooded Jew, nursed in the ceremonies of my ancestral religion.
- I followed that basic requirement, my parents had me circumcised.
- I was born into Jewishness,
- I was born into the Jewish faith.
- I followed the rituals from the very beginning.
- I started with the most essential rite and sacrament which they felt was absolutely necessary for salvation.

So, Paul said when I look at that circumcision that you see as so vital to salvation and I am telling you it's rubbish!

Because salvation is not by

- ritual,
- rite,
- ceremony,
- symbol,
- sacraments,
- masses,
- routines,

- washings, and
- baptisms.

Paul is saying that I considered Jewish rite of all rites, circumcision, as manure. As far as salvation is concerned it's useless.

2. Salvation is not by race

V5, *the stock of Israel*

Some of the Judaizers probably were Gentiles converted later. They were circumcised later in life and they weren't really of the nation Israel.

They were proselytes.

The Old Testament is filled with the teaching that the children of Israel were the covenant people, they were God's chosen people, it was on them that He set His love.

Romans 9:3-5, *For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, ⁴who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; ⁵of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.*

Israelites to whom belong the adoption as sons, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the temple service and the promises whose are the fathers and from whom is the Christ. They had all the privileges.

Amos 3:2, *“You only have I known of all the families of the earth; Therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.”*

They were God's chosen beloved people, He loved them sovereignly.

Paul says that I am an Israelite, I am of the nation of Israel.

Could all the Judaizers claim such religious heritage?

Do they possess by race the rights of God's chosen people?

Paul did and understood the meaning.

All true Jews came from Abraham through Isaac through Jacob because Jacob wrestled with an angel in Genesis 32 and after that wrestling his struggle with God, his name was changed to Israel.

So that's where the children of Israel come from.

Abraham through Isaac through Jacob who was Israel.

There are other people who can trace their heritage back to Abraham because Abraham had another son by the name of Ishmael. He was an illegitimate son born of the handmaid Hagar. He fathered the Arab people. There are some people

who can say I am a child of Abraham but the Ishmaelites are not the children of Israel, they are the children of Abraham through Hagar.

There are some people who can say I am through Abraham and Isaac because Isaac had two sons, Jacob, and Esau. Esau produced the Edomites, more Arabic people. There are people who can say I am of Esau, so I come through Abraham and Isaac.

But only those who come through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are Israelites. So, Paul is saying I am pure in terms of my Jewish heritage, pure descent from God's chosen people. That's a credential.

The Jews believed that

- if they were circumcised the eighth day and
- if they were of the pure line coming out of the loins of Jacob
- coming through the twelve tribes,
- were the children of Jacob, and

Therefore, the chosen people of God who were the saved, the redeemed, the inheritors of eternal glory.

Paul says that is absolutely useless!

No religious virtue is gained by birth!

There are people today who want to affirm household salvation. They twist the Philippian jailer's story that he was saved and his whole household and they assumed that when parents are saved that the children born of those parents are in covenant relationship to God.

That's why they still engage in infant baptism which is a form of covenant identity. Infant baptism is how you identify a child as having been born into covenant identity, household salvation by virtue of parents.

Your religious family grants you no standing with God.
You were born into a Christian nation grants you no standing with God.

The fact that you were born into a Christian family grants you no standing with God, no salvation, it's useless.

3. Salvation is not by rank

V5, circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin,

Of all the tribes, certainly the two were most elite, namely Judah and Benjamin.

We talk a lot about Judah because out of the line of Judah comes the Messiah, but we can't forget Benjamin.

Benjamin was a very elite tribe.

a) Loved by Israel

Benjamin was the younger of two sons born to Rachel.

Genesis chapter 30 that Rachel was Jacob's favourite wife and that made Benjamin a favourite child.

He was the last and thus he was the baby of all and the baby of the beloved wife, the tenderly beloved Benjamin.

Genesis 35:9-19,

b) Only son born in Promised Land

We can find out that Benjamin was the only one of the sons of Jacob born in the promised land.

