

Exhortation And Warning

PHI 3:1 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.

1. "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord."
 - a. "Finally" denotes a shift in thinking.
 - b. It is from "to loipon" [**tah** loi **pahn**] - lit "for the rest," but most often translated "finally."
 - c. It can have the meaning of "furthermore, henceforth, from now on." (Gal. 6:17; 2 Tim. 4:8).
 - d. It is evident that Paul does not mean the letter is ending.
 - 1) He is only about half-way through the letter.
 - 2) He used this word again in Philippians 4:8 showing that he is not affirming a second ending. This would be one too many endings.
 - 3) He used the word about three-fifths of the way through the letter of 1 Thessalonians. (1 Thess. 4:1).
 - 4) There is no evidence that Philippians is really two epistles that Paul merged together or some editor merged.
 - e. He exhorts them to "rejoice in the Lord." - "in [the] Lord" here and in Phil. 4:4.
 - 1) There can be no real rejoicing outside of the Lord.
 - 2) All spiritual blessings are in Christ (Eph. 1:3), and He is the only way to heaven. (Jn. 14:6).
 - 3) Christians are to be a joyful, happy people who know the Lord and have assurance that one day they will be with the Lord.
 - 4) "in [the] Lord" denotes one in relationship to Christ - a Christian.
2. "To write the same things again is no trouble to me" - It was not a problem for him to write the same thing he had spoken to them. "Again" is in italics, but it is implied by the context.
 - a. He did not tire writing these things to them.
 - b. He wanted them to know the things that please God, and to avoid the things that would lead to the condemnation of their souls.
 - c. Paul did not want his labor to be in vain. (Phil. 2:16).
3. "and it is a safeguard for you" - It was good for them to hear it over and over.
 - a. It was good for them to receive it in writing.

b. Repetition is an important part of learning. (2 Pet. 1:13; 3:1).

2PE 1:13 And I consider it right, as long as I am in this earthly dwelling, **to stir you up by way of reminder,**

2PE 3:1 This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which I am stirring up your sincere mind **by way of reminder,**

PHI 3:2 Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision;

- “Beware” is used 3 times in this verse.
 - It is literally “look [to].” It comes from the Greek “blepo” [**bleh** poh]. NIV has “watch out.”
1. “Beware of the dogs” - Based on the context he is referring to the Judaizers. These teachers sought to bind circumcision, the Sabbath and some other aspects on Christians as a matter of salvation.
 - a. Jews used it often to describe pagans, and Jesus used it of a Gentile woman to test and demonstrate her great faith. (Mk. 7:27, 28).

MAR 7:27 And He was saying to her, "Let the children be satisfied first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." See Matt. 15:28.

MAR 7:28 But she answered and said to Him, "Yes, Lord, but even the dogs under the table feed on the children's crumbs."

b. Jesus had used the word “dogs” to refer to those who had no appreciation of spiritual things. (Matt. 7:6).

MAT 7:6 "Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.

- c. It was pointless to spend time teaching those who have no appreciation for the gospel.
 - d. This could not be known in advance, but would become evident by their rejection of the gospel.
 - e. Jesus instructed his disciples to shake off the dust from their feet as they left the places where they were not received. (Matt. 10:14; Mk. 6:11; Lk. 9:5; Acts 13:51).
2. “beware of the evil workers”
 - 1) These were evil workers who sought to lead brethren away from the truth rather than lead them to the truth and a right relationship to the Lord.
 - 2) They may or may not have been sincere, but they, if left unchecked, would cause men to lose their souls.
 3. “beware of the false circumcision” - This is a reference to false teachers who would bind circumcision on men as a matter of salvation and cause men to be cut off from Christ. (Gal. 5:4).
 4. Physical circumcision had no part in a Christian’s salvation. (Gal. 5:6; 1 Cor. 7:19).

GAL 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.

1CO 7:19 Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but what matters is the keeping of the commandments of God.

PHI 3:3 for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh,

- “true” is supplied by NASB.
- Lit. “For we are the circumcision.”
- “True” is implied and expresses the thought Paul is seeking to convey to his readers.

