

## Attributes of the True Christian Philippians 3:1-6

### All Stand and Read Scripture

#### **Philippians 3:1-6**

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

3 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things *again* is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you.

<sup>2</sup> Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the <sup>[a]</sup>false circumcision; <sup>3</sup> for we are the *true* <sup>[b]</sup>circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh, <sup>4</sup> although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: <sup>5</sup> circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; <sup>6</sup> as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.

### Prayer

#### INTRODUCTION:

Paul, once again is encouraging us to “Rejoice in the Lord”. He wants us to experience the “True Joy” that comes by trusting in God and being a bond-servant of His Son.

As Christians we are often confused in the difference between happiness and joy. They are **not** the same. Happiness is a worldly emotion that we seek. Joy is a sense of “well-being” that comes from serving the Lord despite our circumstances.

We tend to spend our lives trying to do things that we think will make us **HAPPY**. We pursue happiness.

The definition of **happiness** is “*A temporary feeling of pleasure based upon positive circumstances*”.

#### ILLUSTRATION:

- When we were in high school, many of us thought, when I get my driver’s license and a new car to drive, I will finally be happy.
- When I graduate with good grades, I will really be happy.
- When I find the right person to marry, I will be happy.

- When I find a good paying job, I will be happy.
- When I finally own my own home, I will be happy.

You get the point. We are always seeking for positive events in our life that can make us HAPPY. Note, though, that each time we achieve that “**happiness goal**” we are only happy for a very short time and we start looking for something else to make us happy again.

- I need a better car that gets better gas mileage, has air conditioning, and power seats.
- I need a master’s degree so I can get a better paying job.
- I need a much larger house in an affluent neighborhood with good schools.

But, what happens

- When things don’t go your way?
- When difficulties occur in your marriage?
- When you lose your job and you can no longer make house payments?

**You are no longer happy!**

**Happiness:** *“A temporary feeling of pleasure based upon positive circumstances”.*

Regardless of the type of happiness we seek the end result is **ALWAYS** the same. When the **positive results or feelings from those endeavors end**, happiness goes away.

## **2 Corinthians 5:17**

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

<sup>17</sup> Therefore if anyone is in Christ, <sup>a</sup>he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

We can continue to chase happiness or we can trust in God’s wisdom and become a “new creature” for Him. When we are willing to surrender ourselves to Christ, He then **infiltrates** us with something much better than happiness.

What does Christ offer us? Christ offers us **JOY!**

The definition of **joy** is *“A continuous trust in God that leads to a sense of well-being despite our circumstances”.*

Paul understood and experienced true joy in his life. That is why he was able to say,

## **Philippians 4:11-12**

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

<sup>11</sup> ...I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. <sup>12</sup> I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have **learned the secret** of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.

What was Paul's "secret" to be "content in whatever circumstance" he faced?

It was **JOY!** It was a sense of **well-being despite** his current circumstances.

Paul **wants all of us** to experience this same **JOY** and **REJOICE** in the Lord. He then tells us how to achieve true joy.

### **Philippians 4:9**

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

<sup>9</sup> The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

Paul exhorts us to surrender ourselves completely to Christ and practice the things that he taught us and did as an example for us. When we become a "new creature" in Christ and serve the Lord, we will have the "Peace of God" within us. This is the **sense of well-being** that I have been talking about. He then tells us what that peace does to us.

### **Philippians 4:7**

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

<sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which surpasses all <sup>l</sup>comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

This is the "Secret" to true joy.

### **Philippians 3:1**

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

<sup>3</sup> Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.

Would you like to experience true joy in your life and **truly** be able to "rejoice in the Lord"?

Listen carefully as Paul explains **how WE can attain** the attributes of "the true circumcision" and experience the "peace of God" in our lives which produces **JOY**.

## **BODY:**

### **Philippians 3:3**

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

for we are the *true* <sup>Ⓛ</sup>circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh,

Paul writes of **three attributes that embodies a true Christian** or **characterizes** one who is the “**true circumcision**”.

These are attributes that we should pursue in our walk with the Lord.

