

June 11, 2023

### Overflow 3-Exchange it for Infinite Value!

Many years ago, on a family vacation, our old minivan broke down midway to a family reunion in another state. We ended up trading it in, and we bought a new car. It was an exchange that did not feel good. From having no car payments to having car payments to get from any point A to B was not my idea of a great exchange. Things were already tight before.

What we are talking about today is a different kind of exchange. It was not with a dealer specializing in autos. It was a dealer who specialized in Grace. Giving what we do not deserve. God takes our old clunker in exchange for something of infinite value that is completely paid for by Him! That's why it's called the "Gospel" which means good news.

"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose."

—Jim Elliot

Jim Elliot was talking about his life.  
Paul has similar quotes when he wrote Philippians.

What is fascinating is how Paul describes his change in values. Paul was willing to exchange everything he formerly valued for something he valued so much more, something of surpassing worth. And his description was part of his correction of flawed religious thinking!

Let's jump right in.

*Philippians 3:1–3 (NIV) Further, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you. <sup>2</sup> Watch out for those dogs, those evildoers, those mutilators of the flesh. <sup>3</sup> For it is we who are the circumcision, we who serve God by his Spirit, who boast in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh—*

Jewish Christian men were trying to convince Gentile Christian men that they could not be right with God until they became circumcised. Awkward subject! & OUCH! Paul was MAD because he understood that this was a complete perversion of the good news about salvation by faith in Jesus.

#### I. **Christ followers don't ACHIEVE righteousness; they RECEIVE it.**

Next in the letter, Paul tells his faith story to help address the controversy over the basis for confidence before God. These people had it wrong.

As you listen to Paul's faith story here, it sounds so different from the kind of "testimony" (old church word for your faith story describing how God changed your life).

**Most CHRISTIAN testimonies go something like this:** I used to be so very messed up. Then I met Jesus and he forgave me and completely changed my life. My life is now so much better. You should turn to Jesus too.

Is that what Paul describes in his experience? No. He challenges everyone with his story.

*Philippians 3:4-11 (NIV)* <sup>4</sup> though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: <sup>5</sup> circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; <sup>6</sup> as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless. <sup>7</sup> But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. <sup>8</sup> What is more, I consider everything a loss because of **the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord**, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup> and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. <sup>10</sup> I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, <sup>11</sup> and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

### **Do you hear the difference in his “Testimony”?**

It’s not, I used to be so messed up, and now my life is great, your life can be awesome too if you choose Jesus.

His story was, “I thought my life was awesome, the kind of life I wanted, and the kind of life everybody else wanted. But then I met Jesus and none of that mattered. I let that all go. All that was not great, in fact it was getting in the way. I gave it all up for something greater.

Then he defines greater in ways I rarely if ever run into.

<sup>10</sup> I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,

It’s not, “NOW, my life is fantastic, if you want a fantastic life you need Jesus.”

It’s “NOW I know it’s not about me, it’s all about JESUS, I encourage you to sign up no matter what the cost will be to you! It’s worth it!”

The true Gospel doesn’t sell the cheap stuff, it sells the deep stuff that is worth EVERYTHING. It’s worth the battle. It’s worth the suffering. It’s worth eternity!” Christ followers don’t ACHIEVE righteousness; they RECEIVE it.

## **II. Trade in your old clunker (SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS)**

Self-righteousness is delusional and dangerous; it’s a counterfeit religious approach to spirituality based on false pride.

Jesus slammed this approach repeatedly!

*Matthew 5:20 (NIV) For I tell you that unless your righteousness **surpasses** that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.*

In the sermon on the mount Jesus goes on to describe this surpassing righteousness as more than outward behavior but goodness from the inside out.

There is a **surpassing** righteousness that comes by knowing Jesus personally and intimately and living to please him from your heart with his help!

*Philippians 3:7–9 (NIV) But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. <sup>s</sup> What is more, I consider everything a loss because of **the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord**, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them **garbage**, that I may gain Christ <sup>o</sup> and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.*

To say the clunker of Self-Righteousness has no value is not strong enough. Self-Righteousness actually has NEGATIVE VALUE. It is a liability to you!

*Philippians 3:8 (NIV) ...I consider them **garbage**, that I may gain Christ.*

PAUL HAD LEARNED that his prior credentials are worse than nothing! HIS CLUNKER HAD LESS THAN NO VALUE. What he thought were his strongest ASSETS had become LIABILITIES taking him further away from GOD, not closer. HIS CLUNKER WAS “GARBAGE”.

