Who Let the Dog’s Out – Philippians 3:1-9

Introduction

Dogs in Bible times were not well liked! They weren’t part of the family! They were filthy street scavengers that fed on garbage & were dangerous!

To be called a dog was an insult, but Paul uses it intentionally as a warning. Paul is saying beware of the dogs who roam & wreak havoc on the church.

Ch. 3:1-9 – Is about protecting oneself from the dogs & having true joy!

Paul begins chapter 3 with some good pastor humor - “Finally…” but there is still 40% of the letter yet to go.

Again Paul refers to the Philippians here in family terms – “my brothers...”, and this is in sharp contrast to the homeless dogs he is about to identify.

Paul calls the family of God to “Rejoice in the Lord!” – Paul’s main point in this letter is joy, and this supernatural joy is a Christian birthright!

There is a huge difference between happiness & joy!

- Happiness is circumstantial & fleeting!
- Supernatural joy is eternal b/c it is found “in the Lord” who is eternal & who gives us eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ.

True joy is found in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Paul experienced this joy & it enabled him to view all of life as “in the Lord.”

And he called the Philippians to also find their joy “in the Lord” as well as...

- Philippians 1:14 – “Confidence in the Lord”
- Philippians 2:1 – “Encouragement in Christ/In the Lord”
- Philippians 2:23 – “Trust in the Lord”
- Philippians 2:29 – “Receive others in the Lord”
- Philippians 4:1 – “Stand firm in the Lord”
- Philippians 4:4, 10 – “Rejoice in the Lord”

Does our status of being “in the Lord” effect how we live into every circumstance of our lives?

Do our lives function out of supernatural joy or circumstantial happiness?

It is no trouble for Paul to continue to write about such things because the more he proclaims Christ the more joy there is to be found.

But, beware of the dogs who’re looking to steal our joy that is in the Lord!

Paul not only wants to remind us of our joy he also wants to safeguard it!

Who are these dogs, these evil doers, these mutilators of the flesh?

Let’s look at this list in reverse order:

- **Mutilators of the flesh** – Those of the circumcision group that focus on only the externals and not the heart.
- **Evil-doers** – Those who try to earn their status with God based upon what they do or don’t do. There are no good works apart from Christ!
- **Dogs** – Those who feed on garbage instead of on the Bread of Life!

True circumcision is circumcision of the heart! Those who...

- Worship by the Spirit of God!
- Glory in Christ Jesus!
- Put no confidence in the flesh!

In verses 5-6 Paul makes an assets vs. liability chart in reference to faith!

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assets</th>
<th>Liabilities</th>
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Paul moves everything from the asset column to the liability column, b/c it is all counted loss in comparison to the surpassing worth of knowing Christ!

Paul counts it all as rubbish/excrement in order that he may gain Christ!

Matt Chandler - “The best of our best, without Jesus, looks like a pile of crap compared to Him!”

Don’t let looking good or being better be your goal. Let the goal be Him!

Don’t let happiness in worldly things distract you from finding true joy!

There is no greater joy than knowing Jesus, being with Jesus, and becoming like Jesus!

If Paul had a life verse I think it would be Phil. 3:8-9. Let it be ours too!