

Philippians 10-07-09a

This is Friday the 9th of June 2010. We're in the book of Philippians at the beginning portion of chapter 3. We'll take a moment as we always do to begin with a word of prayer individually and then collectively. It gives us a chance to to cultivate and encourage the presence and ministry of God's Holy Spirit in our midst and in our hearts.

We pray. Father, we come to the end of another busy week and find ourselves impressed as always with the ways that you provide for us and bless us and challenge us and guide the circumstances of our lives to remind us of our place with you, our relationship with you through the Lord Jesus, and the potential that we have both now and in the ages to come to lay hold of righteousness by faith and to reflect your glory. We thank you for this passage in the letter that Paul wrote to the Philippian Church and we ask your blessing on us as we study it together.

We pray that each of us will find in it truth that is meaningful and applicable and will clarify our perception and enhance our motivation and guide us as we seek to walk down the narrow road through the straight gate that leads to life. We ask it in Jesus name. Amen.

Well, the third chapter, as you will recall, begins *ta loipon* in Greek, which literally means the rest or as for the rest. It is sometimes a marker that you're getting to the conclusion of a letter or a presentation and that's why you have it translated in the New King James, finally, but it doesn't so much mean finally as it marks a change in emphasis or a change in focus, a new subject that is under discussion. And so when it says *ta loipon adelphoi mu*, he is definitely changing from what we have just covered.

What did we just cover? He's been talking about Timothy. He's been talking about Epaphroditus and these individuals who are going to come and make a visit and all of the characteristics of those men, the type of men that they are and how they should be received and honored because of their faithful service and so on. And this is another illustration and another example of what principles he has been discussing.

What are those principles? Look out not only for your own interests, but also for the interests of others. That's the thread constantly running through this letter. He says, this is why I'm not discouraged even though I'm in prison.

I'm like a drink offering poured out on the sacrifice of your faith and so on. He says that's it's fine because I recognize that God is working in and through me and whatever happens to me to bless others. He says Timothy is like-minded with me.

I don't have anybody else that's got the same soul with me like Timothy does. And Epaphroditus, he's nearly killed himself serving on your behalf. So now he's going to leave the personal recommendations and personal encouragements and come back to some some application of spiritual truth.

So he says taloi pan. He says you can translate this lots of different ways. It doesn't make sense to translate it literally the rest.

So we say getting back to my topic or let me say further something along that line. It's just a marker, but it doesn't really mean finally. And the reason that's important is we've got another taloi pan coming up later where it really is finally.

So this is the semi-finals not the finals. And he says rejoice in the Lord to write this again or to write the same thing to you isn't tedious, but for you it is safe. And we've gone over that and Paul says, you know, the repetition doesn't bother me and it's beneficial to you.

This word translated safe, asfales. I mentioned that last time, but it's really interesting. Why does Paul say I'm going to tell you some things I've told you before? That's what he's saying.

So what is the use of review? Why is review a good thing? Well, it is security. The word asfales, if I give you some of the other places where it is used, you'll see why Paul uses it here. Asphalos, A-S-P-H-A-L.

It looks like you're going to spell asphalt, but it's asphalos. Asphalos actually, it ends in Omega Sigma. And it's used quite often in Luke, both Luke and Acts.

It's used in Hebrews 6.19. Now listen to this. In Hebrews 6 where he's talking about the unchangeable things that God has given us and it's impossible for God to be untruthful. We who have taken refuge have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope that is set before us.

God has given us these guarantees and demonstrations and manifestations so that we can pursue the hope, hope of resurrection, hope of righteousness by faith, hope of inheritance, hope of entering into that rest, the whole theme of Hebrews, enter into that rest by faith, all of these heroes. Well here in chapter 6 he says God has given us these guarantees so that we'll be strongly encouraged to take hold of that hope. Live your life as a believer in Jesus Christ, not an American citizen pursuing the capitalistic goal of profit and a happy life and comforts.