1. “for we are the true circumcision” - True circumcision was circumcision of the heart. (Rom. 2:28, 29).

ROM 2:28 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh.

ROM 2:29 But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.

- a. “True circumcision” is not the cutting away of flesh, but it is a cutting away sin from the heart.
- b. It is for both males and females.
- c. No one can go to heaven without spiritual circumcision.
- d. Spiritual circumcision occurs when the penitent believers dies to sin as a way of life and is buried with Christ in the waters of baptism and arises to walk in the newness of life. (Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12; 3:1).

2. “who worship in the Spirit of God” - This is a description of the “true circumcision,” that is, the circumcision that counts with God. There is no preposition in the Greek, but “pneuma” [**pnoo** mah tee] can be rendered in the locative or instrumental case.

- a. “who worship by the Spirit of God” - ASV
- b. The Greek “latreuo” [lah **troo** oh] means “to worship, serve.”
- c. It can be rendered “who serve by the Spirit of God.”
- d. Either translation makes good sense, and it seems impossible to be sure.

1) Christians worship according to the instructions of the Holy Spirit.

2) Christians serve according to the instructions of the Holy Spirit.

3) The Holy Spirit guided the apostles to reveal “all truth.” (Jn. 16:13).

4) This truth was imparted to the early Christians through preaching and the written word.

3. “and glory in Christ Jesus” - It is a reference to those who take pride in Jesus only.

- a. Paul had ceased to glory in his flesh.
- b. He gloried only in the cross of Jesus Christ. (Gal. 6:14).

GAL 6:14 But may it never be that I should boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

4. “and put no confidence in the flesh” - He did rely on his physical circumcision for salvation.

- a. He knew it counted for nothing spiritually.
- b. The Christian’s confidence is in Jesus and His atonement on the cross.
- c. The Christian’s confidence is based on coming to Jesus and living for Him.

PHI 3:4 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:

1. “although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh” - If anyone could boast or have confidence in the flesh, it would be Paul.
2. “If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more” - If one could be saved because of the flesh, it would be Paul.
3. He proceeds to give the reasons he might boast in the flesh.

PHI 3:5 circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee;

1. “circumcised the eighth day”
 - a. This was the day all Jewish males were to be circumcised. (Gen. 17:12; Lev. 12:3).

GEN 17:12 "And every male among you who is eight days old shall be circumcised throughout your generations, a servant who is born in the house or who is bought with money from any foreigner, who is not of your descendants.

LEV 12:3 'And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.

- b. His parents had carefully observed the requirement of the law as did the parents of Jesus. (Lk. 1:59; 2:21).

LUK 1:59 And it came about that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child [John the Baptist], and they were going to call him Zacharias, after his father.

LUK 2:21 And when eight days were completed before His circumcision, His name was then called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.

- c. Some Jews did not perform circumcision on the 8th day if it came on the Sabbath Day .
 - d. This was defined by some as forbidden work.
2. “of the nation of Israel” - He was an Israelite by race - not like Ishmael or Gentile proselytes.
3. “of the tribe of Benjamin” - One of the tribes that remained faithful when the northern tribes revolted.
 - a. It was a matter of pride to be from this tribe.
 - b. Benjamin was the son of Jacob’s beloved wife Rachel.
 - c. The first king of Israel, Saul, came from this tribe. (1 Sam. 9:21),

4. “a Hebrew of Hebrews [parents]” - He was a Hebrew who had Hebrew parents. See 2 Cor. 11:22.

- a. This is the way this expression is usually interpreted.
- b. It might have reference to the fact he spoke Hebrew or more technically Aramaic.

ACT 22:2 And when they heard that he was addressing them **in the Hebrew dialect**, they became even more quiet; and he said, “dialektos” [dee ah lehk tahs] - “language, dialect, vernacular” (Acts 1:19, 2:6, 8; 21:40; 22:2; 26:14).

ACT 22:3 "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated under Gamaliel, strictly according to the law of our fathers, being zealous for God, just as you all are today.

