

iii. In the middle of v9, Paul says he wants righteousness that is *“through the faithfulness of Christ.”*

iv. Paul has begun thinking like Jesus Christ regarding *how* he uses his power. And he calls for us (3:17) to do the same.

Conclusion: How do we follow?

A. “it’s not easy being green.”

B. Only One Thing (Luke 18:22)

LIVE THE STORY

The Gospel is intended to be learned and lived in community.

The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.

- How does the transforming meaning of Kermit’s “It’s not easy being green” teach us something about how to read our Bibles?
- What power and status did the Law give to Paul? How has his giving up that power been to our benefit?
- Why is the story of Paul in 3:4-11 another example of someone who has the mind that was in Christ (2:5) in them?
- Since Paul was a believer (and an apostle), what does he mean when he says he wants to *know* Christ? (Allow context to help.)
- Regardless of *who* the “dogs” were, why could it be possible that Paul’s warning was as much that they might beware dogs within them as a church?
- How is the instruction of Jesus to the rich young ruler (Luke 18:22) intend to create another example of one with the mind of Christ?
- In Paul’s life, what is the difference between the righteousness which the Law gave him, and that which was through the faithfulness of Christ?

Slaves of Christ - Part 8 What Happened to Paul?

Jerry Cisar — November 18, 2018

Text: Philippians 3:1-11

Introduction: “It’s not easy being green.”

I. Who are the Dogs? (3:1-3)

A. What are the “same things” about which Paul is writing again?

B. Who are these dogs?

- i. Christian Judaizers?
- ii. Jews who were persecuting the church?

a) Phil. 1:27-28

b) It may be like Jesus’ “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees” (Matt. 16:6).

iii. “Dogs,” “evil doers,” and “mutilators of the flesh.”

a) Psalm 22:16 “because many **dogs** encircled me, a gathering of **evildoers** surrounded me. They **gouged** my hands and feet;” (NETS)

b) Paul could be describing both the crucifixion of Christ by the Jewish leaders *and* the persecution of the Church.

C. Who are the persecuted? (3)

i. What does it mean to be “the circumcision”? (Eph. 2:11-13)

- ii. Who serve/worship by the Spirit of God.
 - a) John 4:23-24
 - b) This word for serve/worship is a priestly term (3:3).
- iii. In contrast to the dogs and mutilators of the flesh, we put no confidence in the flesh.

II. Who was Paul? (3:4-6)

A. If anyone has reasons for confidence in the flesh, it's Paul.

B. What reasons does Paul list?

- i. He was circumcised on the 8th day: Faithful parents.
- ii. He was of the people of Israel (according to the flesh).
- iii. Of the tribe of Benjamin
- iv. A Hebrew of Hebrews
- v. Regarding the Law, a Pharisee.
- vi. As for zeal, persecuting the church.
 - a) Numbers 25:5-12
 - b) Pharisees wanted to win the favor of the Lord like Phineas!
- vii. As for righteousness based on the Law, faultless.

III. What Happened to Paul? (3:7-11)

A. What was Paul talking about?

- i. Whatever Paul describes as *gaining Christ* and being *found in Him* or having a *righteousness through faith in Christ*, he declares in v 12 that he has **not** already obtained it!

- ii. He cannot be talking about justification. Then what *is* he talking about?

B. What happened to Paul on the Road to Damascus?

- i. A Parable

- ii. On the Damascus road, Saul had a vision of God. When he asked, "Who are you, Lord?" he didn't expect Jesus to answer. But when Jesus did answer, Paul realized he was persecuting the very One he was trying to please.

C. How did this change his values and pursuits?

- i. The key is found in Phil. 2:5-11.
 - a) The cross is God making Himself known more fully than the Law ever could.
 - b) Paul refuses to cling to the Law for his own exaltation but empties himself.
- ii. Paul knew Christ, now he *wants to know experientially*.
 - a) "To know Christ" or to "gain Christ" in this context includes equals "participation in His sufferings, being made like Him in His death."
 - b) Paul didn't know Christ *in this sense* on the Damascus Road, but he *met* Christ.
 - c) 3:7-11 describes Paul as he works out his own salvation with fear and trembling—making Christ's story his own.