That's temporary. It's ephemeral. It's earthly.

It's mundane. Live in the light of hope and he goes on to say in verse 19, this hope we have as an anchor of the soul. This hope, looking ahead to the future things of God, there's really a resurrection.

There's really a Jesus Christ. There's really going to be a millennial kingdom. You're really going to have a resurrection body.

There's really going to be a new heaven, new earth, new Jerusalem and this hope is an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast and the word there is Asphalae. Asphalae kai babayan. The anchor is sure.

It's like that hymn, our anchor holds and grips the solid rock, right? Asphalae, stability, immovability. You're not going to be shaken. You're not going to be thrown off your pins.

When we were learning the martial arts and personal defense, the first thing they tried to teach us was this is how you have to stand. If you're going to be engaged in any kind of hand-to-hand combat, if you've got to defend yourself against attack, you have to know how to stand. You've got to get your feet shoulder-width apart, left foot slightly in front of the right, knees bent.

Keep your balance. Feel the flexibility that is there. You get in that very slight crouch with your feet spread.

Somebody comes up and smacks you and this is what the instructor did. He said look at the difference in this stance. He had somebody stand this way.

He came up and smacked him. Well, they took the blow and returned to the original position. Previous to that, he'd had somebody just stand up there and Mitchum didn't know what was happening and just stood there and he knocked him.

Well, the guy stumbled and nearly fell over because he was standing there with his knees straight and not prepared, not stable. So when Paul says, I'm writing these things to you and it's not a problem for me to repeat myself. It's not a problem for me to write the same things again, but it's going to give you this stability.

You're like the anchor stuck in. You need this. You need to drive your tent pegs deeper into the soil.

How do you drive a peg into the soil? How many times do you hit it with the hammer? If you're going to sink a nail in and put a framing together for a building, how many times do you hit the nail? You repeat. You hit it. Paul says, I don't mind hammering on this three, four, five, six times because every time I hit it, it's going to be driven in deeper.

Asphalte. It's going to hold like an anchor, secure. That's the idea.

He says, as for the rest, brethren, rejoice in the Lord and keep on rejoicing while I repeat some things I've told you before, whether it's in this letter, previous letter, previous visit, whatever. He says, look, don't roll your eyes at the repetition. He says, because I got no problem repeating myself and for you, I'm just driving that peg in deeper.

So I'm repeating myself right now. And see, you have to really play poker because that's just what we're talking about. So that's the introduction.

Now, it's important to understand that because look at what he says next. He says, blepote tus kunas, blepote tus kakus ergetas, blepote tein katatomen. Each of these three things starts with a K. You got kunas, kakus, and katatomen.

We know that this mutilation deal, or the false circumcision, is how they translate it in the New American Standard. Normally, that's peritome, tome to cut, peri around, for obvious reasons. But he doesn't use peritome.

He uses katatome. In Greek, like in English, you know, we say up and down. I've had my ups and downs.

Those are our opposites. In Greek, those words are ana and kata. Ana is up.

Anastasis, I'm going to stand up. That's the word for resurrection. Stasis, to stand.

You know, something is static. It's the stasis. Well, anastasis, stand up.

Kata is down. So instead of peritome, this is katatome. It's to cut down.

And he's sort of, he's using a pun to talk about what happens if you fall back into the legalism of the Jews, who say, well, you know, all of this Jesus stuff is great, but it doesn't do away with the law of Moses. And if you don't get circumcised, you're not going to be acceptable to God. You need to keep the feasts.

You need to observe the rituals. You need to keep the law of Moses. And Paul says, that's not a peritome.

That's not the real circumcision. That's katatome. You're cutting yourself down.

Katatome. So, and it's great because it also alliterates. It's just like they teach you in seminary.

You've got to make your points. I'll start with the same letter. So he says, blepetetus kunas, which is dogs, blepetetus kakus ergetas, workers of kaka, of evil.