- c. We cannot be sure about its exact meaning, but whatever the meaning it was a grounds for boasting in the flesh.

5. “as to the Law, a Pharisee” - The sect strictly adhered to the Mosaical law. (Acts 26:5).

ACT 26:5 since they have known about me for a long time previously, if they are willing to testify, that I lived as a Pharisee according to the strictest sect of our religion.

- a. Many of the Pharisees were very self-righteous and corrupt. (Lk. 18:9-14; Matt. 23:2,3).
- b. Jesus taught our righteousness must exceed their righteousness. (Matt. 5:20).

PHI 3:6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.

1. “ as to zeal, a persecutor of the church” - Paul had zealously persecuted the church because he believed this is what pleased God. (Acts 7:58-8:1; 22:5; 9-1; 1 Tim. 1:13).

2. “as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless”

- a. He is not claiming sinlessness under the law, but was claiming he was zealous to follow the details of the law. See Acts 22:3; 23:1.
- b. Paul knew all have sinned an fallen short of God’s glory. (Rom. 3:10-11, 23).

Note: Many today boast in a variety of things for salvation

Race	Church Attendance	Some outstanding deed
Nationality	Good works	Position in or out of church
Wealth	Character	Knowledge of the Bible
What others do	Fame	How long one has been a Christian
Some real or claimed experience	Parents or grandparents	How much one gives.

3. None of these things merit or earn us salvation. (Rom. 6:23; 11:6; Eph. 2:1-10).

- a. It is vain to boast in these things.
- b. All boasting must be in Christ Jesus. (1 Cor. 1:31; Gal. 6:14).

1CO 1:31 that, just as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord."

GAL 6:14 But may it never be that I should boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

PHI 3:7 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

1. “ But whatever things were gain to me” - What was once a gain to him he realized had no value. He no longer boasted of those things he had previously counted as gain.
2. “those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ”
 - a. Now because of Christ and his understanding of how people are saved he no longer counted on those things.
 - b. He realized that no one could keep the law perfectly, and thus stood condemned by the law.

PHI 3:8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ,

1. “More than that, I count all things to be loss” - This is explained later in this verse.
2. “in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord”
 - a. Jesus was the most valuable thing in the world to him.
 - b. “Knowing Christ Jesus” as “Lord” meant salvation for him and for all who accept Christ as Lord and Savior.
3. “for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ”
 - a. He now counted those previous fleshly things as rubbish.
 - b. The Greek has “skubala” [**skoo** bah lah] meaning “offal, dung, sweepings, refuse.”
 - c. Some translations render the word “dung” or “refuse.”
 - d. He used a very strong and graphic word to describe his feelings about the things he had formerly trusted in for salvation.
 - e. They counted for absolutely nothing spiritually.

PHI 3:9 and may be found in Him, 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,

1. “and may be found in Him” - Paul wanted to be found in Christ. Only in Christ does one find salvation. (Jn. 14:6; Acts 4:12).
2. “not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law”
 - a. He recognized that there was no “righteousness” [justification, pardon] based on the Law of Moses.
 - 1) No one could keep the Law perfectly.
 - 2) Failure to keep it perfectly meant condemnation. (Jas. 2:10).

- b. By it no one could be saved. (Gal. 2:16).

GAL 2:16 nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that **we may be justified by faith in Christ**, and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified.

3. “but that which is through faith in Christ” - Paul had come to understand that salvation was through “the faith in Christ.”

- a. “...we may be justified by faith in Christ...” (Gal. 2:16).

- b. He now knew that salvation was apart “from works of the Law.” (Rom. 3:28).

ROM 3:28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.

4. “the righteousness [justification] which comes from God on the basis of faith”

- a. “righteousness” is here used in the sense of “justification, pardon.”

- b. Paul had come to realize that salvation was on the basis of faith in Christ. (Gal. 3:26, 27).

- c. This was not merely mental assent, but was a faith that led one to trust in Jesus and obey Him. (Rom. 1:5; 16:26; Gal. 5:6).

