



World Christian Fellowship

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Philippians 28 Who is a Christian? Part 02

Philippians 3:1-3, *Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. For me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but for you it is safe. ²Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation! ³For we are the circumcision, who worship ^[a]God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,*

Apostle Paul was preaching the gospel of salvation by grace through faith, plus or minus nothing.

He was preaching the gospel of grace, no works at all whatsoever involved. Paul travelled around the regions and preached that and established churches. He was being followed by some Jews.

These Judaizers were propagating that believe in Christ, His death and resurrection is important, but God will not accept you unless you are circumcised.

You must affirm physical circumcision, surgical circumcision because that's the mark of God's people.

Secondly, you must keep all the ceremonies and laws of Moses.

So, Paul would establish a church. Into town would come these Jews. They would be accepted because they would affirm Christ. They would affirm the gospel. But the Judaizers will bring in this confusion to them.

It reached such a big problem that it became the major concern of the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15.

You had people on the one side who were saying salvation is by grace and works. God does His part in Christ; you do your part by being circumcised and keeping Mosaic law.

On the other hand, you had those who said salvation is by grace through faith plus and minus nothing!

No works at all, no circumcision, no ceremonies, no necessity to please God by your own merit, your own effort.

Paul takes the view of the Judaizers in V2.

Dogs,
Evil workers, and
Mutilation.

They are dogs.

Why?

Unclean outcasts.

They are evil workers.

Why?

Because they think they are doing and working good but the fact is they are working evil.

Because they are attempting to please God by their own self-effort.

The mutilation.

Why?

Because they do not have a true cleansing which circumcision symbolized, all they have is a physical surgery that's nothing more than a mutilation.

Circumcision was always an outward symbol of an inward reality!

On the other hand, he comes then in verse 3 to the true circumcision.

Circumcision symbolized the need for a cleansed life and a cleansed heart.

How do we know the true circumcision?

Three things characterize them.

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

1. Worship God in the Spirit of God

Only true worship is that which is prompted by the Spirit of God indwelling.

Only people the Spirit of God indwells are Christians. Therefore, they are the only ones who worship by the Spirit of God.

There is deep within the true believer a longing to glorify God, and to serve God.

Jesus in John 4 is confronting a Samaritan woman. She has discovered by what He has said about her life that He knows everything about her and that that knowledge was not available to Him through normal means so He must be a man of God.

He told her all about her dissolute life, all about her immorality. She understood that He was speaking on a supernatural level.

John 4:19, *The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.*

She knows that He has got some supernatural source for His information.

Now that she knows He represents and speaks for God and that He's plugged in to the supernatural, she wants some information herself.

So, she wants to know about worship.

She is a Samaritan.

The Samaritans had set up worship on Mount Gerizim, they were half Jew, and half Gentile.

They had been rejected by the Jews who were very zealous of their racial purity.

These intermarrying half-Jews were hated and despised by the Jews. Therefore, they were not given access to the temple at Jerusalem, nor to the worship that was conducted there.

So, they had to develop their own system of worship which they did in Samaria on Mount Gerizim. Since they also did not have the Scripture, they accepted only the Pentateuch, not the whole Old Testament, they were limited as to what they knew.

So, they had developed a highbred kind of independent worship on their own mountain according to their own rules.

John 4:20, *Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship."*

She then asks Jesus **What place do you worship?**

You are a prophet of God.

She was saying that to Jesus that I am confused by this.

- The Jews say it's Jerusalem.
- Our fathers say it's here.

What is the right place to worship?

She was thinking that now that I am being confronted by this man of God,

- I want to deal with my life,
- I want to worship God,
- I want to make my life right,

Which mountain do I go to?

John 4:21, *Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father.*

Jesus is simply saying the hour is very soon to come when you will see that it is not relevant which mountain you worship in.

It is not an issue of where in the sense of geography.

It is an issue of spirit.

It is about what is in you wherever you are, not where you are!

What Jesus is saying to her is that worship is a way of life.

