

Philippians 3

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Preacher: Clay Naylor

[0 : 00] And to protect them, as we're going to see, to protect them from the false teaching and false doctrine that was coming out of a particular branch, a group of people inside the church.

! But I was going to read you this quote by a short quote by Martin Luther, and he said, The gospel cannot be heard enough, for it cannot be grasped enough.

Moreover, our greatest task as preachers is to keep you faithful to this article and to bequeath this treasure to you when we die.

So the greatest thing that we can have to give you as the people in our congregations he's saying is the gospel, and to entrust that to you.

And when we die, you'll know that, and you'll treasure it and live in it. And so the thing about this passage also is it's such an amazing passage that, though, if I was just to sit down with you kind of one-on-one and walk through the passage, it would be really easy.

[1 : 06] But to actually teach through it, there's like so many different ways. So I hope that I just picked a good way to go about it. And then we're going to finish the other part of it next week.

But it all has to do, to some degree, we're going to look at this and ask them three questions. The first question is, what awaits us after death?

What awaits us after death? And the answer is the judgment of God. God is called the righteous judge in Scripture.

It's one of the things about God. He is a holy, righteous, and pure judge, and the perfect judge, if you want to look at it that way.

And all of us, every one of us in here, are going to stand in front of the judgment seat of God one day. And we have to think of this like in terms of like a courtroom idea.

[2 : 12] And it's something that we can tremble about. And probably I remember many times getting scared by when I was a kid. And hearing about it, I'm not actually having a good understanding of actually what it was.

But we have to understand that God's holiness, that's one of the things that God is. It means He's totally separated from all things that are sinful and evil.

It has nothing to do with them. And that He's like pure in all His ways and upright and perfect. And so His holiness doesn't just mean He's separated from evil, but it also means that He's devoted to destroying evil.

And how we want God to be that way. We don't want Him to be a God that sees evil going on and has no problem with it. All we have to do is just look on the news or kind of look around and what's going on in our own country and places in the world.

And you see like awful, awful, heinous things being done. And there's something inside of you, most of you probably, that just says there's got to be justice for that.

[3 : 22] That's wrong. Like that's got to be made right. And if we who are sinful, if we think that way, how much more would a holy and righteous God.

And I'm trying to help. I've been having a lot of talks with people about God's attributes lately. I've been writing about God's attributes and who God is.

Because how you understand God is going to shape the rest of your life. If you have a puny, weak understanding of God, that's probably what your life will look like. But if you have a huge biblical idea about God and your knowledge of God is increasing, then God's going to get bigger and bigger in your mind.

But something about the attributes of God. I've come to kind of learn this, that we as humans, as finite human beings, we like to kind of look at God and like put Him in categories called attributes.

You know, we want to say God is holy, God is just, God is loving, God is gracious, you know, so forth. God is omniscient. He's all powerful. These little things.

[4 : 35] But the truth is that it's not that God is sometimes those attributes. You know, we can look at our lives and say right now, you know, I can be a loving person.

You know that? Some of you know me. We'll have to know that I cannot be a loving person too. And so what happened? You know, I can be those things, but I am not those things. And that's a major difference because God, not just that God can be loving, it's that God is love and that He is just. He is holy. And His attributes are brought together in such a way to where His goodness is a demonstration of His justice.

And His justice is a demonstration of His goodness, vice versa. It's also, so when God shows judgment, it's not just He's being just, it's that He's being good. He's being loving in that same instant.

You can't really, it's just our puny efforts as finite creatures to try to understand something of who God is. But God will punish evil.

[5 : 44] He will punish sin. All those who have sinned and rebelled against God will pay. This is what Scripture teaches. Old and New Testament, out of the mouths of the prophets, out of the mouth of the apostles, out of Christ.

This is what is taught. There's a payday, if you want to call it that, coming for sin. For the wages of sin is death, the gift of God, eternal life in Christ Jesus.

Romans 6.23, the Old Testament calls it the day of the Lord, the day of wrath. It's called many things in the Scripture, but Psalm 7.11 says that God, it calls God the righteous judge.

And He's going to do like what good judges do. He's going to punish evil. And if you want to flip in your Bibles, I'm just going to give you just one picture of this.

