

11. What are then benefits and blessings of faith described in verses 10-11?

12. Looking back to verse 1 why is being reminded of these things safe for us? Does it stir you up to rejoice in the Lord?

Pray

On Sunday 18th November it was 140 years since the opening of St James Church. Give thanks to God for the ministry of the church over those years. Pray that whilst we wait for Christ's return we would be faithful as believers and continue to call people to repentance and faith in Christ.

Pray that God would help us as individuals not to trust in ourselves, or our background, but in Christ, and, like Paul, to rejoice in all the blessings that come to us through faith because of Christ.

Pray that in our services week by week, and in private devotions, we would worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus. Pray for all those who are involved in leading worship in different ways that they would be Christ focused in what they do.

*David Phillips,
October 2018*

Philippians

Study 7 :

Righteousness through Faith

Philippians 3.1-11



Read Philippians 3.1-11

Rejoice in the Lord

At the start of chapter 3 Paul's seems about to finish his letter but soon finds he has more to say.

1. What reasons have we seen in this letter so far for Paul's joy/rejoicing? See Phil 1.4, 1.18, 2.2 & 2.17.

2. What reasons has he given why the Philippians should rejoice? See Phil 1.25, 2.18 & 2.28-29.

3. (Verse 1) What does it mean for us to "rejoice in the Lord"?

Beware the Mutilation

In verse chapter 3 verse 1 Paul writes about what is safe and mentions the danger of “the mutilation”. He forcefully warns about those who insist that all non-Jewish converts must follow all the rituals given to Israel.

4. How does Acts 16.3 show us that circumcision itself was not the problem?

Read Galatians 5.1-6 (questions 5-7 are on this passage)

5. What was the problem with circumcision now that Christ had come and the Holy Spirit had been poured out?

6. What was at stake in this issue? Was Paul right to be so strident? How did he hope to keep the Philippians safe from danger?

7. Paul, like his fellow Jews, had previously put confidence in his background. But in verse Phil 3.3 what does he say really matters?

When Paul says “we are the circumcision” in Phil 3.3 he is referring to the fact that now that Christ has come, the covenant people of God are those who trust in Christ.

8. (Philippians 3.4-6) Paul presents his credentials as a Hebrew of Hebrews but only to say that in Christ these things are of no value for salvation. What sort of religious things might churchgoers, or others, imagine will give them standing with God?

9. (Verse 8) Read Matthew 13.45-46. (Ignoring for a moment verses 9ff). Why does Paul say that “knowing Christ Jesus my Lord” is worth more than anything else in the world?

10. What sort of things do people today count as worth more, such that they do not follow or turn back from following Christ?

11. (Verse 9) Our own righteousness is what comes through keeping God’s commands and so being found right (or just) by God as judge. But Paul writes about a righteousness that is not his own. (Martin Luther famously called it ‘an alien righteousness’).

a) Where does this ‘alien’ righteousness come from?

b) How does it come?

c) On what does it depend?

d) What is it that makes it hard for people to accept this teaching that we are justified (counted righteous) by faith and not by works?