



# CAPITOL COMMISSION™

## Faith in Me Vs. Faith in Christ

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**The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians** (60-62 A.D.), Paul is imprisoned (one of four Prison Letters, the others being Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon) in Rome addressing the established Christian (mostly Gentile) church in Philippi, the first founded by Paul in Europe. In this letter, Paul, having a fondness for the people of the church of Philippi, because of their faithfulness and generous nature, wanted to thank them for their gifts, letting them know why he was returning Epaphroditus to them, sharing his situation in prison, urging unity in church, and warning them against false teachers. While false doctrine had started to plague many of the churches, he wanted to provide encouragement for practical living and support for sound doctrine. While much of the letter deals with spiritual growth, the tone throughout is that there is joy in Christ and Paul rejoices in Christ being proclaimed regardless of his circumstance and that they also must conduct their lives, strive and suffer in and for Christ. (Php 3:1- 11 NASB)

*“Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things again is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you. Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision; for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh, (3:1-3)*

**False comfort in false doctrine.** Paul starts to bring his letter to the Philippian church to a close and again warn the believers to be watchful and on guard for teachers of false doctrine. These teachers Paul compares to dogs, evil workers and false circumcision. This comparison to dogs could have been a reference in the OT where Isaiah warned his people of against false prophets; *“His watchmen are blind, All of them know nothing. All of them are mute dogs unable to bark, Dreamers lying down, who love to slumber;” (Is 56:10)* Isaiah was warning the people of his day to watch for false prophets that tell the people what they want to hear to comfort them rather than tell the truth of a coming disaster.

Likewise, Paul was sounding a warning to the Philippian believers to watch for the ‘dogs’ of that day who were sharing that all was fine and they had nothing to worry about rather than to share the truth and the full gospel of God which may make people feel uncomfortable. That false comfort subsequently can come from pride and fleshly confidence. Paul shares that truth is found in the Spirit of God and the glory in Christ Jesus and that there is no truth in false religion. Paul transparently shares of his own prideful and fleshly past false comfort.

*“although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.” (3:4-6)*

**Paul’s past self righteousness.** Paul shares that if people were made righteous by their own goodness and religiousness then he would have been at the top of the heap. Paul’s sights 7 examples of his religious righteousness that he could have bragged about and at one time put his trust in. 1. He was circumcised on the eighth day, brought up in the faith and ‘religious’ from the start of his life. 2. He was of the nation of Israel, the God favored nation. 3. He was of the tribe of Benjamin, the first family of the tribes and who’s first king was Saul (possibly why he was first called Saul). 4. He was a Hebrew of Hebrew, a top leader in the church. 5. Regarding keeping the Law, he was a Pharisee, the supposed best of the religious leaders. 6. His zeal for God, he persecuted the church and pursued them with passion. 7. He kept the Law, while not perfect or sinless he said he was blameless.

However, Paul said that while he may have valued all of those attributes at one time, he now counts them as rubbish.

*“But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.” (3:7-11)*

**Joy and Righteousness in Christ.** Paul counts all of the religious things that he did as losses and rubbish when compared to the saving grace found in Christ Jesus. Paul shares that he was religious before he was saved, but his religion couldn’t save him. He had to lose his religion in order to be saved and receive the gift of grace from God of eternal life found solely in Christ Jesus based upon faith. Paul declares that knowing the power in the suffering, death and resurrection of Christ would result in his resurrection from the dead and eternal fellowship with Christ.

### For your consideration:

- Are you discerning regarding God’s truth?
- Are you counting on your goodness and religious things you do rather than what God gift of grace did for you through Jesus Christ?
- Have you accepted that gift of grace found in Jesus Christ through faith in Him alone?

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## BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS: SESSION OR HEARING WEDNESDAYS AT 7:30AM, STATEHOUSE RM. 44

STAFF, LOBBYISTS AND CAPITOL SQUARE COMMUNITY: WEDNESDAYS AT NOON, STATEHOUSE RM.44