PHI 3:10 that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;

1. “that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection”

- a. Paul was excited that he had come to have a saving knowledge in Christ and had acted on that knowledge by accepting Jesus as his Lord and Savior.

- b. He had also come to know through faith “the power of His resurrection.”

- 1) He knew Christ had been raised from the dead. (1 Cor. 15:5-11).

- 2) The Lord appeared to him on the road to Damascus. (Acts 9:1-6). He addressed Jesus as “Lord,” but soon learned His identity and in fact Jesus truly became His Lord.

- 3) He knew the resurrection was the heart of the Christian faith, and had come to realized that all is folly without it. (1 Cor.15:12-19). Note: The death, burial, and resurrection were all vital to the Christian vain. Christianity rests on the three pillars and fails if any of the three are not true.

- 4) He believed the resurrection of Christ was the pledge [guarantee] of our resurrection. (1 Cor. 15:20-23).

2. “and the fellowship [sharing] of His sufferings”

- a. Those who know Christ will be raised by Christ in that last day, but they will also share now in the sufferings of Christ. (Matt. 5:10-12; Jn. 15:20-23).

- b. Peter taught it was a privilege to suffer for Christ, and not a matter of shame. (1 Pet. 4:14-16).

1PE 4:14 If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.

1PE 4:15 By no means let any of you suffer as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler;

1PE 4:16 but if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not feel ashamed, but in that name let him glorify God.

3. "being conformed to His death"

- Lit. "being conformed to the death of him."
- NIV has "becoming like him in his death"
 - a. Paul recognized that he might be called upon to die because His faith in Jesus.
 - b. He was ready to live for Christ or to die for Him. (Phil. 1:21).

PHI 3:11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

1. He looked forward "to the resurrection from the dead." He would be free of this corruptible body.
2. He knew in Christ that one day he would be raised to have a new spiritual body (1 Cor. 15:49-58).
3. He knew on "the last day" he, along with the other righteous, would be raised from the dead. (Jn. 6:39, 40, 44, 54; 11:24).

JOH 6:39 "And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on **the last day**."

JOH 6:40 "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him, may have eternal life; and I Myself will raise him up on **the last day**."

JOH 6:44 "No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on **the last day**."

JOH 6:54 "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on **the last day**."

JOH 11:24 Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on **the last day**."

4. He knew he would ascend to be with Christ. (1 Thess. 4:13-18).
5. He knew in heaven he would have a body like that of Christ Jesus. (Phil. 3:20,21). See 1 Jn. 3:1.
 - a. Jesus has a glorious spiritual body.
 - b. We too shall have a glorious spiritual body.

6. **Note:**

- a. The wicked will also be raised on "the last day" - the same day the righteous are raised. (Dan. 12:2; Jn. 5:28, 29; Acts 24:15).
- b. They will be judged on the "last day." (Jn. 12:48).

JOH 12:48 "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day. The Greek has the preposition "en" meaning "in" and can be translated "at."

- c. It is called “the last day” because there will be no more days.
- d. The parable of the dragnet indicates Jesus will bless His followers on that day, and He will judge and condemn the wicked at the same time. (Matt. 13:47-50).

MAT 13:47 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea, and gathering fish of every kind;
MAT 13:48 and when it was filled, they drew it up on the beach; and they sat down, and gathered the good fish into containers, but the bad they threw away.

MAT 13:49 "So it will be at the end of the age; the angels shall come forth, and take out the wicked from among the righteous,

MAT 13:50 and will cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

- e. The parable of the tares teaches the same truths. (Matt. 13:36-43).

MAT 13:36 Then He left the multitudes, and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field."

MAT 13:37 And He answered and said, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man,

MAT 13:38 and the field is the world; and as for the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one;

MAT 13:39 and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels.

MAT 13:40 "Therefore just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age.

MAT 13:41 "The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness,

MAT 13:42 and will cast them into the furnace of fire; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

MAT 13:43 "Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

"Scripture taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE®,
© Copyright 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation

Used by permission." (www.Lockman.org)