The word translated here “garbage” (3:8) is a very strong word. The word in Greek is *skubala* and is only used once in the Bible.

**Even translating it as “garbage” is too sanitized. *Skubala* is a word used for “refuse, rubbish, leavings, dirt, dung. . . specifically of human excrement, but used for muck of many kinds, excrement, rotten food, bits left at a meal, a rotting corpse. It is a word for nastiness and decay; it is a coarse, ugly, violent word implying worthlessness, uselessness, and repulsiveness. . . It’s a repulsive and revolting word.**

Paul’s reason for using a repulsive revolting word was to set things straight! The counterfeit approach to “righteousness” is REPULSIVE AND REVOLTING to GOD, and should be to us also!

**His message was clear:** When it comes to pleasing God, do not rely on yourself or any other clunker, rely on Jesus!!

### III. Exchange it for **SURPASSING WORTH!**

*Philippians 3:8 (NIV): ...I consider everything a loss because of the **surpassing worth** of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them **garbage**, that I may gain Christ*

- **What will you rely on as your mode of transportation to get you from point A to point B in living RIGHT before God?**
- **The Surpassing Worth of KNOWING JESUS?**
- **Or Garbage?**

*Philippians 3:9 (NIV): and be found in him, not a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the **righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith***

- **QUESTION: How does true righteousness come?**
- **ANSWER: On the basis of faith!**

Faith forms an alliance between us and God. This covenant union with Christ guarantees increasing Christlikeness, and Christlikeness is righteousness.

**Tim Keller wrote:**

*"Sin isn't only doing bad things, it is more fundamentally making good things into ultimate things. Sin is building your life and meaning on anything, even a very good thing, more than on God. . . . Sin is primarily idolatry."*

He gives the following examples:

- If you center your life and identity on your spouse or partner, you will be emotionally dependent, jealous, and controlling...
- If you center your life and identity on your ... children, you will try to live your life through your children until they resent you or have no self of their own...
- If you center your life and identity on your work and career, you will be a driven workaholic and a boring, shallow person. At worst you will lose family and friends and, if your career goes poorly, develop deep depression.
- If you center your life and identity on money and possessions, you'll be eaten up by worry ... and you'll be willing to do unethical things to maintain your lifestyle, which will eventually blow up your life.
- If you center your life and identity on pleasure, gratification, and comfort, you will find yourself getting addicted to something...
- If you center your life and identity on a "noble cause," you will divide the world into "good" and "bad" and demonize your opponents...
- If you center your life and identity on religion and morality, you will, if you are living up to your moral standards, be proud, self-righteous, and cruel. If you don't live up to your moral standards, your guilt will be utterly devastating.

Source: Tim Keller, *The Reason for God* (Dutton, 2008), pp. 275-276, and Tim Keller, "Talking About Idolatry in a Postmodern Age," [www.thegospelcoalition.org](http://www.thegospelcoalition.org)

The answer to all this is the same: Center your life and Identity on Jesus.

At age 72, Tim Keller passed away a few weeks ago with pancreatic cancer. Here are a few of his last words., 'There is no downside for me leaving, not in the slightest.'... I'm ready to see Jesus. I can't wait to see Jesus..."

**It's time to trade everything in any "clunker" that cannot take us from wherever we are to where God wants us to be, and TRADE it in for JESUS who gives us True righteousness, true goodness.**

**He pours HIMSELF into us, cleansing us, filling us with grace enough for us, overflowing with grace toward others. We need Jesus.**

# Talk It Over

## OVERFLOW

(Week 3)

Exchange it for Infinite Value!

### SMALL TALK

1. What does the concept of "joy" mean to you personally, and how do you experience it in your life?

### VIEWPOINT

2. **READ Philippians 3:1-11.** In verses 1-3, what is going on, and how does this warning relate to Paul's overall message in this passage?
3. In verses 4-6, why does Paul list his credentials and accomplishments according to Jewish law? What changed and why? What is his main point?
4. In verses 7-11, what changed his values? How does he describe the worth of his "loss" and "gain"?

### GETTING PERSONAL

5. What are some things that you normally think of as assets in your life that can distract you from fully pursuing a relationship with Christ thereby proving to be liabilities for you rather than assets? How can you refocus your priorities?
6. How have you experienced the power of Christ's resurrection in your life (3:10)? How does it give you hope and assurance in your faith journey?

### MAKING PROGRESS (THIS WEEK)

7. What is the basic difference between the two approaches to "righteousness" (3:9)? What steps can you take to experience more "righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith"?