That's the word in Greek for evil. It's kaka, kakas, kakus here. And he says, blepetetain katatomain.

Now, what I want to talk about for a minute is blepete. This is from blepo. You probably recognize it.

It's the word in Greek that means having to do with looking at a thing. And it's translated here, beware. Doesn't mean beware.

It means beware when you couple it with some other Greek words. There are places where it can mean beware, but not here. Here, it has its primary meaning, which is not so much to be on your guard, when it's translated be on your guard.

And it is that way. Like in Matthew 8, 4, Jesus said to him, see that you tell no one, but go show yourself to the priest and present the offering that Moses commanded as a testimony to them.

The man that he's just healed.

And he says, beware. Take care that you tell no one. You just go show yourself to the priest.

Well, that's blepete plus the preposition me, or actually it's the word, it's not so much a preposition, but it means lest. Blepete lest, and it's blepete me. Beware that you not get yourself in trouble.

And sometimes it's with the preposition apa, like beware of the Jews. Apa means from, be watch out for the Jews. We don't have either of those words here.

Here is just simply blepo. And so a better or more accurate translation here is consider, take note of, pay attention to, or learn a lesson from. He's not saying watch out, beware, danger, danger.

He's saying, I'm going to tell you something I've told you before. This is going to make you more secure. Take note, watch, carefully consider, learn a lesson from the dogs, workers of evil and the cutdowners, the circumcision.

The reason we know this is blepete used in exactly the same construction. And if you can keep your finger here, you really need to look at these passages. And this, this, remember now, we've just had a grammatical marker saying we're going into a new area.

So we want to get the inception of it right, because if we know where Paul is going, we'll get the whole chapter right. If we misunderstand, he's saying beware, beware, you know, huddle in, you know, hunker down, we'll miss it. Look at, keep your finger here, but turn back to 1st Corinthians 1 26.

Paul is talking here, and he says, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God to those who are called, because the foolishness of God is wiser than men and the weakness of God is stronger than men. And then in 26, he says, for consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called, but see there where it says, for you see your calling, brethren, that's blepiteme. He says, he's been talking about your calling.

He said, for those who are called, Christ is your power and your wisdom. And so he says, think about your calling, learn a lesson from your calling, consider the nature of this calling and what it does for you. Pay attention to it.

Don't forget your calling. It's an important element and factor in your thinking that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, but you've got to remember this.

God's not going to work so much through our strength sometimes as through our weakness. God tells Paul, I'm not going to take away your thorn in the flesh because in your weakness, my

strength is made manifest. If you're strong and you get a thing accomplished, well, people are going to say, hey, good job, strong man.

But if you're horrible at something and God gets it done anyway, that's the power of God being manifest where we had no ability to do a thing. So he says, you've got to think about that. You've got to consider your calling.

Look at your calling. God didn't call you because you're valuable. God didn't call you because you're talented.

God didn't call you because he needed you. He said, look at your calling. Think about it.

Same thing if you flip over in that same book to chapter 10, verse 18. He's talking about the bread and the cup that are shared in a meal. And he says, it's not the cup of blessing that we share, a sharing in the blood of Christ.

It's not the bread which we break, a sharing in the body of Christ. Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body for we all partake of the one bread. We are all partakers of Christ.

And look at verse 18. Look at the nation of Israel. Are not those who eat the sacrifices sharers in the altar? That's blepote.

He says, consider the nation of Israel. Take a look at it. Learn a lesson from it.

Pay attention to this example. Look and learn. Right? In 2 Corinthians, chapter 10, verse 7. He's talking to this same group in another letter.

And he says, we're tearing down speculations and lofty things that are raised up. We're pulling these things down. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.

This is what we do a lot of times, what we've done recently. You think about our rather lengthy study of the books of Bart Ehrman. Where he's actively attacking Christianity and attacking the integrity of the Bible and the scriptures and the very foundations of our faith as a former alleged evangelical Christian.

