

Philippians 3:1-16  
The Cost of Christianity . . .  
October 21, 2007  
Pastor Joe Whalen

The early church was a lot like ours . . . different genders . . .  
different skin colors . . . different background . . .

With one vital difference . . . most of the first converts to  
Christianity were Jewish . . .

In the Jewish society, dogs were not seen as pets . . . they were  
seen as vermin . . . and carriers of disease . . . as dangerous  
scavengers . . .

Please open your Bible to Philippians chapter 2 . . . that's page  
\_\_\_\_ if you are using a pew Bible . . .

Here in Philippians . . . Paul just got done telling them to follow  
the Christianity of Timothy and Epaphroditus . . .

#### READ

1. Calling someone a dog in that day, in Jewish society, was a gross insult . . .
  - a. And that is exactly what Paul says about these people . .
  - b. And warns the church to be on guard for these dogs . . . he is not talking about pit bulls or Doberman pinchers . . . he is talking about people . . .
  - c. So what were those people teaching that was so bad?
  - d. They were teaching that you & I have to do something to make Jesus love us and God forgive us . . .

- e. They were teaching that you could have Jesus and your religion . . .
- f. As you know, Jesus is Jewish . . . He is the Jewish Messiah . . . He said He came to fulfill the Jewish Law . . .
- g. Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. – Mat 5:17-18
- h. Jesus was condemned to death in the Jewish city of Jerusalem . .
- i. He was crucified by and buried in a Jewish tomb . . .
- j. When He arose from the dead, He only appeared to Jewish people . . . read your New Testament and find even one place where a gentile saw Him after His resurrection . . .
- k. Not only that, but His 12 apostles were all Jewish . . .
- l. All the early converts to faith in Him were Jewish . . .
- m. And so, many people thought that, in order to trust Jesus Christ as Savior . . .
- n. Many believers thought that . . .
- o. You had to first be converted to Judaism . . .
- p. And then God saved Paul and had him go to Gentiles . . . where were getting saved . . .
- q. And the early church had to deal with the question . . . what about these Gentiles . . . do they need to become Jewish?
- r. And it became such an issue, that the early church met together collectively, as Luke tells us in Acts 15, and after hearing how God had been saving Gentiles . . . James led the church to make the decision . .

- i. *Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world. Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God – Act 15:14-19*
- ii. *And they wrote letters by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia: Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment – Act 15:23-24*
- s. The early church leaders, the apostles, met, prayed, heard testimony, and decided by the Holy Spirit that if God wanted to save Gentiles, and He did, then those Gentiles did not have to convert to Judiasm . . .
- t. If God could save Gentile like Abraham . . . Then He had no problem saving any other Gentiles . . .
- u. And they even say, that those who were teaching that were troubling and subverting, making the

- v. Christians doubt if Jesus was all they needed . . . That's the point . . . just what else beside Jesus do you need to be forgiven and made right before God's eyes?
- w. So these believers in Philippi had been taught by Paul that Jesus was the Savior of all humans . . .
- x. Jesus is the savior of sinners . . . and not just Jewish sinners . . . but sinners just like us . . .
- y. *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief – 1Ti 1:15*
- z. That no matter who you are . . . no matter your background . . . no matter what skin color your parents are . . . no matter what language you speak . . . no matter your social level . . . no matter your educational level . . . no matter your gender . . . no matter your national identity . . . no matter your IQ . . . or your DNA makeup . . .
- aa. No matter your religious background . . .
- bb. If you want to trust Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, if you want to repent of your sins and receive the forgiveness only Jesus can give you . . .
- cc. All you have to do is believe on Him . . . and call upon His name . . .
- dd. *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. – Joh 3:16*
- ee. *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved . . .*
- ff. In Romans chapters 1-3 Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, details for us how everyone is condemned before God as sinners . . .
  - i. The pagan who worships false gods?  
Condemned