In simple words, Jesus is saying that the time is going to come very soon when it will be very clear to everyone that worship is not in a place.

Within another 40 years, not very long until the destruction of Jerusalem ended worship there.

So, Jesus is simply pointing out to her that worship is something on the inside, and not at a place.

John 4:22, *You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.*

Jesus confronts the fact that Samaritan worship was ignorant. They only accepted the Pentateuch therefore they were limited as to their understanding of the Old Testament of God's revelation and therefore of God.

They had developed their own kind of highbred worship and it had a lot of paganism mixed into it.

So, Jesus says to her two things:

1. Worship is not in a place
2. Worship is done according to the truth

God has brought revelation about salvation through the Jews. The writers of Scripture were Jews, to the Jews was given the Scripture, the oracles of God.

Romans 9:4, *who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises;*

So, the Jews then had the truth in Scripture.

The Samaritans didn't have that, so they were worshipping in ignorance.

The time was coming when no place would be THE place.

Worship was to be in spirit and truth.

It isn't not about where you are. There are a lot of people who go to church to worship, go to temples to worship.

People go to Temple,

People to go to Synagogue,

People go to Buddhist Temple,

All those religions go to their place to worship.

You as a Christian, you don't go anywhere to worship, you worship as a way of life because worship is in the Spirit!

Worship is in the spirit, in heart, and it's internal.

All we do in our church is collect all of you worshipers for corporate expression.

You don't have to come to the church to worship.

You can worship anywhere you are, my prayer and plea that you will do!

Worship is in spirit and according to revelation of truth.
What God has revealed in the Bible, not anyway you want to do it.

John 4:24, *But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. ²⁴ God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."*

Ask yourself this question:

Why did God save you?

Answer:

To be a worshiper.

What is the true mark of a Christian?

A Christian is a worshiper.

Exactly that's what Apostle Paul says here in Philippians 3:3.

What is the true circumcision?

Those who worship in the Spirit of God.

If you worship in the Spirit of God, how you going to worship?

You are going to worship in spirit and in truth!

You were saved to be a true worshiper.

how can you tell a true worshiper?

They worship God from the inside according to the Word of God. The world is filled with people who worship in a place according to a design that is not biblical, they are not true worshipers.

They are the false circumcision, not the true. They are deceived.

Worship

The word "worship" here is the word '*latreuo*'.

We get the word "liturgy" from it.

It means to minister, to serve, to worship.

This means to render respectful spiritual service. Some people think worship is just saying things that praise God, singing things that praise God, thinking things that praise God.

That is worship but that's not all it is.

Worship finally comes down to how you live.

Hebrews 13:15-16, *Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. ¹⁶ But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.*

Every part of your life is worship.

The word *latreuo* means worship but it also means service.

Worship involves some components.

Checklist in your heart.

Do I worship God?

1. Affection

Loves God and Christ.

There will be within you a great affection and love for God and Christ.

When you will feel that, and you will express that.

When songs of praise are song, your heart will be lifted up. When you read through the Word of God you will be so encouraged, and you will feel such love for God and love for Christ.

Unsaved person hates God.

Romans 8:7, *Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.*

The saved person loves God.

Matthew 22:37-40, *Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." ³⁸This is the first and great commandment. ³⁹And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' ⁴⁰On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."*

The true Christian has a healthy sense of awe but has an overwhelming sense of love for God and Christ.

2. Joy

There will be a delight in God and Christ. More than love there will not only be the emotion of affection but there will be the emotion of delight.

Your thoughts about God bring you joy.

Your thoughts about Christ bring you delight.

- You love to think about Christ.
- You love to talk about Christ.
- You love to read about Christ.

The contemplation of who God and Christ is, what they had done for you that brings you joy.

3. Peace

There is a confidence to worship.

The true Christian in worshiping is adoring with affection, is delighting with joy, and is also enjoying a confidence that brings peace.

True Christians is not concerned about his own prosperity, own things. But at peace in their relationship to the eternal God and Christ.

