



World Christian Fellowship

www.wcfondon.com
wcfondon@gmail.com

Philippians 25 Relationship not Ritual

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 God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,*

There are two themes runs across our New Testament predominantly.

- True Christianity.
- False Christianity

- ❖ Jesus Christ and the Gospel of God.
- ❖ Who are the followers are True 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.*

Matthew 7:21-23, *“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ ²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’*

Here in this 3 verses Apostle Paul gives two groups and three wonderful lessons.

Group 1:

- Dogs,
- Evil Workers
- Mutilation

Group 2:

- ❖ Worship God in Spirit
- ❖ Glory in Christ Jesus
- ❖ No confidence in the Flesh

Every system of religion without relationship.

Like the churches in Galatia the Jewish religious people followed the footsteps of Apostle Paul here in Philippi. They were forcing the people to circumcise and follow the mosaic laws. They were preaching them that believing only the Lord Jesus Christ is not enough, but you also must do your part.

There were many religious Jews in that world believed that they were the people of God. they maintained a covenant relationship with God which secured their salvation and their eternal life.

Proof of their identity and belonging was the circumcision mark they bore as the children of Abraham naturally that affirmed their right to be called the children of God supernaturally.

For centuries Jews have continued to hold on to that mark by which they assume that they are secure with God. They belong to God and ultimately will receive their kingdom and their glory because they have that mark of circumcision.

To the Jews of the time of Jesus and the time of Paul and even before and even now, circumcision is a very important mark. It is the badge of their Jewishness.

In fact, it has always been important to the degree that the Jewish Talmud says this, "*The commandment of circumcision is more important than all the other injunctions of Scripture,*"

This lesson we will look at this subject of outward symbol and inward relationship in detail.

Circumcision:

The English term "circumcision" comes from a Latin word which means to "cut around."

The Greek is *peritome*, it means to cut around.

A surgery that was performed on little boys. It was also performed initially on adults and often on adults as the record of Scripture indicates when they had not been circumcised as children.

Genesis 17:10-14, *This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised; ¹¹ and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you. 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. ¹³ He who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money must be circumcised, and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. ¹⁴ And the uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant."*

God wanted everyone in the Abraham family to be circumcised.

Egyptian circumcised for Medical reason. People who have diabetic will have big complications when they have infection in that part.

God made them to circumcise for medical reason.
Also, for spiritual reason.

Man is wicked.

Man, produce is also wicked. So, to show the procreation of wickedness God made them to circumcise.

Remember Jesus did not have a human father so that He can be perfect Man without sin.

Man needed to be cleansed of his sin through a spiritual surgery. Very graphic symbol was chosen because that is the procreative point at which man produces sinful man.

So, man in his natural condition is a sinner and he produce sinners nothing but sinners. At the very point of his nature then he needs cleansing.

Every time they circumcised a person or a little eight-day-old male child, they were reminding themselves of the fact that man at his very base nature was a wicked sinner and desperately in need of a cleansing.

Joshua 5:2-7, *At that time the Lord said to Joshua, "Make flint knives for yourself, and circumcise the sons of Israel again the second time."³ So Joshua made flint knives for himself, and circumcised the sons of Israel at the hill of the foreskins.⁴ And this is the reason why Joshua circumcised them: All the people who came out of Egypt who were males, all the men of war, had died in the wilderness on the way, after they had come out of Egypt.⁵ For all the people who came out had been circumcised, but all the people born in the wilderness, on the way as they came out of Egypt, had not been circumcised.⁶ For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the people who were men of war, who came out of Egypt, were consumed, because they did not obey the voice of the Lord—to whom the Lord swore that He would not show them the land which the Lord had sworn to their fathers that He would give us, "a land flowing with milk and honey."⁷ Then Joshua circumcised their sons whom He raised up in their place; for they were uncircumcised, because they had not been circumcised on the way.*

Exodus 12:48, *And when a stranger dwells with you and wants to keep the Passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as a native of the land. For no uncircumcised person shall eat it.*

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

Genesis 34: Story of Dinah being raped and people Shechem killed.

Genesis 34:25, *Now it came to pass on the third day, when they were in pain, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, each took his sword and came boldly upon the city and killed all the males.*

David and Saul.

1 Samuel 18:20, *Now Michal, Saul's daughter, loved David. And they told Saul, and the thing pleased him.*

Saul's daughter wanted to marry David, but David thought otherwise. Finally, Saul devise a plan to put David in trouble by asking 100 Philistine foreskins. Since God was with him, he went and killed 200 male Philistines and brought foreskin.