- ii. The nice person doesn't worship false gods . . . but doesn't worship the true God?  
Condemned
- iii. The religious person who goes to church . . . and is morally good? What about him? What about her? *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:* Rom 3:10
- iv. Well, what about a Jewish man or woman . . .
  - (1) I mean, they worship the God of the bible . . .
  - (2) and maybe they don't believe Jesus is the Messiah . . .
  - (3) but they are keeping the OT Law the best they can . . . and praying . . . and obeying the Law?
  - (4) what about that person?
  - (5) Condemned by almighty God for unbelief about the person and work of His Own Dear Son, the Lord Jesus Christ . . .
  - (6) *There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one* – Rom 3:11-12
  - (7) *Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.* Rom 3:20
  - (8) *For all (Jews, Gentile, Morally good . . . morally wicked, everyone . . . for all) have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;* Rom 3:23

- v. My dear friend . . . there is nothing you can do to earn heaven . . .
- vi. And that's true whether you are Jewish . . . or Catholic . . . or Baptist . . . or Mormon . . .
- vii. And if you want to trust Jesus . . . you can . . . and He is all you need . . .
- viii. Any other gospel is to be damned to hell . . .
- ix. *But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed* – Gal 1:8
- x. The truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is that very important . . . if anyone tries to twist it . . . to make it Jesus plus your good works . . .
- xi. *As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed* – Gal 1:9
- xii. And that is exactly what God promises to those who teach and preach false Gospels . . .
- xiii. *And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power* — 2Th 1:7-9
- gg. So Paul had been to Philippi . . . and had told Gentiles that they could come to Christ the very same way he did . . . by faith . . .
- hh. Receiving the free gift of eternal life by believing

- on Jesus . . .
- ii. And then after he left, some of these dogs . . . these false teachers . . .
- jj. Came into the church at Philippi and told the new believers that they had to be circumcised in order to really be saved . . . they had to do something to be REALLY forgiven . . .
- kk. And Paul minces no words about this false teaching . . .
- ll. These false teachers mistook what the OT sacrificial system and the Law of Moses were about in the first place . . .
- mm. Law was all about in the first place . .
- nn. They thought the Law made them holy . . . they thought that their religious deeds made them holy . . .
- oo. When in reality, all the Law really does is prove that you are a sinner . . .
- pp. Therefore *by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: **for by the law is the knowledge of sin*** – Rom 3:20
- qq. The OT sacrificial system of animals being sacrificed and blood being sprinkled . . . those where not means of holiness . . .
- rr. They were signs that pointed to the one and only sacrifice . . . the Lamb of God . . . who would die . . . who would shed His blood for the ransom of many . . .
- ss. The Temple was the supreme meeting place between God and humans . . . was just brick . . . and wood . . . the most important thing the Temple did was it pointed to the Messiah . . . to Jesus, who claimed to be the Temple himself . . . the one and only meeting place between God and humanity . . .
  - i. *Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy*

- this temple, and in three days I will raise it up* – Joh 2:19
- ii. *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus* – 1Tim . . .
- tt. The priesthood of the Old Testament looks forward to the one, supreme High Priest – Hebrews 5 and 7 . . .
- uu. The sacrifices ultimately anticipate the One who would shed His own blood, not the blood of bulls and goats that can never take away sin . . .
- vv. The Passover not only looked back to the blessed night when the angel of death passed over the homes of those who put the blood of the Passover Lamb on two doorposts and on the lintel . .
- ww. But it also looked forwards to Christ our Passover Lamb who was sacrificed for us on that cross outside of Jerusalem . . .
- xx. For many conservative Jews in Paul’s day, the sign of entrance into the covenant was circumcision . . .
- yy. And that is why it was such a crucial issue for them . . .
- zz. If to received the Jewish Jesus as Your Jewish Messiah . .
- aaa. Then gentiles would have to become Jewish first . . .
- bbb. They would have to be circumcised before they could become Christians, then . . .
- ccc. To put it another way, when Jews told Gentile Christians that they had to be circumcised before they could be real and proper Christians . . .
- ddd. They were saying, in effect, that Gentiles could not really enjoy the blessings of the Gospel . . .
- eee. The blessings of Jesus Christ . . . until they had undergone the rite of circumcision and solemnly pledged themselves to live under the ancient Jewish