Flip to, excuse me, Revelation 20. That's Revelation singular, not the book of Revelations, like a lot of people say.

[6 : 48] So Revelation, flip over there. I'm going to go into chapter 20. And there's a picture of the judgment here.

And it's kind of sandwiched in between chapter 19, where Christ returns with the armies of heaven, and He wipes out all the evil on the earth and kind of brings them to that next stage of judgment. And then after this chapter we're about to read is the creation of the new heavens and the new earth, where everything is beautiful and awesome and the way it should have been and even better. So this is where we find the judgment is actually between these two things, the return of Christ and the new heaven and new earth. But I wonder how many have actually read this before.

It's really, really sobering. This is John seeing this go down. And so look at verse 11. It says, It says, Those are just symbolic meanings for death.

[8 : 28] Simply put, there's a lot more there, but death and Hades. I gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done.

Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

So, chilling, sobering passage to think about. This is where we're all going to be one day. And we're going to be judged according to what we've done.

It says that twice in there. So, what's going to make the difference? Just to walk you through this passage, it's a white throne. And a throne always, in Scripture, means it's a symbol of power, authority, sovereignty.

And white, meaning like pure and clean and upright. And the sheer presence of God's holiness and purity causes all the creation that has been tainted by sin and messed up by sin to flee.

[9 : 39] That's what happens. Like the whole creation just disappears. Because think about it. This is before the creation of the new heaven and the new earth. So, you see that? Like it's like fleeing away. The old is passing away.

In front of the very presence of God, it just kind of takes off and flees. And from God, this is before the new was made. And all men, where it says there in verse 12, the dead, the great, the small, this just means everyone.

The weak, the powerful, the rich, the poor. Everyone from the beggar on the street to the most powerful person on the planet. All are going to stand before God.

And it says here that books, books were open. Books, books plural. And these books record every thought, every word, every deed that we've ever done throughout our lives.

And that's, again, I'm thinking about things I've done right now and things I've said and how chilling it would be to be exposed.

[10:48] There's another, this isn't, John's not the first one to write about this. Hundreds and hundreds of years before John ever came on the scene, the prophet Daniel spoke about the same thing.

You can just write down Daniel chapter 7 and you'll read the same kind of language here. And so they're judged according to what they've done in the books. Then it says the book of life that contains all the names of those who have looked to Christ for salvation, those who have been redeemed by Christ, hence the book of life.

They'll have life. And they're judged differently than the others who are not reading the book of life. And so when the people's thoughts, words, deeds, and actions, whatever, when they were in light of God's holiness, they all fail the test, every one of them.

They don't meet what's required. They all fall short. And if their names were not in the book of life, they were cast into the lake of fire. And I want you to think about that.

Like, how embarrassed or how frightened would you be right now like if I were to say, hey, we're going to like watch a video of your life, like every thought, word, deed, and action that you've ever committed.

[12:09] Like, all of you would probably just flee. Like, I'm leaving. I'm not watching. Like, I'm getting out of here. I'm running to the mountains and not coming out again. That's definitely what I would do. I've mentioned this before.

You're just going to feel utterly exposed. Anybody ever felt that before? Like, utterly exposed? You have for, like, maybe something you've done. You've been found out. And I've mentioned this show before, but I don't have cable or satellite or anything.

But a long time ago, I was with some crazy friends of mine and they were watching a show called To Catch a Prayer. Has anybody ever heard of that before? It's a show that they try to find men who were wanting to have sex with underage girls.

And they, like, talk to them on the Internet and all these things. They set up meetings with them. And eventually, these guys, if they keep following through with it, and even with the girl, they're saying, Hey, I'm just, I'm underage, I'm underage.

And if they're undeterred by it, they, the cops, like, you'll see, they're organized like a meeting place. And this is all, like, on video. You'll see the guy just kind of creeping around.

[13:22] And then all of a sudden, like, a camera will come in his face. And, like, the cops will come around him. He's just like, oh, my goodness. Like, he's caught. And, like, this total look of exposure.

Some of them just break down and cry. Other ones run. And just a feeling of total exposure being caught on national television. You know, many of them have families, have real prominent positions in society, and they're caught.

And as bad as that is, like, this will be infinitely much worse, this, the judgment of God. And we all face this.