Where do you get love, joy, and peace?

Galatians 5:22-23, *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.*

The Holy Spirit that produces this.

That is why when Paul says that worship in the Spirit of God.

It is the Spirit of God that comes to take residence in us that produces affection for Christ, delight in Christ and peace from Christ.

The true character of our worship.

- a loving element,
- a rejoicing element,
- a peaceful element.

4. Devotion to God

There is an unusual devotion to God and Christ.

In the heart there is a total devotion to God and Christ. It is a love that knows no rival, it is a delight that knows no equal, it is a peace that knows no comparison.

Nothing really can compete. The love and the joy and the peace that we feel toward Christ knows no equal.

Matthew 4:10, *Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.' "*

We can learn this from Jesus the true characteristic of a true believer.

We are the true worshipers whom the Father sought to worship Him.

So, how do you know you are a true Christian?

Worship from the heart, not because you do external things.

You love God and Christ and you delight in them.

There is a joy.

You have a peace in that relationship that passes all understanding.

Singularly devoted to Christ and God.

Only the Holy Spirit can produce that.

The Holy Spirit is the divine initiator at work in the depths of the human heart. He transforms a person's life to promote worship.

1 Corinthians 2:11, *For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.*

2 Corinthians 13:5, *Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.*

You can be an almost Christian and I can't tell the difference. God knows it, don't you be deceived, you examine your heart.

Do you worship God like this?

Or is your worship simply something you do in a place and according to your own rules?

True worship comes out of relationship praise, adoration, and service.

You live your life as an act of worship, you live your life as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God.

Romans 12:1-2, *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

This is the way you ought to live your life, it is a living sacrifice and it is an act of worship.

2. Glory in Christ Jesus

The word "glory" is, *kauchaomai*. The Greek verb means to boast, only to boast with exultant joy, to boast in the sense that this is what I am most proud of.

Paul uses this word 35 times and all the other New Testament writers put together only use it twice.

The true Christian gives all the credit for all that he is to Christ.

How can you identify a false Christian?

They take credit.

They believe that because of their religious duties they have earned favour with God.

Others believe that if they do more good things than bad things, God will accept them.

They believe that they have the ability to please God in some way and gain merit for themselves, gain approval for themselves.

One of the most mind boggling errors that you can come across in the Catholic theology that says that by your deeds you not only earn merit for yourself, but if you earn more merit than you need to get into heaven, your extra merit goes into the

treasury of merit to be applied to somebody else to get them out of purgatory.

What that says is not only can I by merit earn my own salvation, but I can over earn it and apply what is left to someone else's salvation. There is no treasury of merit for the super achievers.

A true believer will never claim any merit and never claim any credit. The true believer will always boast only in Christ Jesus.

Look at some of the saying Apostle Paul says about it!

1 Corinthians 1:31, *that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the Lord."*

2 Corinthians 10:17, *But "he who glories, let him glory in the Lord."*

Those whose hearts have been circumcised find their only point of pride is in Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:10, *But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.*

1 Corinthians 2:2, *For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.*

- Christ gets all the credit,
- Christ gets all the glory,
- Christ is all my pride,
- Christ is all my boast.

Philippians 3:8-9, *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 ⁹ 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;*

Christ is everything, I am nothing. That is a true Christian.

Now you may go to church and you may any activity and if you are feeling that you have done something to earn your salvation and you should get a little of the credit, then you are not glorying, boasting, exalting Christ.

Shocker that you are not a Christian!

The true Christian puts all the credit where the credit must be put.

- all my pride is Christ,
- all my joy is Christ,
- all my boast is Christ, and
- all my life is Christ.

When you become a Christian, you must acknowledge Jesus as Lord! Also, you give Him your life, He becomes all your joy, delight, and all boast.

There are a lot of people who want Christ's grace, but not His government.

There are a lot of people who want Christ to be priest who pays the penalty for their sin, but not prophet who tells them what they must do.