And he's trying to make these arguments and raising himself up as a judge and critic of God's word and tearing down things. And Paul says, no, no, the weapons of our warfare are not fleshly. It's not our strength.

It's mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God. What are those high things? It's these kinds of arguments. Atheistic arguments, the Skeptic's Bible, the Bart Ehrman's of the world, these British

guys that write their books about how silly it is to be a Christian and so on.

Christopher Hitchens and Sam Harris and Dawkins, Richard Dawkins. So, casting it down, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled. Then look at verse 7. Do you look at things according to the outward appearance? Tacata prosopon? According to the face? Do you blepete? Is this how you consider and judge and draw your conclusions and learn your lessons by looking at the externals? Are you saying, well, I see fleshly cause and effect.

So, I see people doing things in droves. They must be right. Everybody's praying the prayer of Jabez.

They must be right. Everybody's analyzing their spiritual temperament. And so that must be right.

Everybody's doing this, that and the other. So, are you blepete by the face of things? And prosopon, you know, pros is face to face with. Well, prosopon is face to face with your face.

Do you blepete according to the outward appearance? If anyone is convinced in himself that he is Christ, let him consider this in himself that just as he is Christ and so on. So, this is the proper use of blepete. Now, back to our passage.

When Paul says, look at the dogs. Look at the workers of evil. Look at the cut downers.

What's he saying? He's not saying, ooh, watch out. Avoid them. Scary, scary bad.

Boo Halloween. Be afraid, be afraid, be afraid. Beware.

You know, when I see that word beware, the very first time I ever read it, I was a tiny child and somebody down our street in Oceanside had a sign in the yard that said, beware of dog. And I had just learned how to read. I was reading milk cartons and cereal boxes and stuff.

And I was, you know, a few years old. And I was looking at that. I thought, beware, beware, be, beware.

I got the be right away, but the beware. And of course, it comes from be wary, be wary of. And so you get the idea when you see that word that it's like rule, you know, stand back.

And that isn't what Paul is saying. He says, look, learn a lesson from the dogs. Learn a lesson from the workers of evil and learn a lesson from these guys who cut down in trying to cut around.

They cut down. And what is that lesson? He says, we are the circumcision. We are the Perry Tomei.

Those people are the Kata Tomei. In trying to follow the fleshly letter of the law, they're, they're destroying. They're chopping things down.

We are the true circumcision. We are the Perry Tomei. If you want to be pleasing to God in the way that the Old Testament saints pleased God in entering into the covenant of Abraham from Genesis 17.

Then do what we're doing. We are the circumcision. The ones who worship God in the spirit.

And once again, this is Latruo, L-A-T-R-E-U-O. And it means to serve. Not just doing obeisance and giving glory and honor and singing praise songs.

Latruo means we are serving. With that reverent awe and respect and, and honor that is due to God. But it's not just, oh, God is good.

Oh, God is good. Let's sing another, you know, 7-Eleven song. This is service.

We are the circumcision who serve God in the spirit. And what this literally says in Greek, and I like the word order in Greek better. For we are the circumcision, the ones in the spirit of God serving.

Numati Theou. I don't like the way the New King James separates this out, worshiping God in the spirit. In Greek it is, we are the ones in the spirit of God serving.

In, by, with. This is an instrumental, this is by means of. In the sphere of, in the power of, in the realm of the spirit of God we are serving.

Your service is not in the flesh, it's in the spirit. Now, how does this work it out, work itself out in practical terms? It's easy to say, well, plunking money in the offering plate just as an act in itself isn't service. You know, going to church, getting involved in some active ministry in and of itself, by itself.

Well, let's bring it a little bit closer to home. Attending Bible class by itself, just showing up, making sure you don't miss, is by itself. If you're just doing it because you say, well, you know, God's got to bless me because, look, I'm going to Bible class every time the doors are open.