- Law . . .
- fff. The couldn't be really truly born again members of God's Kingdom and God's family . . . until they had a good dose of religion to go with their faith . . .
  - ggg. Paul says those who teach this are nothing but dogs, evil doers, and mulilators . . .
  - hhh. Because they are minimizing the sacrifice of Jesus . . .
  - iii. Minimzing the power of Jesus to save us from our sins . . .
  - jjj. Minimizing the love of God who said Jesus died in our place and for our sake . . .
  - kkk. And making humans do something in order to merit Jesus and His mercy and grace . . .
- III. And that, my friend, is a false gospel . . .
2. And you can't say, "well, Paul was just jealous and frustrated b/c he was not Jewish . . . and didn't have those men's credentials . . . and their privileges . . .
  3. Far from it: Paul himself, if he wanted to, could certainly boast about the many grounds of religious confidence that he himself enjoyed . . .
  4. READ v. 4 . . .
  5. He has been circumcised on the 8<sup>th</sup> day, as the Law of Moses prescribed . . .
  6. He was a circumcised full-blooded Jew . . . well w/in the covenant people . . .
  7. Not only that, but he sprang from the tribe of Benjamin . . . one of only 2 tribes that did not rebel against the Davidic dynasty. . .
  8. Culturally, he was a Hebrew of Hebrews . . .", meaning that he spoke the language, knew the culture . . . was steeped in the culture . . .
  9. His racial . . . religious . . . and educational heritage were all Jewish . . .
  10. He was brought up in the Pharisee sect . . . strict . . .

- disciplined . . . informed . . . widely respected . . .
11. And not only that, but he understood Judaism so well, that when the follower of Jesus began to say that Jesus had risen from the dead . . .
  12. Paul, or Saul as he was then known, began to persecute the church . . . *and As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison – Act 8:3*
  13. In fact, according to the inspired record you hold in your hands, according to the religious demands and rituals of the day . . . Paul was blameless . . .
  14. REREAD v. 6 . . .
  15. And he does not mean that he was sinless . . . no . . .
  16. Far from it . . . the Law provided only temporary sacrifices which did not take away sin . . .
  17. No, the Law of Moses did not wipe sin away . . . it only provided a temporary covering for sin . . .
  18. And each year, on the Day of Atonement, the high priest, who sprinkled the blood of animals in the Most Holy Place, to atone for both his sins and for the sins of the people . . .
  19. The High priest had to make those sacrifices over and over and over again . . . b/c the Law provided no way for us to be made holy once and for all . . .
  20. Paul is saying that, before he got saved, he was carefully following the entire pattern of religious life . . . he was completely and utterly doing everything he was told to do . . .
  21. READ V. 7 . . .
    - a. Everything that had been in his credit side . . . has now been transferred to his debit column . . .
    - b. Christ alone stands in the credit side . . .
    - c. Christ and Christ alone his Paul's only hope . . . his only righteousness . . . his only sacrifice . . .
  22. READ v. 8 . . .
  23. He counts everything else a loss . . .

- a. And lose them he did . . .
  - b. Paul was written off by his former friends and intellectual peers . . .
  - c. He lost the security of a home . . .
  - d. Becoming a constant traveler . . .
  - e. He tells us that he has suffered . . .
    - i. in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; *In* journeyings often, *in* perils of waters, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils by *mine own* countrymen, *in* perils by the heathen, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not? – 2Co 11:23-29
  - f. And he is not complaining . . . this is not pity party . . .
  - g. This is the truth of the situation . . .
  - h. He had come to Christ . . .
  - i. And for the sake of the Gospel . . . he had lost his friends . . . his religion . . . his culture . . .
24. Paul rationally thinks about all the things taken away from him for the cause of Jesus Christ . . . and the list is short . . .
25. It is simply everything . . . the only thing the Gospel cost Paul was his life . . .
26. And he says, “Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith – Php 3:8-9
27. Paul had come to the place where he understood that following Jesus meant turning his back on his culture . . . on his religion . . . on his family . . . on his desires . . . on his goals . . . On EVERYTHING HE EVER KNEW OR HOPED FOR . . .
28. And my dear friends . . . please listen to what Paul is telling us . . .
29. On one side is everything the world has to offer . . .
  - a. Power . . .
  - b. Prestige . . .
  - c. Money . . .
  - d. Religion that is powerless . . . yet comfortable . . .
  - e. Family . . .
  - f. Friends . . .
  - g. Being comfortable . . .
30. On the other side is Jesus Christ and the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith . . . and Him alone . . .
31. And Paul says, “Man, that’s a no-brainer . . .there is no question . . .
32. Jesus and the righteousness from God that Jesus secures are incomparably better than anything the world might offer . . .”
33. Righteousness means being completely right in God’s eyes . . .
34. Notice what Paul says about it here . . .
  - a. It comes from God . . . it is God’s gift, secured b/c God sent His son to die for us sinners . . .
  - b. It is “by faith” which means it is secured not by

