

The Wednesday Word, February 17, 2021: Three Features of the Gospel Believer.

Philippians 3:3, *“For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.”*

Our text is sometimes badly mis-used and mistreated. Indeed, it has often been used to brutalize the saints as it makes imaginary, legalistic demands on them. The verse has been used to insist that we become worshipers and people who rejoice.

Good luck with that one!

Our verse, however, has nothing to do with mandates. It’s a description of the believer’s lifestyle. You can turn it into law by demanding that we worship and rejoice ... but no amount of legalistic preaching can get that desired result.

Notice how in this marvelous little verse we see three excellent truths.

1. True Believers Worship.

Worship is like breathing, we don’t have to be told to do it. As reborn people it’s what we want to do. When we obey the revealed word of God we are worshiping. When we present our body as a living sacrifice, we are worshiping (Romans 12:1).

It’s interesting to observe the kind of worshippers God is seeking. He is seeking for people who will worship Him in spirit and truth (see John 4:23). Worship, we should remember, is not an attempt to gain heavenly approval. No indeed ... that approval has already been secured by the shed blood of Calvary. That’s why the gospel provides the energy for all true worship.

No one can worship who isn’t saved. Think about it, how can an unsaved religious person worship when he has neither the Spirit in him nor the righteousness of Christ on him? Yet, there he goes to his church service, well-dressed and tidy and there he sings of matters he knows not of ... and calls it worship.

2. The True Believer Rejoices in Christ Jesus.

The Spirit of God energizes every true believer enabling them to rejoice in Christ Jesus. No one can rejoice properly unless their joy is in Christ the Lord (Philippians 4:4).

To ‘rejoice’ in our verse (Philippians 3:3), means to ‘boast.’ The believer, therefore, is one who boasts in Christ Jesus (1 Corinthians 1:31; 2 Corinthians 10:11; Psalm 34:2; Romans 15:17;

Galatians 6:14).

“But brother Miles, why is there so little true zeal for the Lord?”

It’s because there is so little rejoicing.

Why is there so little rejoicing?

It’s because we are not living in the gospel.

We are instructed in scripture to rejoice in the Lord but some believers I’ve met should have “Mourn in the Lord always” imprinted on their Bibles. However, rejoicing is our heaven given privilege. The Judge of all the earth could have justly condemned us but instead laid the foundation of our joy in the blood of His cross. Gospel truths are filled with reasons to rejoice.

“But Brother Miles, do you always rejoice?” No, I don’t, and I confess it as sin as I do my other imperfections. Sometimes when I see the wretchedness of my own heart (outside of Christ) I feel powerless to rejoice. This is where the third part of our verse comes into play.

3. The True Believer Puts no Confidence in the Flesh.

When we see what we are outside of Christ and realize that our flesh is unimprovable, corrupt and utterly worthless it is then we learn to put no confidence in anything that the flesh tells us. What the flesh tells us about us is not who we are. We have a new identity in Christ. And when the flesh causes us to despair, Jesus comes to us by His Spirit on the wings of the gospel and tells us again of His Finished Work. I then am enabled to put no confidence in the flesh and focus instead on the gospel and learn to rejoice in Christ Jesus.

The believer never tires of exploring the Finished Work and discovering how it applies to our lives.

And that’s the Gospel Truth!