Certainly not king who has authority over everything.

- A lot of people want heaven but not the narrow way.
- A lot of people who want the gift but won't want to take it in empty hands.
- A lot of people want the pearl but won't sell all.

But for the true Christian, Christ is all!

Jesus Christ is our life.

Christ is our Lord and Saviour and our life.

We glory in nothing but the cross of Christ. We are determined to know nothing but the cross of Christ. All the credit is His, all the glory is His. That's the true Christian.

We have the attitude of the prodigal.

Luke 15:21, *And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.'*

I am not worthy of anything.

The true Christian is consumed with Christ.

Romans 15:17, *Therefore I have reason to glory in Christ Jesus in the things which pertain to God.*

How about you?

Is all your boast in Christ?

All your pride in what He's done for you?

All your rejoicing in Him?

Is all your life in Him?

Is He all and all to you?

Do you live for Christ, breathe for Christ?

That is a true Christian.

3. Put no confidence in the flesh.

If all the glory goes to God and all the boast is in Christ, then you certainly can't put any confidence in the flesh.

What did it earn you?

What did it get you?

What did it gain you?
All the flesh will do is destroy you.

What do you mean flesh?

Unredeemed humanness.
My own ability apart from God.

You have no confidence in the flesh. That's different than the Jews.

- The Jews placed all their confidence in the flesh.
- They were descended from Abraham physically.
- They had a physical surgery called circumcision.
- They physically performed the ceremonies and they outwardly did the duties of the Mosaic Law and the traditions.

Romans 3:19-20, *Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.²⁰ Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*

It shuts out true salvation, it is the religion of human achievement. It is false.

Humility:

True Christians are humble when they look at themselves.

They see their flesh as sinful.

James 4:6, &10, *But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."*

¹⁰ Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

We are humble about our own abilities.

- I can't earn heaven.
- I can't please God.
- I can't merit salvation.

I am what I am by God's grace.

So, I turn from sinful self-effort to salvation by grace through faith. I forsake any goodness in my own flesh. I rely totally on Christ, Holy Spirit, and all the glory to God.

That is a true Christian.

Conclusion:

The almost Christian might feel a certain natural kind of conviction, might feel bad about sin, but understand the difference.

There is a natural conviction that is chiefly related to sins. The unsaved person, the almost Christian, the religious-but-not-

saved person will feel bad about sin not because he or she feels bad about the sin, but they feel bad about its consequence.

They feel bad about what their sin produces, they do not feel bad about the evil in them that produces the sin.

That is the difference.

Natural conviction feels bad about the sin.

Natural conviction is repulsed by child abuse, by rape, by mutilation, by cruelty, by mass murder, that scandalizes even the natural man.

He feels convicted that that is wrong mostly because it encroaches upon someone else not because in its root it is evil. So, he doesn't like the evil that sin produces, but he never recognizes the evil that produces sin.

True spiritual repentance touches the deep secret undiscerned sins of hypocrisy, pride, envy, hardness of heart, rejection of Christ.

- Natural conviction deals with my conduct.
- Spiritual repentance deals with my condition.

- Natural conviction deals with the symptoms.
- Spiritual repentance deals with the disease.

- Natural conviction makes a person shy away from God because they feel fearful.
- Spiritual repentance makes a person run to God for forgiveness.

Spiritual repentance means putting no confidence in the flesh. There is nothing in you that's good, it's rotten to the core.

A person with natural, just feeling bad about the sin produces, feeling badly about what happens on the outside, feeling bad about their conduct, doesn't ever deal with the wretchedness of their condition and doesn't see in the flesh the inability to ever produce anything good.

What marks a true Christian?

Worship in Spirit and in truth, giving all the credit to Jesus Christ who is their only pride and joy, and repentance which turns totally from the wretchedness of the sinful condition to accept the salvation that only comes through God's grace.

That's the true circumcision.

Certainly, it's my prayer that that is you, that you truly know the salvation God sent His Son to bring.