1. A True Christian Glorifies God and The Son. “*The true* <sup>Ⓛ</sup>*circumcision glories in Christ Jesus.*”
2. A True Christian Trusts God. “*The true* <sup>Ⓛ</sup>*circumcision puts no confidence in the flesh.*”
3. A True Christian Worships in the Spirit of God. “*The true* <sup>Ⓛ</sup>*circumcision worships in the Spirit of God.*”

#### **I. A True Christian Glorifies God.**

**Philippians 3:3:** “*The true* <sup>Ⓛ</sup>*circumcision glories in Christ Jesus.*”

### **Isaiah 55:8-9**

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

<sup>8</sup> “For My thoughts are not your thoughts,  
Nor are your ways My ways,” declares the LORD.  
<sup>9</sup> “For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth,  
So are My ways higher than your ways  
And My thoughts than your thoughts.

I wish I could describe to you the majesty and glory of God, but I cannot. I wish we were a people that would just stand in AWE at the greatness of God.

A FINITE person cannot describe an INFINITE God!

He is God and He is everything.

How do we “Glory” in God and Christ?

To glorify God, is like “bragging” about Him.

### **Acts 17:24-25**

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

<sup>24</sup> The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; <sup>25</sup> nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all *people* life and breath and all things;

There are not enough words to adequately define the height, depth, and breadth of God, but maybe I could make a feeble attempt with an illustration.

#### ILLUSTRATION:

When I was attending Ozark Bible College, I went with a friend to the National Christian Convention in Phoenix, AZ. After the convention, we drove to the Grand Canyon. I remember looking at it and thinking how large it was.

- It is 6000 feet deep (over a mile); 18 miles wide (about the distance from Greenwood to Independence; and 277 miles long (about the distance from Greenwood to East St. Louis). THAT IS A BIG HOLE!
- When you look at a map of Arizona and look in the Northeast corner, you see a little spot on the map. It is the Grand Canyon. The Grand Canyon is not so great anymore.
- Arizona is only one of 50 states.
- The United States is only 1/3 of the North American continent.
- The North American continent is only one of seven continents.
- The seven continents only make up 1/3 of the earth vs. 2/3 water. (This makes the Grand Canyon, in comparison, like a speck of dust on a map.)
- The earth is considered a small planet.
- It surrounds the sun which is , which is a modest size, and it dwarfs the earth. It travels at 155,000 miles a second. At that speed, it takes the sun 200 million years to orbit the Milky Way galaxy.
- Scientists tell us that the Milky Way is just one of around one million galaxies, as if they really know. (In hush) (The Grand Canyon has become so insignificant that it does not even exist now in comparison).

#### **Isaiah 40:25-26**

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

<sup>25</sup> “To whom then will you liken Me  
That I would be *his* equal?” says the Holy One.

<sup>26</sup> Lift up your eyes on high  
And see who has created these *stars*,  
The One who leads forth their host by number,  
He calls them all by name;  
Because of the greatness of His might and the <sup>l</sup>strength of *His* power,  
Not one *of them* is missing.

#### **Luke 12:7**

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

**7 Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered.**

Can you imagine if God knows the very number of hairs on your head, how much knowledge He would have to have, at this detailed level, for the entire universe.

This illustration is no doubt much like the Grand Canyon in comparison to the entire universe when it comes to describing the full “Glory of God”.

Consider how insignificant we are in comparison to our Creator God and GLORIFY His name!

There is God and there is none other. (Write our G with finger) He is capital **G** !

I sincerely believe that we must try to dwell on the majesty of our eternal God! I am afraid that too many Christians paint a far too small picture of God.

We can spend hours hearing of the incredible gift that God of the universe has given to us:

- An identity of being in Christ.
- We are chosen, loved, and redeemed.
- We are God’s masterpiece.
- We have been adopted as “children of God”.

and still some of us still struggle for that to change and revolutionize their life.

(In hush) I wonder if it is because they don’t consider (Spread out Hands above head) the GREATNESS of God.

Once we start to put our arms around the glory of God and can truly glorify Him, then we must learn to trust Him.

## **II. A True Christian Trusts God.**

**Philippians 3:3:** “The *true* <sup>l</sup>circumcision puts no confidence in the flesh.”

Here is the point! Who I am has significance, because He is the One who is significant! I am because He IS! Without Him, I am nothing!

God left us His word through the writers of the New Testament who lived and learned from Christ, so we can know what life is all about and how to serve Him.

God tells us that Jesus came to earth so that all men could be reconciled back to God despite our sin. Jesus died on the cross for our sins. In God’s word, he tells us how to be reconciled back to Him.

