

PHILIPPIANS

Rejoice In
The Lord!

Dogs?

Lesson Thirty

Philippians

Rejoice In The Lord!

Lesson Thirty

Page 2 of 4

Lesson Goal: To assist students in understanding Paul's repeated message.

Scriptures: Philippians 3:2, 3

For Memory: "For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ." Philippians 3:18

Dogs?

What in the world? What is Paul saying? The guy's gone off the deep end. He is calling someone a dog! Can you believe it?...a dog! All we can say is that sometimes people's behavior must be strongly addressed.

Paul had been traveling around telling people that, by faith, they could be saved...that all they had to do was completely and thoroughly believe that Jesus is the Son of God and had lived, died and rose again for their salvation. Salvation, according to Paul, is a free gift. He further taught that this free gift is for everyone...to any person, no matter what their race, nationality or previous religious belief.*

But, everywhere he went there was a group of people, the Judaizers, who followed him telling new Christians that there was more to it than that. They said that salvation was only for the Jews. They said that a Christian had to earn his or her salvation by following the law of the Jews. They said that any person who received the salvation of God had to be circumcised. That was the physical sign of being a Jew.

Paul said that salvation was given to humans by the grace of God. The Judaizers were saying that salvation is of God, but that humans had to earn it by doing many things to convince God that they were serious about being His children. Paul uses three strong words to call attention to the truth of their religion.

First, he calls them dogs. Now, it is important to understand that referring to someone as a dog then was different than it would be today. Dogs in our day have been made pets. In Paul's day they were scavengers. They roamed in packs through the streets and in the countryside looking for something, anything, to eat and growling at anyone who got in their way. They were dangerous strays who no one wanted. In Matthew 7:6, Jesus said, "Don't give dogs what is sacred, do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces."

The second thing he said is that they are "evil workers." If you think about it, this was just as insulting. The Judaizers were going around doing what they thought was missionary work. They were correcting what they saw as the wrong doctrine of Paul. Paul said that their work was evil. They were destroying the true message of

Philippians

Rejoice In The Lord!

the Gospel. What really happened was that they were moving people further and further away from God, rather than bringing them near to God. All Christian workers must be extremely careful to hear and know the truth before they try to preach or teach it.

The third thing Paul said of these folks was that they, by requiring circumcision, were just wasting their effort. Circumcision was a sign given to Abraham to identify people who would be the partners in God's covenant with Abraham. In the New Testament, that covenant was no longer in effect. Sometimes the Jews thought that their circumcision was enough, that they didn't have to follow laws or spiritual practices.

Paul then, in verse three, said that there was a new kind of circumcision...a sign of true faith. There was a new covenant. Jesus died on the cross to make the new covenant possible. It was a covenant of the heart and soul. It had nothing to do with the physical part of the Christian. It was all about worship of God through His Spirit by those who don't depend on physical things to mark them as children of God. So, it is a circumcision of the heart. And, our worship must be in Jesus' name.

That is still true today!

*Underlined statements in this Teacher's Guide appear in the Student Worksheet with blanks to be filled in by the student during the lesson. Words in the Student Worksheet may not appear exactly as printed in the Teacher's Guide.



Teaching Tips:

1. This lesson may seem a little hard because of the idea of circumcision. It would benefit the teacher to be direct, unembarrassed, and let Scripture speak for itself. For further thoughts on circumcision, see Genesis 17:9, 10: Origin; Leviticus 26:41: Circumcision isn't only about foreskin; Galatians 6:12-17: Judaizers
2. See also Romans 2:25-29, a New Testament word on circumcision of the heart.
3. Songs that emphasize God's grace, new life in Jesus, faith in Jesus, and sharing the Good News are appropriate.
4. Pray with your students: Ask God to reveal His way for you to behave as believers. Thank God for the assurance that we don't have to obey laws or go through some kind of initiation to be children of God.
5. Teachers may outline verse three as does Warren Wiersbe. Paul: (1) worships God in the Spirit, John 4:19-124; (2) boasts in Jesus Christ, Ephesians 2:8-10 and Galatians 6:14; and (3) has no confidence in the flesh, Romans 7:15-25.

Philippians

Rejoice In The Lord!

Student Worksheet

Lesson Thirty

Page 4 of 4

For Memory: “For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ..” Philippians 3:18

Dogs?

=Salvation, according to Paul, is a _____ gift. He further taught that this free _____ is for everyone...to any person, no matter what their _____, _____ or previous religious _____.

=Everywhere Paul went there was a group of people, the _____, who followed him telling new Christians that there was _____ to it than that. They said that salvation was only for the _____, that a Christian had to _____ his or her salvation by following the law of the Jews, that a _____ who received salvation had to be circumcised.

=Paul said that _____ was given to humans by the grace of God.

=Paul said that there was a new kind of circumcision...a sign of true _____. There was a new _____. Jesus _____ on the cross to make the new covenant possible. It was a covenant of the _____ and _____. It had nothing to do with the physical part of the Christian. It was all about _____ of God through His _____ by those who don't _____ on physical things to mark them as children of _____. So, it is a circumcision of the _____. And, our worship must be in _____ name.

How to begin a Personal Relationship with God:

First, believe that there is a God.

Second, believe that Jesus, God's Son, was sent to earth to die so that you can have a relationship with God.

Third, ask God to forgive your sins in Jesus' name. Jesus' death on the cross paid the price of every sin you commit.

Fourth, ask Jesus to be your Savior and the Lord of your life.

Fifth, believe that He has answered your prayer, and be determined to live for him all the rest of your life.