We, some of us in the past have attended churches that might have three, four, five, six Bible classes a week. And there were people who thought, you know what, I'm going to make every single one of those. It's just nuts, it's nuts to go to church six days a week.

Nobody can live a normal life. You can't have a normal family life going to Bible class six days a week. But there were people who thought, you know, if going to Bible class twice is good, going three times is better, four times is even better, five times is better, and six times, I'm going to be glowing in the dark with blessing and reward and, you know, super grace this.

And, you know, I'm going to be up at the top waving the flag when the saints go marching in. No. We are the circumcision, the ones who are doing what God wants done when we are serving

God in the realm of, in the power of, by the guidance of God's Spirit.

And I promise you, God's Spirit is not going to tell you, son, go to Bible class six days a week. It's a half hour drive there, it's a half hour drive back, it's an hour and a half in the class, so you take three hours out of every... This is just silly. Let me ask you something.

If you want your car fixed, do you want to go to a mechanic who spends three hours out of every day going to school trying to learn how to be a mechanic or somebody who's in there actually fixing cars? Do you want to go to a doctor who says, well, you know, I can only have two or three appointments a day because I'm really still in school learning how to be a doctor. You know, I'm just going to class all the time. The learning part, the truth of God part is simple.

It's the application part that we need. This is why when we were taking Celestial Navigation and when we were taking, you know, a lot of these other courses, they give you a little bit of information and say, now, practical exercise, practical exercise. I was involved in a discussion just this past week, the title of which was praying.

What's the whole deal with prayer? These are a mixture of believers and unbelievers saying, you know, why is it the Christians think prayer does any good? What is prayer for? And you get all the responses all over the map. Well, my response was, as is sometimes the case where I am very terse, I said, prayer is an exercise in the solving of story problems. And when we supply the right answer, so does God.

That was my whole response. Prayer is, and I believe that to be true, prayer is an exercise in solving story problems. When you supply the right answer, so does God.

You think about it. What's the point of prayer? It forces us to think about situations that we face, that those in our periphery face, pray for one another, pray for those who have their... How do you pray for the president? This one or the last one, or the one before that, or the one before that, or the one that was in for eight years in the 80s. How do you pray for the president? That's a story problem you have to solve.

Is the guy a believer or not? It makes a difference in how you pray. Oh God, give this guy wise counsel, because you're not going to be able to deal with him directly. Oh God, please, you know, but you have to figure.

You can't just say, Oh God, move the heart of the president to make everything happen the way I think it ought to happen. You can't do that. You've got to think in terms of what you know.

That's what a story problem is. Right? So, in the same way, when we serve God in the spirit, as we go through our day, we're thinking in terms of what we know and making application of it. And a little Bible class goes a long way.

We need a lot more of that application than we need indoctrination. When I was at the basic

school, and they were teaching us interlocking fields of fire, it's real easy on paper. I can remember sitting there on a hot, muggy Virginia afternoon with my workbook, and they said, Look, interlocking fields of fire.

You're the platoon leader. You're going to deploy your men. Machine gun here, machine gun here.

Make sure that when machine gun on the right shoots to the left, he overlaps with the machine gun on the left that's shooting to the right. I thought, Hey, how hard is that? You know, when will this be over? Well, the next day we go to the field. Okay, Hall, you're the platoon leader.

See that hill up there? Take the hill, deploy your stuff, set up your security, and be sure you have interlocking fields of fire. Well, we get up there, and we're fighting through the brambles, and I'm falling down. I had bruises on both sides of my legs because that morning we had done the snap and roll and go from place to place.

Back then, we didn't have MREs. We had C-rations. I had those tin cans in my pouch pockets.

And so, okay, run and roll and run and roll in the cans. And I was just black and blue. So my legs are killing me.

I'm hot. I'm being eaten by all of the indigenous life forms. Sweat pouring down.