This takes trust in God. I cannot explain **WHY** it was necessary that Christ in the flesh had to come to earth and die on the cross for our sins. I cannot explain **HOW** His death actually took on our sins. This all requires **TRUST** or **FAITH** in God.

Once we accept the majesty and glory of God and His infinite power, it should not require a lot of convincing that we should read His word and trust Him. The Word is there so we can know the will of God and be able to know when someone is teaching or preaching a wrong doctrine.

This occurred in early church history. The word was being proclaimed and Gentiles were accepting Christ. It is recorded in Acts 15 that men from Judea began teaching that **“Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.”**

The teaching would be something like this today. “Have you scheduled your surgery yet? You know that you need to quit eating at Oklahoma Joes BBQ. I’ve noticed that you have been working out at the gym on Saturday and working during the afternoon, you can’t do that!”

So Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem and had the first recorded church meeting with the apostles and church leaders. Peter through the revelation of the Holy Spirit, said “We should not make it difficult for the Gentiles. We should not add all of these requirements upon them.”

This is what Paul is referring to when he says

### **Philippians 3:2-3**

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

**<sup>2</sup> Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the [a]false circumcision; <sup>3</sup> for we are the *true* [b]circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh,**

We also must not add other conditions to God’s word. We must trust in God’s word only. Other doctrine put out by churches IS NOT NECESSARY!

### **2 Timothy 3:13-17**

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

**<sup>13</sup> But evil men and impostors will proceed *from bad* to worse, deceiving and being deceived. <sup>14</sup> You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*, <sup>15</sup> and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. <sup>16</sup> All Scripture is [a]inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for [b]training in righteousness; <sup>17</sup> so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.**

Once we can glorify God and learn to trust Him, Paul tells us to worship in the Spirit of God.

### **III. A True Christian Worships in the Spirit of God.**

**Philippians 3:3:** “The *true* [circumcision worships in the Spirit of God.”

Jesus was talking to the Samaritan woman at the well in

**John 4:23-24**

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

<sup>23</sup> But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. <sup>24</sup> God is [spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

The point Jesus is making is that God must be worshiped in both spirit and truth.

We are no longer under the Law of Moses. It all changed when Jesus died on the cross 2000 years ago. The veil in the Temple was torn from top to bottom when our Savior died, which meant that believers now had, in spirit, direct access to God.

Spirit is mentioned because those who worship God must be "born again" and be recipients of God's Holy Spirit.

Truth is mentioned because having God's Spirit, but failing to submit to the revealed truth from God (the Bible) will cause unacceptable and false worship based on an incorrect notion of God and what He desires and requires from those who would please Him.

So spirit without truth is in error and cannot please God.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

If God was small enough for us to understand Him, then He would not be big enough for us to trust Him.

The most joyful people I know are people who have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Whether they are poor or rich is secondary to them. What is important to them is that they have their priorities in line.

You know what an oxymoron is, right? An oxymoron is two contrasting words that have a self-contradictory effect like:

- Jumbo Shrimp
- Cold Hotdog
- Dead Livestock
- Cafeteria Food
- An Adult Male
- Or a Short Sermon

Another oxymoron would be a “Joyless Christian”.

Could there be such a thing?

Is it possible for someone to be totally “sold out” to Jesus Christ and not exude the joy of Christ in their life?

Glorify God.

Trust in His word.

Worship Him in Spirit and Truth.

People mocked Christ because He would not come down from the cross. Today we worship Him because He stayed up there.

If you have never turned your life over to Christ, today could be your day of salvation. Whether you only have one sin in your life or millions of sins, it doesn't matter. Christ died for all of your sins. It is like a broken window, whether it has one small hole through it or it is completely shattered, it still needs to be replaced. Sin separates us from a perfect and Holy God.

- If you have never proclaimed Christ as God's Son;
- If have never repented of your sins;
- If you are willing to do as He says and be baptized.
- If you have never made those decisions, and you feel the Holy Spirit convicting your heart,

I want to give you that opportunity this morning.

There are believers here this morning that have been coming for some time.

- Maybe you are ready to **become a part** of this church family
- and would like to **use your influence** in the church
- and **become identified** with this body of believers.

Or maybe you are just in need of **prayer**.

We would ask you to come forward and let us know how we can help you.

## **The Family of God**

I'm so glad I'm a part of the family of God.

I've been washed in the fountain, cleansed by His blood!

Joint heirs with Jesus as we travel this sod,

For I'm part of the family, the family of God.