And so, you only have just a few places to turn tonight, actually less than usual. But look over at Jeremiah, verse, or chapter, chapter 17.

It's going to be just a verse out of this. Jeremiah 17. And this is something that the Lord says. He says, I, the Lord, search the heart and test the mind to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.

[14:39] So, God isn't just looking at your external, you know, just what you do on the outside, your outward behavior. He's looking, like, right through what's going on in your mind and what's going on in your heart.

And earlier in Jeremiah, chapter 11, it says, the Lord of hosts who judges righteously, who tests the heart and the mind.

So, this is what God's going to do. And it's a day that none of us can escape. And so, my responsibility, and those of you in here who are followers of Christ, is to do our best to help others to prepare for that day and also to examine ourselves and make sure that we're prepared for that day.

And you may think this might be a strange way to approach this passage in Philippians. Flip back to Philippians 3. We're going to jump in there. But the first question was, you know, what awaits us after death?

And the answer was the judgment of God, the righteous judgment of God. The second question is, what is the wrong way to prepare for that day?

[15:56] What is the wrong way to prepare for that day? And look back in chapter 3. And we'll look at verse 2 there. Paul is giving a warning and he says, look out for the dogs.

Look out for the evildoers. Look out for those who mutilate the flesh. And then jump to verse 4 real fast. Though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also, if anyone else thinks he has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more.

Circumcised on the eighth day of the people 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 righteousness under the law, blameless.

And he's giving himself as an example of something not to put confidence in. And the answer to the question is, you know, well, the question, what is the wrong way to prepare for that day?

The answer is to place confidence in your own righteousness, your own goodness, produced in your flesh, to place confidence in that. So when Paul says, placing confidence in the flesh, you're just saying in your own, your own abilities, your own, your own, your own self-righteousness, like what you've done, how good you are, apart from what comes from Christ.

[17:26] So that's what he's implying. And because our own righteousness will just infinitely fall short of what God's going to require. He's going to require absolute, total perfection.

And none of us have that to offer. So, being the good apostle, pastor he is, he's like, look out, beware, beware of these kind of men.

And dogs, he uses that description there, dogs, he might sound like, either you're thinking like that's sweet or that's derogatory. It's derogatory.

He's using that kind of like a play on words. It's used in scripture as a term of reproach. And in ancient societies, and in particularly Jewish societies, dogs were not like your cute domesticated pets.

They were seen as like scavengers and dirty, flea-bitten, you know, tramps kind of thing. And they roamed the streets and carried like dangerous infections.

[18:30] And so they were just kind of saying, he's using that figuratively speaking about false teachers. They were coming around and saying things that were, they were perverting the gospel.

And particularly this group was a group of Jews and they were called the, the Judaizers that would try to, to add to the gospel. That's what the gospel was like.

Come by the grace of God and be saved. Come with, without money and by, come, you know, and be saved by Christ. And, and they will throw in there, plus obeying all the old Testament Jewish rituals and customs and laws.

They would, I'm a Gentile. I'm sure that most of you in here are probably Gentile. You're, you're, you're a non-Jew. And so they would tell you, if you wanted to become a follower of Christ, okay, well, they would tell the men in this room, you need to be circumcised.

And like say like a lot of like things, we would need to become Jewish before we became Christian. And that's, that was like in their mind. And this was a total perversion of the gospel.

[19:38] The gospel is, is Jesus. The gospel is not Jesus plus this, and that it's come to Jesus and be saved. And so he's using this as a term to, to say that those are the, the Jews that were seeking to be righteous outside of, of God's righteousness.

He was calling them dogs. And he calls them evil workers, evil doers. They're like all their, all their energies, all their labors were trying to, to point people to the law and not point them to Christ.

And to find a righteous in keeping the law of God. And so any attempt, and you got to just be aware of this, like even when you're sharing the gospel with somebody, make sure they understand that they violated the law of God, but also make sure they understand that they can't keep that law.

You don't wait for them to like get their lives together, get cleaned up and then come to Christ.

Cause that won't ever happen. They have to come to Christ to be saved and then to be cleaned up by Christ.

And so then he says, this idea of like being a mutilator of the flesh. He was, he's talking about like the external circumcision that the Jews would have.

