Sermon Discussion Guide

November 1, 2026
Philippians 3:1-11

Summary

Big Idea: Let Jesus Be Your Joy

In our verses, Paul's desire is for his readers to find their joy in Jesus. In order to find, keep, and grow in our joy in Jesus, Paul says there is error we need to be on guard against and reject as well as truth we must receive and believe. The error is that God accepts us because of Jesus plus our good works. The truth is that the real people of God worship by the spirit, glory in Christ alone, and put no hope or trust or confidence in their own abilities. Trusting in ourselves and our own good works is the default proclivity of every human being – thus it shows up in every single world religion and every philosophy of life. But, trusting in our own merit only steals our joy, because it leads us away from Jesus, and Jesus is the true source of joy.

Discussion Questions

1. What triggers your gag reflex?

Read Philippians 3:1-3

1. What is Paul's hope in this section?
2. According to verse 2 what threatens our joy in Jesus?
    a. We may not have literal Judaizers coming after us, but what false teaching and false beliefs do we have that tempts us in the same way?
    b. When are you prone to drift into this mentality – that God's favor, kindness, and goodness toward you is based on your performance?
        i. In difficulty and hardship? In success and prosperity? Other?
    c. What makes this teaching so attractive to us? What does it offer or claim to offer?
    d. What makes this teaching so dangerous?
3. According to verse 3, who are the real people of God? How do they contrast with verse 2?
    a. Where are you tempted to take credit for God's acceptance and approval of you?

Read Philippians 3:4-11

4. What realization did Paul come to regarding what he thought were his gains?
5. Other than Christ, what other potential source of righteousness are you tempted to count on for God's acceptance and approval of you?
6. What must happen in order to gain Christ? What happens when we do gain Christ?
7. Respond to the following quote: "In Christ, you will never be more justified, more loved, more accepted than you are right now."
    a. Why is this good news in times of difficulty? In times of prosperity?
8. Why is this teaching – that justification and acceptance by God is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone – not only what unbelievers need to hear, but also what Christians need to be reminded of?