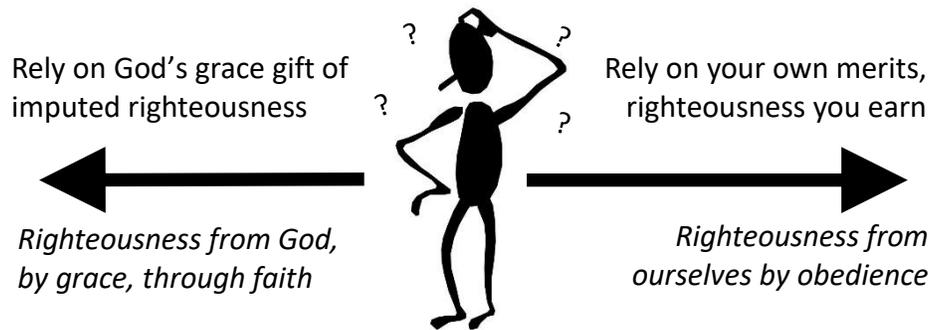


Philippians 3.1-3: The Gift that causes rejoicing! Church of the Open Bible / 12.18.16

Philippians 3.9 NASB: [may I] be found in him [Christ], not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith...



Which one of these options seems more trustworthy? Which will get you to Heaven? [See Romans 3.20-24.]

Philippians 3.1 NET: Finally, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord! To write this again is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you.

Even when we are suffering, even though God asks us to sacrifice, we can and should _____!

Paul was not writing something new, he was explaining again the gospel truths to _____ them from deception.

Philippians 3.2 NET: Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of those who mutilate the flesh!

There was a cult in Philippi, Jews who believed in Jesus as the Messiah, but had a false _____: they believed they could earn righteousness through obedience. These were the antagonists Paul spoke against.

Though the church was not to be intimidated [1.27-28], they should _____ of these antagonists.

The third insulting name is ironic, because Jews were called the "_____" since they circumcised all boys under the covenants God made with Abraham and Moses. Paul called the Jews in the cult the "mutilation," which was a play on words in the Greek language, rhyming and sharing a root with the word for circumcision.

The apostles were _____, but they said Gentile believers did not need to be circumcised or adhere to the Mosaic Law to be Christians. The antagonists rejected this, encouraging the Philippians to follow all the Mosaic Law, including circumcision, in order to be righteous before God.

To Paul, those who rejected the gospel, even if they said they followed _____, were no better than the pagan flesh mutilators who were condemned in the Old Testament Jewish scriptures.

Though the antagonists thought they were workers of _____, because they tried to earn righteousness through obedience, Paul said they were evil workers, the second ironic and insulting name.

The first ironic and insulting thing Paul called the antagonists was _____! In ancient Israel, Jews despised dogs for getting into unclean [unholy] things. As an insult, they would refer to pagan Gentiles as

dogs. Paul ironically calls these Jews dogs because he thinks they are into unclean things in that they try to earn their own righteousness instead of relying on God's grace through Christ.

In summary, the antagonists say you earn righteousness by what you _____; we would say that was bottom line thinking, relying on your own flesh.

Paul knows God's top line revelation; he says you have _____ righteousness without Christ, no matter what you do! and when you are saved in Christ, God considers you as righteous as Christ, because God accounts [imputes] Christ's righteousness to you!

Philippians 3.3 NET: *For we are the circumcision, the ones who worship by the Spirit of God, exult in Christ Jesus, and do not rely on human credentials...*

When Paul says, "we are the circumcision," here, he is saying, we are the true people of _____. Paul was Jewish, most of his readers were Gentiles, but Jews and Gentiles who accept the gospel of Jesus Christ in faith are now one group in Christ, called Christians. Christians – both Jewish and Gentile – are truly God's "circumcised," his chosen people in the New Covenant.

The verb used here for _____ was used in the Greek version of the Jewish scriptures to describe Israel's service to God as his covenant people before the Messiah came. This worship is now given by Christians, those who believe in Jesus as the Messiah-savior. We have the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit; we are Spirit guided, empowered by him, not just following rote rules.

Christians exult or boast in Christ instead of _____, because we know we are saved by his grace and his work in the crucifixion and resurrection. In contrast to the antagonists who are trying to achieve righteousness by relying on their own efforts, we rely on Christ's work for us, and do not trust in our own abilities or accomplishments.

Christians put no confidence in the _____. We do not trust in our own merits, in our birthright, in our privileges, or in our fleshly works, not even in physical circumcision, to help us attain righteousness before God or to contribute to our salvation. Instead we rely entirely on God's gift of grace through faith in Christ.

Conclusions

Paul knew that he could never be _____ enough to earn salvation or our way to Heaven.

When we put our faith in Jesus as our savior, however, God accounts us to be as _____ as Jesus, because he accounts [imputes] to us the righteousness of Christ! This is a gift of grace forever.

We can _____ despite our struggles and failures, because we know we have this gift of imputed righteousness which leads to salvation!

To rejoice is a _____, not an emotion. We can choose to be thankful and excited about the good in life, rather than despairing over our struggles, because we know that ultimately God will deliver us out of the struggle, into Heaven. Even if we lose everything in life, including our self-respect, we can cling to God's unconditional love and unwavering promise of grace, because we already have true faith in Christ which indicates God has given us imputed righteousness [justified us = declared us to be righteous in his sight!] and we can never lose that. And that can be enough, if we let it be! We can choose to rejoice! If we focus on rejoicing in God and his provision, that will safeguard us against what could rob us of our joy or turn us away from God. We need this safeguard given the hardships and antagonists we face in our lives.