[20 : 53] And remember that like circumcision, the old Testament was used as an outward sign that had like two different meanings.

One, it identified you as being part of the people of God. It was an outward sign that kind of like a, like a tattoo or a t-shirt kind of thing. Like it showed that you belong to the people of God. But circumcision itself is symbolic of something. It was expressing the need for God to do something else, which was to circumcise their heart and to change their heart. And that's, so it pointed to a greater fulfillment. It was a foreshadowing of what Christ would come and do. And so he's basically saying like, look, it doesn't matter if you got the outward sign or not. what matters is like what's going on in the inside. So, so he says these things like beware of these guys. But then it gets around to, let's see, verse, verse four there.

[21 : 59] He basically says, if anyone has confidence in the flesh, if anybody should have confidence in how awesome they are, it's me.

It's like what he says. If anybody should, that would be me. He's not, he's not taking confidence in that, but he's just going to make a point to them. He wanted them to know that based on his religious pedigree, he was far more advanced than any of those guys that were trying to attack him and trying to bring down the gospel.

And impeccable pedigree. And he wanted to outdo everybody like on being the religious, awesome, upright guy. And he did by far.

And in this text, it's as if he's saying, I had all these things and I missed it. Like I was, I was like a guy who was studying the signpost, but never went to the location.

He was like, I'm trying to think of an example. Like we don't really have like a lot of signs that tell you where this location is throughout Dhalonega.

[23 : 13] Let's just say we did. And we were coming here one Sunday morning and we saw a few of you just gathered around one of the signs, like a few miles out. And y'all were just kind of standing there.

And I'm like, what are you doing? And you said, well, we're, we've come to Christ family church. And like being, hopefully just say, Hey, uh, that's not, that's not where we gather.

That's a sign pointing to where we are. Like the party is like down the road, like follow me. Uh, so all these things, the law, the prophets, the rituals and sacrifices, all of that were pointing to something. And Paul is saying, I had all these things and I, and I missed the point of it. I wasn't, I didn't see them for what they were intended to do. And he was like weaving his own garment, if you want to call it that of self-righteousness.

He was putting together how awesome he was so that he could stand before God one day. And that would have fallen, fallen short. He was aware of the scripture and Isaiah 64.

[24 : 17] We're going to revisit this next week. Uh, it says that all of our righteous deeds are as filthy rags. And no English translation has been daring enough to actually say what that means.

I'm not going to tell you what it means either, but if you're interested, go look it up. It's a pretty, uh, um, vivid picture of what our righteous deeds are apart from Christ and how God views those. But he's not pleased. So he's saying, if any of you guys think you were religious and had it all together, I'm telling you that I had you outdone by far.

And then he, he gets into, we're going to walk through these things. And I want you to think about your own life as we walk through some of these things.

But, um, sorry, I have some congestion. So I'm sorry if my voice is scratchy tonight, but we're going to look at five things.

[25 : 17] This is all underneath that second question. Five things that do not make us right before God. Okay. Five things that don't make us right before God. First of all, not by ritual, not by ritual.

You see how it says there in Philippians, say he was circumcised on the eighth day. And that was the prescribed day for a Jewish boy to be circumcised under the Levitical law.

So, so from the womb, Paul went through all the right stuff. Like he went through all the proper rites and rituals that were required. At that time. And he followed, followed all of that from the beginning. Excuse me. Somebody get me, uh, Zach, can you give me some water or kitchen? One of you guys. I appreciate it. Um, so, um, so, um, um, so, in the same way, we can't be made right with God according to any kind of ceremony or ritual that we have done or are doing.

Understand that like no infant baptism, no adult baptism, um, whether you're Methodist, Presbyterian Baptist, and however you view baptism, which is an ordinance the church has, it's not

what makes us right with God.

[26 : 35] When Paul says on the eighth day, it's kind of funny in Greek. It means I was an eighth dayer. I was an eighth dayer. Kind of. I, I obeyed the ritual. I obeyed the law and not taking the Lord's supper, attending church services.

None of these things can give us right standing with God. So, so not by ritual. Um, thanks man. I appreciate it. No, I'm good.

Appreciate it. And then secondly, it's not by race. And he says three things kind of about that. You could look at them individually, but excuse me guys.

