

A Main Point: Faith in what Jesus has done. Knowing Jesus is our effort and work.

Overview

1-V1 The constitution of our nation seeks to guarantee “the pursuit of happiness” for all citizens. The test of our lifestyle is—is it making me happy? Do I have joy? Our experience as Christians is that satisfying and lasting joy comes from being in the presence of God. Paul says, “Whatever happens, dear brothers and sisters, may the Lord give you _____.”

2-V2-3 Watch out for those barking _____ trying to convince people that life with God is about what we do and how we look when the real worship of God is in the _____, in the heart in the same way we love our spouses, children and friends. The big issue then was _____ - a human _____, not the work of God, to make a person good.

3-V4-6 Paul had no joy in his religion until Jesus came into his life. Before Christ he had all the religious credentials and achievements. He was _____ when he was 8 days old. He was born into a _____ Jewish family. He was a member of the tribe of _____, who demand the strictest obedience to Jewish law. He was the most _____, the major persecutor of the church. He was never accused of any _____.

4-V 7-8 He once thought all these **religious** things were so _____ but now they are _____ in terms of creating joyful spiritual life compared to what Christ has _____. The things of the former religion are _____ compared to a **relationship** with Christ, having Him and becoming _____ with him.

5-V9-10 Most people are raised in a religion (many are Christian in name) but it is about performance—being good – being successful. They fail and are overwhelmed by guilt and helplessness and they are inclined to throw in the towel or get more frenzied and zealous. Paul had been there but now it is all by “His” grace. “I no longer count on _____ goodness or my _____ to obey God’s _____, but I _____ Christ to save me... by the same mighty power that raised Him from the _____.”

6-V9 There are some things that are too big for us. The pride of fallen humanity is in denial. They say, “If we can’t create the world—then no one did.” “Because genuine goodness and love are impossible, we will limit righteousness to externals.” Some go so far as to say in their heart, “I would rather rule in hell than serve in heaven,” and shake their fists at God to their dying breath. Paul says only God is big enough. “God’s way of making us right with himself depends on _____.” That is a humble acknowledgment that Jesus’ cross saves.

7-V 10-11 The work of the Christian is to trust in and obey the Master. Connection with Him is the human effort, to get to _____ Him, experience the mighty _____ that raised Him from the dead. To be willing to give up comfort and pleasure if need be and _____ with Christ, struggling against a stubborn sinful nature and hateful world, sharing his _____, so that somehow I can experience the _____ from the dead.”

8-V12-14 No person can ever fully achieve spiritual _____ but it’s the thing most _____ for, focusing all our _____, zealous in so far as it depends on us to- finally be all that Christ Jesus _____ me for and wants me to be.”

9-V12-14 **We forget our** _____ --- its failures – its old religion and worldly philosophies— the curses and lies spoken over our life – people influential in our life who do not yet know Jesus, so that we can _____ forward to what lies ahead and reach the _____ which has to do with being called up to _____ now and then.

10- V15-16 Paul says that being _____ means accepting these words as “the” truth of what this world and life on this planet is about.

11-V17-19 Paul exhorts the believers to _____ their life after his lifestyle and reject lifestyles of some Christian leaders whose god is their _____ for the things of this earth. They are actually enemies of the _____ which puts the natural man to death.

12-V20-21 “ But we are _____ of heaven where the Lord Jesus Christ _____. And we are eagerly awaiting for him to _____ as our Savior. He will take these weak _____ bodies of ours and change them into _____ bodies like his own.”

Word Study

- JOY • APPETITES • KNOW • CITIZEN • FOCUSING
- DOGS and MUTILATION • WATCH OUT

-1- 3:1 _____ “In the presence of the Lord there is joy forever more.” “No wonder my heart is filled with joy, and my mouth shouts his praises! My body rests in safety. For you will not leave my soul among the dead.. You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of you presence, and the pleasures of living with you forever.” Psalm 16:9-11
Joy is a fruit of the Holy Spirit who dwells within us. It’s something we let happen, not make happen. Galatians 5:23

-2- 3:2 _____ Paul is writing to counteract the teaching of Jewish Christian teachers (Judaizers) who maintained that keeping the whole Jewish law was necessary to salvation. Paul knows that if our salvation depends on our keeping the laws that we are all lost, for no one is able to keep all the laws--even external ones--let alone have a purity of heart in regard to all laws. Jesus said that if one lusts, he has committed adultery. That if one hates, he has committed murder. (Matthew 5:21-27) Paul is greatly upset with these teachings. These teachers followed in his footsteps and attempted to re-teach the new Christian churches--which were mostly Jews. In the beginning years Paul first went to the synagogues in every city and preached there first. • A council of the apostles (the 12 who walked with Jesus) and other Christian leaders met in Jerusalem to settle this issue. The decision was that it is not necessary to do the rituals of the Jewish law. (Acts 15)

-3- V2-3 _____ and _____ These words show how really angry Paul was. DOGS is a word applied to homosexuals. He is literally calling them Judaizers --perverts. MUTILATION. He is speaking of the hallowed practice of circumcision, which a Jewish male would point to with pride, not as some improvement of the body in God’s sight now but a mutilation of the body, in the same category as tattoos and body piercing.

-4- 3:10 _____ There is book knowledge and there is knowledge gained by knowing something or a person through an extended one-on-one relationship. This sort of knowledge impacts the person. It is the kind of knowledge that a long time married couple has. As the years have gone by, they have become very much alike--as their lives have melted together. “For my determined purpose is that I may know Him--that I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him, perceiving and recognizing and understanding (the wonders of His Person) more strongly and more clearly. And that I may in some way come to know the power out flowing from His resurrection (which it exerts over believers); and that I may share His suffering as to be continually transformed (in spirit into His likeness even) to His death (in the hope) that, if

possible, I may attain to the (spiritual and moral) resurrection (that lifts me) out from among the dead (even while in this body).” Amplified Bible

-5- 3:13 _____ or reaching out. The picture is of a runner running toward the goal, extending his hand to be the first one to pass his body over the goal and win.

-6- 3:19 _____ The Lord promises to those who seek his Kingdom first that they will have all the blessings of this earth. However, Christian people need to be watchful that they increase their focus and effort on experiencing God and helping people and do not backslide inch by inch back, so that in their heart they are living for their appetites.

-7-6:20 _____ There is an effort in coming to a point where a Christian person says, “I feel more apart of my church and world of God than I do for the world’s things.”

What does this Scripture say to you?