My uniform is soaked. All the other guys feel the same way. We're slogging up this hill.

Guys are lugging the M60s with the BFAs on them, the blank firing adapters. And you can't see. I'm trying to look at my compass and my map and be sure that we're actually going to the right hill, if you've seen the Virginia woods.

And so you try to get up there, and you say, well, you know, military crests. Okay, hey, Bob, put your M60 over there. And, well, I can't see, Bob, when I get over here to Ted, who's going to put in the other M60.

And how do I know that there's in it? It's a whole lot different doing it for real than it is looking at it on paper. And we did that. We spent, you know, weeks in the field learning how to do the stuff that looked really easy on paper.

That's what our life is here on this earth. You're not going to make it sitting around listening to tapes and going to Bible class all the time. We get a little bit of information, and we get a lot of application.

Why do you think God gives us a daily life that is largely not church, almost entirely not church? Because he gives us a few drops of truth, and it takes us days and weeks to figure out how to wind that up and make it go, how to actually master that material and make it work. So, listen,

anybody, I will tell you right now, anybody that's going, now, it's one thing if you want to get up and have a devotional. It's one thing if you want to have some meditation time.

And if you can do that listening to a tape, stop the thing, think about it, do your scripture reading, review old notes, read a good book, get C.H. Macintosh, get Chafer, get any, you know, streams in the desert, my utmost for his highest, whatever works for you and stimulates your thinking, great. Do that every day. But going to a Bible class every evening, driving there, sitting there, driving home, is insane.

I'm just telling you now from experience, it's insane. And it misses the point. That is going back to the katatome.

You will cut down your spiritual life. You will cut down a church doing that. And it's one of the reasons we're back to just meeting twice a week instead of three times.

We're getting plenty of truth to work with without meeting an extra two sessions a week. That's my estimate. You all are doing great.

You don't need another Bible class. So that's what he's talking about. We are doing what God wants done.

If you think circumcision is the way to God's heart, guess what? You are going to be the circumcision when you are operating in the power of God's spirit, guided by God's spirit, serving God in God's spirit. That's doing it right. That's your goal.

That's what you want every day. Now look, there are three elements. There are three descriptions of those who are the circumcision.

And what does he mean by the circumcision? You are the family of God. You are the Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. You are the chosen people.

You are the inheritors. You are the covenant participants. You are there if you are serving in God's spirit.

A. B. Rejoicing in Christ Jesus. Several different words in Greek are translated rejoice. Guess which one this is? This is kalkaomai.

The one we talked about earlier that means, this is often translated boasting. And remember how we went through, I spent a lot of time talking about what kalkaomai means. And it means to celebrate.

Celebrating in Christ. It's not bragging. It's not braggadocio.

It's not strutting. You know, air of superiority. Looking down your nose.

We've got it and you don't. I've got the light of God and you're in the dark. Look at me.

Kalkaomai means a genuine celebration. You look at a thing and you say this is just great. By the way, you want to talk about something to celebrate.

I was talking to Dr. Eddy this week. And he's going to Borneo. He's got a two-day evangelism conference there.

And it's going to be really interesting. Because his Christmas sermons have been playing on the radio there now for many months. Started small and they went to twice a day and three times a day.

Seven days a week. And so I said, Dr. Eddy, he said I'm going to Kalimantan, which is Borneo. And I said, wow.

So do you think there'll be more people coming? Because you've been on the radio there. And he said, well, I will tell you this. I have talked to Dr. Heber Daniels, who is the head of that radio station.

And told him about the evangelism conference. And he's announcing it on the radio. So the two-day evangelism conference.

See, Heber Daniel is a graduate of Eddy's seminary. And now he's at the radio station. So this is like a binary star system here.

And so whenever Dr. Eddy comes up with something, Heber Daniel says, hey, let's put it on the radio. So he's announcing this on the radio. Now, see, I celebrate that.