Um, he says of the nation of Israel. Okay. So the nation of Israel, he was a direct racial descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

He was in that, the perfect line, born into the very people that God chose in the old Testament to manifest his law to, and to, and to give his statutes to, and who he preserved and protected and delivered and spoke to.

[27 : 45] He was of, of that people. Uh, so, so Jews, you know, relied heavily on their heritage to, uh, to make them right with God. And then he goes on even further.

He says of the tribe of Benjamin. Um, Benjamin was the second son of, of Rachel, Joseph's younger brother. and Rachel was the most loved wife of Jacob, who became known as Israel.

That's why it's called the sons of Israel. Um, Benjamin was one of the most prominent, most influential tribes, noble tribes. Those of you have heard of, of Mordecai and Esther.

They were from the tribe of Benjamin. They were the tribe that remained true to David during the civil war for the Davidic dynasty. So they were a pretty happening tribe of all the tribes for sure.

And so it's been interesting is that, did you know that like the Jews at this time in Jesus day, most of them did not know which tribe they came from. And it was, uh, so many, you know, hundreds and hundreds of years of, of intermarrying and the exiles, the Babylonian exile and coming back.

[28 : 57] Most of them didn't know what tribe they came from, but Paul was able to say with confidence, like my people, my family, like we remained like true to the tribe of Benjamin the whole time.

So we know you probably don't know. I do. It's like what he's, what he's trying to say. So then he goes on. He says a Hebrew of Hebrews. This is all under, not by race.

So he was born to Hebrew speaking parents. They taught him, they taught him all the, the, the social customs and, and, and traditions of the people. So a rich heritage, he's got, he's from like the people that you want to be by.

And so likewise, most of us in here are probably be aware of this, but just because you're born into a certain family or a certain people group, a race does not make you right with God.

It's living in America, even living in the Bible belt doesn't make you right with God. People just have this impression. There's just so many Christians around here. And because it's the Bible belt and it doesn't matter what kind of rank we have in society or in the church, you can be a, you can be a pastor or whatever.

[30 : 12] It doesn't matter. So it's not by, not by race. It has no value before God, not by tradition. And thirdly, not by religion. You look back in Philippians, he says, as to the law, I was a Pharisee.

And they were the most orthodox of all the religious sects. Pharisee, the word, the word itself means separated ones.

That's like what it means, separated ones. And they were very, very influential and lived extremely disciplined lives, strict lifestyles.

They were teachers of the law. They would have had the entire Old Testament memorized. They would have had it right here. And they would have taught it and declared it to people. And they had the best upright behavior.

They were the guys who didn't do anything kind of out of line. And Paul actually told King Agrippa in Acts 26, he says, I lived in this group.

[31 : 14] And he says, they were the strictest party of our religion. And I lived with them as a Pharisee. That's like what he said. Like we were, so I was top of the ladder. You know, I wasn't, I wasn't t-ball or peewee.

Baseball, I was, I was pro, you know, like I was, I was the best in the religious system. So, likewise, even the most talented, popular Christian pastor, teacher, author, evangelist, theological scholar, writer, whatever, it doesn't matter.

Like it doesn't, it's not going to square you away with God one day. He's not, he's not impressed by how much religion you have and what you've done. Reciting prayers, going on mission trips, going and preaching the gospel to many, many people.

It's not going to make one difference to God whatsoever. He's not going to be pleased. You still not, your name will not be in the book of life. Like that's, that's what's going to matter. He's going to judge you according to the evil you've done.

And, and then here's a big one. A shocker. This is going to be a question that we're going to talk about in a minute. But fourthly, not by sincerity, not by sincerity.

[32 : 28] That doesn't make it right with God. He says, as to zeal, a persecutor of the church. So he makes a point to say, of these Judaizers who want to destroy the church, I had far more zeal to annihilate the church than any of them.

Like I had far greater zeal to destroy the church. Paul persecuted them. He killed them. He threw many of them in prison. And that was his goal before he was a, before he was a Christian.

So he wasn't just, you know, you know, aggravated by Christians. He was out to kill them and destroy them. And he had more zeal than any of those guys who were like going out to, to down, you know, to slam the gospel.