- works, but through faith in Christ . . .
- i. The means of being right in God's eyes is received BY faith . .
  - ii. And the object of that faith is Jesus Christ . .
- c. This righteousness from God is set over against whatever Paul could achieve on his own by observing the Law and trying to live it . . .
35. My dear friends, Jesus Christ is the ultimate fulfillment of the Law . . .
  36. And His obedience to God . . . His sacrifice on the cross . . . is the one and only sacrifice for sin . . .
  37. It's is all you need . . . it is all there is . . .
  38. And you doing your part . . . and God doing His part . . . is blaspheme . . .
  39. All your religious good works . . .
  40. All your cultural accolades . .
  41. All your career advancements . . .
  42. All your material wealth and goods . . .
  43. All your educational degrees . . .
  44. All your good works . . .
  45. Are all rubbish compared to Jesus Christ and what is to be found in Him . . .
  46. The righteousness that comes from God and is by faith is found in the Person of Jesus Christ . .
  47. And to understand that, means that everything else you ever hope to be . . . everything you have earned up to this point in life . . .
  48. Are now just trash . . . are now dung . . . are now in your eyes out front with the rest of the trash . . .
  49. B/c they are absolutely worthless to make you right in God's sight . . . they are absolutely powerless . . .
  50. And if following Jesus costs . . . well, it should . . .
  51. It has cost literally untold millions down the corridors of history . . . who understood that receivein the Gospel is free

- . . .
52. But it does cost . . .
  53. PAUSE . . .
  54. My friend, you must understand that justification from your sin is God's work . . . secured by Christ's death and appropriated by faith . .
  55. If you are a believer in Jesus Christ and His finished work, God looks at you through the death of His son . . . and He declares you just . . . He declares you sinless . . .
  56. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son – 1Jn 5:11
  57. *There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh – Rom 8:1-3
  58. Listen, my dear friend, the Bible, the most important thing you could ever do is know God . . .
  59. And all of creation is crying out that we are on the path to judgment . . .
  60. You know it as well as I . . .
  61. And in that final day . . . when you stand before Him at last . . .
  62. The most important thing will not be your house . . . or your education . . . or your financial portfolio . . . or your friends . . . or your religion . . . or your good works . . . Or how much your friends liked you . . .
  63. The most important matter is to be declared righteous by the God of the Universe . . .
  64. It is more important than your friends . . . it's more important than your family . . . it is more important than your job . . . it is more important than anything everything the world can possible give you . . .

65. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment . . . Heb 9:27
66. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Mar 8:36
67. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, *and* be merry. But God said unto him, *Thou* fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? Luke 12:19-20
68. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? – Mat 16:26

the most important thing in this life is to know that you are ready for the next . . .

And since forgiveness from God and entrance into heaven depends absolutely on gaining Christ and being found in Him, Paul wants it above all things . . .

EVERYTHING else is just rubbish . . .

And because it is so precious . . . and because it is the most important thing . . . everything else is just trash . . .

So, what does Christianity cost? Simply, it only costs everything . . .

It will cost you your religion . . .

It will cost you your friends . . .

It will cost you your family . . .

Not so you could get forgiveness . . .

It really costs nothing (dung) important . . .

So, my dear friend . . . what did the Gospel cost you last week?

What price have you paid to follow this crucified and risen King?

Or were you embarrassed to speak his name?