1 Samuel 18:27, *therefore David arose and went, he and his men, and killed two hundred men of the Philistines. And David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full count to the king, that he might become the king's son-in-law. Then Saul gave him Michal his daughter as a wife.*

God not only wanted as an outward sign but also an inward sign.

Leviticus 26:41, *and that I also have walked contrary to them and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if*

their uncircumcised hearts are humbled, and they accept their guilt—⁴² then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and My covenant with Isaac and My covenant with Abraham I will remember; I will remember the land.

Deuteronomy 10:16, *Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer.*

Deuteronomy 30:6, *And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.*

Jeremiah 4:4, *Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, And take away the foreskins of your hearts, You men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, Lest My fury come forth like fire, And burn so that no one can quench it, Because of the evil of your doings.”*

Ezekiel 44:7, *When you brought in foreigners, uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in My sanctuary to defile it—My house—and when you offered My food, the fat and the blood, then they broke My covenant because of all your abominations.*

A circumcised foreskin can only be a sign of the need for a circumcised heart, a cleansed heart.

But it wasn't long after God instituted it that they had already begun to deteriorate and that's why you have those passages where God says circumcise your hearts.

Already the thing began to deteriorate and all they were living by was the physical sign and disregarding the spiritual counterpart.

- Their hearts were wicked.
- Their mouths were wicked.
- Their ears were wicked.

But they very dutifully circumcised their little boys on the eighth day and circumcised anybody that came into their land to live with them.

They had twisted the whole thing so that all they had left was the duty of the external and there was no reality of the internal.

- They were religious on the outside and
- They were not spiritual on the inside.
- They could do the natural fleshly thing,
- They could not do the supernatural spiritual thing.
- ❖ They were cleaned physically,
- ❖ They were never cleansed spiritually.

Paul sums it up!

Romans 2:25, *For circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the law; but if you are a breaker of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.*

The symbol isolated from the reality is meaningless.

What would it matter if you came here on the Lord's day and took communion if you denied the crucifixion and the resurrection?

What would it matter if you came in here and were baptized in water if you didn't believe in Jesus Christ?

Absolutely pointless.

The symbol means nothing without the reality.

If you are a transgressor of the law and you have never been cleansed on the inside by the grace of God and made righteous to become obedient to the law, circumcision is useless.

If you have come to righteousness and if you have been cleansed on the inside and you are a new creation on the inside, then the outward sign means something to you, it demonstrates outwardly what has happened inwardly.

Romans 2:26, *Therefore, if an uncircumcised man keeps the righteous requirements of the law, will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision?*

Uncircumcised Gentile who has been transformed and cleansed to obey the law of God doesn't need circumcision.

A disobedient lawless unsaved Jew with circumcision will find it useless.

Romans 2:27, *And will not the physically uncircumcised, if he fulfils the law, judge you who, even with your written code and circumcision, are a transgressor of the law?*

The uncircumcised but saved and obedient Gentile will judge the circumcised lost and disobedient Jew!

Romans 2:28-29, *For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh;²⁹ but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.*

The Jews were circumcised on the outside, not the inside and God was more pleased with Gentiles who were not circumcised on the outside but circumcised on the inside.

So, circumcision is the external symbol showing the need for a deep total cleansing from sin. But Israel had reduced it to a symbol with nothing of spiritual significance.

Paul was facing the same old problem again in Philippi.

Do we have similar problem today? How relevant for us is this today?

People who are saying all the time if you want to be right with God you have got to do this or do that.

Light this candle, bow down, go through this ceremony, say this prayer, do this ritual, buy this absolving, or you have got to join this organization, be a part of this, have this special kind of baptism, you have got to work your way into the Kingdom.

So, Paul is giving us the lesson of who is a true believer and who are not?

Ephesians 2:8-9, *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast.*

Salvation is a free gift!

If you receive salvation in Jesus Christ by His death and resurrection as a gift from God, you received it confessing your sin and turning to Christ, you are the true circumcision.

If you are doing anything to earn favour with God, you are the false.

Paul warns them three times in verse 2 so do !!

"Beware of the dogs."

Two words in the New Testament for dogs, both from the same root.

One is **kunarion**, that means a little dog, a little pet dog.
Other word is **kuon**, that means dogs, scavenger dogs which is used here.

The term **kunarion**, is used in

Matthew 15:26-27, *But He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs." ²⁷ And she said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table."*

Mark 7-27, *But Jesus said to her, "Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs."*

It means a little diminutive pet dog.

The word here is **kuon**, that word is used of dogs that were not pets and most of the dogs in that culture were not pets. They were scavengers.