And this is what's scary. God really doesn't care about good intentions and, and right motives. He, he doesn't.

just because someone is genuine about something and believe something, you know, very zealously does not make it right. That's kind of the bottom line. You can be zealous about the wrong things.

[33 : 32] I know that. I'm being zealous about a lot of ridiculous, stupid things in my life that, that really don't matter. I was wrong. So, so he was saying, I was zealous to destroy Christ.

What an idiot I was, you know, so he was zealous about those things. So even zeal doesn't make something right. So when you turn on the TV or the radio and you hear, I know some guys will hear a pastor on the radio or the TV and thought they are so captivating.

You know, like, he's just so passionate. Like, he just must be right. And I'm like, no, no, like, listen to what he's saying. Don't just follow the guy's passion. So passion doesn't make you right.

The guy's sincerity doesn't. In Galatians 1, 13, this is Paul writing. This is something he says, for you heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it.

And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age. So extremely zealous was I for the, for the traditions of my fathers. So he, he reflects back on that.

[34 : 38] It's like that, that was me before I knew Christ, before Christ came to save me. So, so good intentions don't make a, it's right before God.

here's, here's a verse you can write down. I'll read it to you, but like, it's, it's a sobering verse. This is Proverbs 19, verse two. It says, desire, or zeal, desire without knowledge is not good.

And whoever makes haste with his feet misses his way. It's like what it says. So, just because we're passionate, you know, rah, rah about God, doesn't make us right.

We have to have like a right understanding about who God is. And then be passionate about that. God desires to be worshiped in spirit and truth. John four. So we can't worship God for like a false idea of who he is.

He cares about how he's viewed and how he's seen. And so, uh, there's a lot more to say about that. But fifthly, and lastly here, um, not by legalistic righteousness.

[35 : 42] And in Philippians, as to the righteousness, which is in the law, I was found blameless. So no one can look at Paul's lifestyle and, and, and say, and accuse him of anything like, like it looked bad.

He had it just all together on the outside. He was, uh, no loose living whatsoever. And so, in the same way, our own morality and our own, uh, if we, do you know anybody that's just kind of like driven by keeping the rules?

I mean, you might be that way. Just like, which isn't a bad thing. You should keep the rules. I'm just saying that, like they're almost driven by that. I've got to keep the rules. And I can't do anything bad. And, and to some degree, I think that's going to make you right with God, depending on how well you keep the rules. You don't drink, cuss or chew or party or sleep around. And so you think that you're, you're right with God because you don't do those things.

And still God's, your righteousness is not going to be based on that. So all, those are all wrong ways to prepare for this day of judgment, to like rely on those things.

[36 : 50] Paul's renouncing those things. He's saying, that's who I was. Now that is where I was placing my hope, but no longer. These are the things that he says, I count as loss a little later in this passage.

I, I, I forget those things. Like I, I push those things aside and they were good things, right? They weren't bad things. You just named, but he was just saying, I have my hope to be, to be saved by those things.

And that's not right. So, so the last question, and then we'll break out in a group such as this one is, what is the right way to prepare for that day, the day of judgment?

And that's, that's in the whole rest of the passage. And that's what we're going to spend next week talking about the whole time. But briefly, look at verse three. For we are the true circumcision who worship by the spirit of God and the glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh.

So what's the right way to prepare for that day? To put no confidence in the flesh, no confidence in your own righteousness whatsoever. Nothing you've done.

[37 : 59] And, and to look totally to Christ to provide like that righteousness for you and that you can't provide for yourself. So he calls the church, the true circumcision, right?

Because the true circumcision are those that don't just have an outward sign that they belong to God, but they actually have the heart that's been circumcised. The heart has been changed by God and regenerated by God.

And so that's what it, what it symbolizes. Deuteronomy 30 verse six, you could write that down.

That's, that speaks of how God is saying one day, I will circumcise your heart and I'll, I'll enable you to love me because right now, you know, apart from my own work, you can't love me.

You, you love sin and you despise me. And so in the new Testament, whenever a circumcision is mentioned to some degree, it's synonymous with being born again, it's synonymous with the new, the new birth.

Colossians two, nine through 13 kind of talks about that. So the true people of God actually possess the new heart. And not just an outward sign that they belong to God.