So, Benjamin had a very unique identity and title to that land.

c) Warrior front in the battle line

Benjamin furthermore was given unique military priority.

Judges 5:14, *From Ephraim were those whose roots were in Amalek. After you, Benjamin, with your peoples, From Machir rulers came down, And from Zebulun those who bear the recruiter's staff.*

Hosea 5:8, *"Blow the ram's horn in Gibeah, The trumpet in Ramah! Cry aloud at Beth Aven, 'Look behind you, O Benjamin!"*

When the troops went to battle, Benjamin was the front line. They must have been loyal, courageous, great soldiers.

d) First King of Israel

Furthermore, when the Israelites wanted king it was from the tribe of Benjamin. 1 Samuel chapter 9, Saul was from the tribe of Benjamin.

e) Inheritor of Holy City from God

When God divided up the promised land, He gave certain sections of the land to the tribes. The section God gave it to Benjamin included the city of Jerusalem!

Judges 1:21, *But the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites who inhabited Jerusalem; so the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem to this day.*

The holy city itself was in the territory of Benjamin and thus Benjamin was a very noble tribe, for in their territory was the great holy city of Jerusalem,

f) Loyal to Davidic dynasty

After Solomon the kingdom split because there was a revolution, and the northern kingdom and the southern kingdom were divided, and Benjamin stayed loyal to the Davidic dynasty and stayed with Judah in the south. Benjamin and

Judah formed the legitimate southern kingdom, the northern kingdom went off in rebellion and eventually was carried away into captivity in 722 B. C.

1 Kings 12:21, *And when Rehoboam came to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah with the tribe of Benjamin, one hundred and eighty thousand chosen men who were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, that he might restore the kingdom to Rehoboam the son of Solomon.*

Benjamin was loyal to David at the time of the kingdom being split. Benjamin and Judah then forming the southern kingdom.

g) God raised rescuer of Israelites

A very famous man came out of the tribe of Benjamin, the man that God used to spare the entire nation of Israel from being massacred, that man's name was Mordecai.

Mordecai was used by God in the story of Esther to preserve the people of Israel. Mordecai was of the tribe of Benjamin.

Benjamin was a noble group for a number of reasons, it stood above the other tribes but not perfect by any means!

Shimei that fool who cursed David and threw rocks at him was a Benjamite.

Judges 19 and 20 where tribe of Benjamin perpetrated a gang rape that ended up in a victim being chopped into little pieces and mailed around to all the tribes. A gross thing, it ended up actually 25,100 Benjamites were massacred.

So not all the history of Benjamin is worthy of, you know, copying, but they were a noble group.

They were considered a ranking tribe.

By the time Paul wrote Philippians most of the Jews didn't know their tribe.

Two reasons:

1. The records were lost in the Babylonian captivity
2. Intermarriage had blurred the lines, the tribal lines.

What Paul is saying is I have never been involved and my family has never been involved in intermarriage, we have stayed pure tribe of Benjamin.

Paul is a Jew in the purest truest sense who even knows his tribe which was not the case for all the Judaizers.

Paul comes from privileged class.

Paul is saying that means nothing, that is not adequate to save me from sin and make me right with God.

The highest aristocracy in Israel couldn't make a person to be a child of God.

No noble religious heritage can make you right with God.

- You can even be a priest,
- You can even be a religious person,
- You can be a religious leader,
- You can be a teacher in a religion,
- You can be in a religious family,
- You can be Pastors son/daughter
- You can be missionary children,
- You can be born into a religious family,
- You can be from a Pastors family,

Remember God is not impressed.

Let me sum up all the three points:

Salvation is NOT by

- Ritual,
- Race,
- Rite

All these three are received by Paul as an inheritance.

Paul did NOT and Could NOT earn them.

His parents circumcised him.

His parents determined that he was in the nation of Israel

His Parents were the tribe of Benjamin.

Paul says, "This I received by inheritance."