Biblical encyclopaedia has lot of details about those days' dogs. Dogs roamed the streets. Dogs were scrounging, they were scavengers. They roamed in packs. They hunted the garbage of

the city. They were often rabid. They were wild. Would literally prowl the ancient streets without an owner and without home, they would feed on the garbage, on the filth. They would fight one another. They would attack people. In some cases, people would lose their lives because the dogs were diseased.

To show you something of the character of these kinds of dogs, do you remember the parable of the rich man and Lazarus?

In that story that part of the torture of Lazarus was that he was sick, and, in his poverty, he was lying in the street. The dogs were licking his sores, the filthy vile scroungy scavenger dogs of the street, unimaginably licking the sores of this poor beggar.

In the book of Revelation when it wants to identify the people who are not allowed into the gate of the holy city.

Revelation 22:15, *But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.*

They are not the warm and fuzzy little diminutives that we have as pets. These dogs were very different. They were the lowest of the low, the scavengers, the scoundrels, the useless filthy curs that moved in the streets and were a threat to people and children.

Because they were so base and such filthy animals, the Jews had come to use the term "dog" as a title for Gentiles. In fact, the Talmud says the nations of the world are like dogs.

The Gentiles were dogs, Gentile dogs, unclean, filthy, scrounging scavengers who savagely attacked the truth and were dangerous.

So, the Jews would see the Gentiles as dogs. The Judaizers trying to protect the Jewishness that was so precious to them would see even the Gentile Christians as dogs until they went through a circumcision. Jews called Gentiles dogs.

What is startling here is that Paul, a Jew, calls Jews dogs. Paul is saying, in effect, beware of those people who self-righteously call other dogs, but they are the dogs. They accuse others of shamelessly attacking the truth and they are shamelessly attacking the truth.

Are dogs unclean and filthy?

So are they!

Are dogs snarling and howling and vicious?

So are they!

Are dogs dangerous and able to wound and even kill?

So are they!

Stay away from them. Stay away from those dangerous filthy snarling howling wild attacking false teachers who parade themselves as if they are the virtuous ones, but they are deadly, they are dangerous, they are dirty.

Paul is talking about people who are religious.

Anybody who comes along in this time and day and says you have to be baptized in water to be saved is a dangerous dog.

Anybody who comes along in this day and says in order to be saved,

- you have got to go through some certain kind of ceremony,
- you have got to say some certain kinds of prayers,
- you have got to go through a ritual

Dog is an unclean thing and dangerous at best!

Beloved, salvation is by grace and grace alone. Anything else that comes down is nothing but a filthy unclean beast.

Evil workers.

They pride themselves on being workers of righteousness. Those who are involved in those kinds of external religions of works see themselves as the workers of what is good, that they please God, they are earning His favour, and earning salvation.

They are the noble upholders of the ceremonies and the rituals of their religion.

They have,

- lit their candles,
- bowed their knee,
- prostrated to the east,
- gone through the water,
- gone through the ritual,
- run down the beads,
- done the good deeds,
- filled up all their agenda with those required things.

They have done all that good, but they are not good workers. Paul calls them as Evil Workers.

Why?

Because it is the wickedness of all wickedness to think that you can earn anything with God.

Why is that wicked?

Because it is pride at its peak and pride is a sin.

Unregenerate people, even religious people can't do really what is good.

They do them with bad reasons, bad motives.

They are motivated by their wicked selfish self-centred nature.

Unregenerate people can also do bad good.

It's good in the sense that

- they can help the poor,
- they can relieve the widows,
- they can visit the prisoners,
- they can adopt orphans,
- they can do good.

But it's bad good because it's motivated by pride rather than the glory of God.

The best that the unregenerate can do is bad good. They can do bad bad or bad good.

But only the redeemed can do good good! A good deed motivated to the glory of God.

It may appear good on the outside, it is bad on the inside because it is nothing but the expulsion of pride which believes that you can please God on your own.

The Judaizers were among them. Evil workers trying to earn God's favour. It doesn't mean that they were doing evil deeds, they were working to please God, but they were evil because it was all motivated by the false belief that they could be pleasing to God.

How are we characterized?

All internally.

We worship in the Spirit of God; we glory in Christ Jesus.

Who gets all the glory for our salvation?

Christ. Our worship isn't external, it's in the Spirit. He gets all the glory.

How much confidence do we have in our flesh?

None.

Difference.

They worship on the outside,
They glory in their human achievement,
Their religious activity and they have a lot of confidence in the flesh.