

A Paradigm Shift

Philippians 3:4-8

Theme: A person's confidence for salvation must never be in the flesh but in the Lord Jesus Christ alone.

Paul's Past Confidence in the Flesh (3:4-6)

Paul forcefully warned the Philippians
about Judaisers—3:2.

Christians are the true circumcision—
3:3.

Paul elaborates on not putting
confidence in the flesh.

For salvation, Paul once relied on:

1. His Heritage – the circumstances he was born into (v. 5a-d):

- circumcised on 8th day
- of the *race* of Israel
- of the tribe of Benjamin
- a Hebrew of Hebrews [*Hebrew parents; spoke Hebrew & Aramaic*]

Are there not many like him in every generation?

Those who rely on
Protestant heritage,
Roman Catholic heritage,
birth into a Christian country,
birth into a Christian family,
or baptism.

2. His Religion - what he had achieved (5e, 6):

- Pharisee
- religious zeal
- religious righteousness

Today there are millions in the West
like Saul!

Essentially self-attainment is relied
upon for salvation!

Paul's Present Confidence in Christ alone (3:7-8)

Paul saw his heritage and religion as loss
in light of the all-sufficient work of Christ
- 3:7-8.

He uses accounting language.

What he once considered assets he now
sees as one big liability.

He now sees Jesus as his only asset.

Paul is not concerned that the
Philippian Christians could lose their
salvation...

...but if they could slip back from their
position of grace,
cf. Galatians 5:4.

A Christian can't lose his/her salvation,
cf. John 10:28-30; Philippians 1:4-6...

...but a Christian can backslide and
begin to place his/her confidence in
the flesh.

This grieves/quenches the Spirit.

It leads to lack of evidence of the transforming power of Gospel.

It will lead to discipline by a loving Father, *cf.* Hebrews 12:6.

This is what Paul is concerned about.

Paul leaves the Philippians in no doubt
of the centrality of Jesus Christ to
him—3:7-8.

Knowing Christ does not mean head
knowledge.

It means knowing Him
personally/relationally.

Gaining Christ is another way of saying
I want to know Christ.

Paul is basically exhorting the
Philippians to be like him.

He is exhorting *us* to be like him.

No matter how precious the social privileges and how perfect the moral accomplishments may be, all that ultimately, eternally matters for a follower of Christ is Christ.

(G. Walter Hansen)

Conclusion

Can You see the Danger?

Are you trying to pay your own way regarding salvation by relying on your heritage/religion?

You must see your profit as loss.

Salvation does not become ours by effort but by rejection of effort!

*Christian, beware of falling from a
position of grace.*

*Doing so will render your Christian life
powerless and insipid.*

It will lead to discipline by your Father.

*Constantly remind yourself that Christ
is all-sufficient
and the moment you start having
confidence in the flesh,
repent and once again confess with
the Apostle Philippians 3:7-8.*