[39 : 05] So, so I could go to the coolest tattoo parlor and just write like the whole gospel of John on my arm in Greek. And it means nothing. It doesn't mean that like I belong to Christ at all.

God, God examines the heart. And in Galatians, he actually says, this is something he says towards the end of the book of Galatians. It's not by a circumcision or not, or non circumcision, but a new creation that matters.

That's like what he says. Like, it's not that you have a sign, an outward sign or, or don't have an outward sign. You have a tattoo or you don't have the tattoo. He's like, but what matters is that you're a new creation changed by the Holy Spirit and given a new heart by the Holy Spirit.

And so where it says that they worship in the spirit of God and the glory of Jesus Christ, it means that they're, they're the true worshipers. They're the ones that worship God for who he actually is and, and have the right zeal and they worship by the Holy Spirit.

That's what happens. And I mean, huge stressing there. They, it says that we don't put confidence in the flesh. Like we, we despair of who we are. We have nothing to offer.

[40 : 16] We are, our righteousness, these are filthy rags. So we look to Christ to save us and then turn here and then we're going to read this and then go into groups. But Titus three, flip over to the Titus three.

And this is going to sum up this last question. Titus three, verse four. So, this will sum up that.

It says, but when the goodness and loving kindness of God, our savior appeared, he saved us. Key word there. Saved from what?

Saved from the wrath of God. Saved from judgment. He saved us. Not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy.

By the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit. There's the new birth. That's the idea of the Holy Spirit. Coming in and changing and making you a new creation. Circumcising your heart.

[41 : 26] That's what that's a picture of. Verse six. Whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ, our savior. So that being justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

And that word justified, that's what we're going to really talk about even more next week. But in a courtroom to be justified is being, is the opposite of being condemned. You know, it means like you're declared to be innocent.

You can go, you're set free because you're innocent. I'm going to allow you to go. And it says we're justified by the, by his grace. So that we'll have hope of eternal life.

And so this is the first part of that is that it doesn't matter. Um, I, I grew up in a Christian home. My parents were Christians.

My grandparents are Christians and my great grandparents are Christians. And a rich heritage of people that all love the Lord and poured their lives out to, to see the kingdom advance.

[42 : 30] I was born in the South, in the Bible belt. Um, been the church, been the church my whole life. And I have no confidence in that now.

I usually think, probably when I was a kid, I guess I'm more right. Cause I'm kind of in this camp and God looks at every individual and he tests their hearts and he tests their minds. And he sees where they stand.

And so if you're here tonight and you don't have, if you have been putting confidence in, and how good you've been and how many good deeds you've done, just throw it all away and just come and just humble yourself.

Uh, at the foot of the cross and, and let Christ be all that you need. And, uh, let us take hope in that. Um, that's what we're going to talk about next week.

And, uh, this little book is a, is a picture of justification. It's, uh, it's out of an old Testament story called, I was Zachariah and, and Joshua, the high priest who had these filthy garments that he, he stood before God.

[43 : 33] And, uh, cool, cool way to learn about that. So we're going to look at that next week. And then the rest of the verses, they're up to verse 11, where he says, I count all that loss in comparison to knowing Christ and, and having Christ as my righteousness.

So we're going to respond and seeing, and then we're going to bust out into the groups. Um, so let me just pray for us and, and Alex and reach. I can come up.

Father, we, we look to you. Lord, I, I know I can, things even come to my mind now, things I've done, things I've, I've said in public and in private behind closed doors that have been utter rebellion against you.

Things that have dishonored you, have brought, have brought great harm to me and to others. And God, uh, I know there's nothing I can do to, to make myself right with you.

And, and so, Lord, I, I pray that, that anyone here that feels that way, they would, um, despair of themselves and they would find complete hope and complete trust in the work of Christ to make them right before you.

[44 : 52] And, and to prepare for that, that day of judgment, that our names will be found in the book of life and that we'll, we'll have eternal life and that we'll dwell in your presence and, and be with you, um, for all eternity, um, all from a gift of grace is found in Christ.

So, so Lord, I pray that would be just the meditation of our hearts this evening. And, and even as we go to bed, that we can find ourselves completely in Christ. It's in his name we pray.

Amen.