

## Thanksgiving 2019 – A Thankful Heart has a relationship with God

Good morning and welcome

Has anyone put up their Christmas decorations yet.....its about that time, but.....this is one of my favorite times of the year...for several reasons

1 I like fall.....and 2. I like thanksgiving.....and 3. I like turkey....and 4. I like sweet potato casserole....

But thanksgiving is one of those holidays that we celebrate that tends to be more about others than our self

We are going to spend the next few weeks preparing for thanksgiving by looking at Phil 3&4 and developing a thankful heart.....how do we do that, how do we go about developing a thankful heart....a thankful heart has a rel w/

Lets begin this morning with **Philippians 3:1-11** – read it.....as we read it, I want you to pay attention to what Paul says about religious people.....let me give you a hint about what Paul says about them.....he describes them as a 4 legged

lets define – the religious people here are those who believe you deserve God's favor because you do some kind of good deed

Lets dive right into this text.....and see how we can apply this text to our life.....

**v. 2** – Paul warns the phil. And us.....to look out for dogs...../evildoers....(explain -not domesticated, wild)

The people that Paul is talking about here would have been known as Judaizers.....

Judaizers were a particular group of religious people who made it their practice to follow Paul around town when he was preaching and they would attempt to undo all that he said.....

Judaizers, were religious people.....they believed they deserved God's grace and mercy because they would perform various good deeds.....they also claimed to be Christians

so the first thing we need to do....is lets understand how to differentiate religious people from true believers....

Paul tells us the good deed they think earns Gods favor.....they mutilate the flesh

Remembering, religious people believe you deserve God's grace when you do something.....look at what the Judaizers said.....**v.2**

In this case, the judaizers believed you had to be circumcised in order to earn God's grace....

1<sup>st</sup> Application point: .....the difference in religious people and people who have a relationship with God....is that **your relationship with God does not begin by you performing a good deed....**

Circumcision in the OT, and for the religious Jews was a very sacred act that they believed sealed a person into a relationship with God....

WE have people today that believe there are actions that seal us into a relationship with God.....

Maybe you've been told, you can't go to heaven unless you've been baptized.....this is inherently false....our relationship with God is never dependent on an action we perform.....

Baptism is an act of obedience where the believer makes their first step in following Christ....it is very important, but we are not saved through our baptism....

Baptism and circumcision are similarly related in that God never intended them to be acts of salvation, they were symbols of obedience....

Look what Paul says next.....I can out obedience all of you, I can out religion anyone.....v.3b-6.....ex ea. One

So what do we do with obedience.....we need to understand that obedience follows salvation, it's a sign...we honor Christ with obedience.....we can't use our obedience to gain the favor of God...why....b/c he made us obedient....

Can you imagine for a moment.....your child's room is a mess.....you go in, clean it up, put everything in place, you dust, vacuum, cobwebs, its immaculate.....your child comes in and expects you to reward them for a clean room.....of course not....

But that's what a lot of Christians do.....God, you owe me for being obedient.....never mind the fact.....we are only obedient because he was obedient.....We honor Christ because he cleaned our room for us

Instead....look what Paul says we should do. Application point #2.....v.7 – Everything is garbage compared to Jesus

Paul had it all....he had dual citizenship Hebrew/Roman, he was wealthy, he had the heritage of being a Benjamite,

There was no one more zealous than him, he even reminds us.....remember I used to persecute Christians...

He even goes as far to say....under the law.....I was blameless....

But when he met Christ everything changed, when we understand Christ.....everything changes...

I'll give up everything for Him.....my home = rubbish, my job = rubbish, the way people view me = rubbish, my possessions= rubbish, its all garbage as long as I have Jesus....

3<sup>rd</sup> Application Point – v.11 When we understand the resurrection from the dead, we will do anything to attain it

What does this resurrection from the dead mean.....it means that we are a forgiven people, and that is something to truly be thankful for...

Without forgiveness, we have no hope other than death.....the hope we have in the resurrection is called faith....

Do you realize that the prosperity gospel is not new.....Judaizers believed the same thing....they believed that circumcision brought the favor of God....

Remember, there is literally nothing you can do to earn God's favor, he gives it freely to those who trust in him....

But his favor is not found on this earth....its found in eternity...that is it....

If anyone ever tells you that you can earn God's favor.....RUN....does God bless us, absolutely, should we thank him for all he has given us, YES.....

but we should treat it all as rubbish when compared to the resurrection.....

Paul literally says....by any means possible....I want to attain it.....

Can I tell you, that God loves you.....there is nothing you have to do to earn his love....he gives it freely to anyone who comes to him....