This is Kaukau Mai. I just think it is so great. And this guy named Paulus has got the three dozen radio stations.

And Eddy's sermons are going to start playing on 36 times as many radio stations as they have been on so far in Indonesia. Kaukau Mai. Man, that's what I call celebrate.

That's the word here. Do you celebrate in Christ? Does it get your pulse beating when God does great things? You look around in your periphery. You look in your own life.

You look in the world at large. You look in the scriptures and you see God at work. You see His grace and His faithfulness.

And His creativity in doing tremendous things. If you Kaukau Mai in Christ, that's element number two. Element number three is have no confidence in the flesh.

And this, when it says not having confidence, this is from patho. And this is a word that has a range of meaning. It basically means to be persuaded or to be convinced.

And if you're persuaded or convinced by a thing, you've kind of put your trust in it. You know, I remember back in the 70s when synthetic motor oil came out. And they would give you a pitch.

And they had a little machine. And you could see regular motor oil and they had synthetic motor oil. And there's little gears you could turn.

My grandpa got into this for a while. He had Conklin synthetic motor oil. And he had this little machine.

And it was very persuasive, very convincing. This crank turns hard. This crank turns easy.

You know, this looks dirty. This looks clean. And it's very persuasive.

And so we say, okay, great. And I drain my engine and put in the Conklin because I'm persuaded. I'm convinced.

I put my confidence. I do something about this. Because I'm persuaded, I do something different.

Patho. That's what it means. Well, this is patho plus uke.

Uke is the strong negative in Greek. I'm persuaded, confident, and depending on my flesh. My ideas.

My plan. That's not what drives my train. Not in the flesh.

Having been persuaded. And this is a perfect active participle. What do you know about the perfect tense? It's completed action in past time.

I've already made up my mind that I'm rocking and rolling with my thing. Not in the flesh. Having been persuaded.

Having been convinced. Having put my trust. That's not how I'm living today.

I didn't get up and say, you know, I'm a smart guy. I can make this happen. You know, I've got the money.

I've got the time. I've got the talent. I've got the resources.

I've got the wife who will get this done while I sit back and drink tea. I've got the kids I can devote to that. You know, I've got the... Not depending on, because I've decided in the past that this is my strategy, human stuff.

Those are the three elements. Paul says, if you've got those three things figured out, you are the circumcision. You're in the stratum with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob.

Moses, Elijah, the prophets. As good as it gets. Go through the list.

Are we serving by means of, in the sphere of, in the power of the Spirit of God? Do we understand how the Holy Spirit works? It's not hand-waving and tongues. It's not smack them in the head and say, be healed. We have to understand the Holy Spirit if you're going to operate in the sphere of the Spirit.

What's his job? Leads you into all truth. Gives you perception. Enables your prayer life.

Translates your prayers to God in groanings that cannot be uttered. Read Romans. It's a powerful thing.

God, the Holy Spirit is our conduit to the Father. He is our comforter. Jesus said, I'm going to be gone.

I'm going to give you somebody that's going to be even better than me being here. I can only, in my incarnation, be one place at one time. Holy Spirit can indwell all of you, can seal all of you, can reveal truth to all of you at any time.

You don't have to say, wake up in the middle of the night and say, where's Jesus? Let's go find him and haunt around and here he's off praying. You've got the Spirit. He's with you always.

What a great thing. We have it better than the disciples. It's hard to believe.

But if you had a choice, if Monty says, door number A is the incarnate Jesus, we are better off than Peter, Andrew, James, and John, and all the rest. In God's Spirit, celebrating in Christ Jesus. It's one thing to celebrate.

What do people celebrate? We just celebrated the Fourth of July. What were they celebrating? Well, it kind of depends on the individual. It depends on the politics.

It depends on the perspective. Where are our sources of genuine joy? Sometimes we celebrate when we buy something new. We celebrate when that package off eBay comes in the mail.

We celebrate when something goes on sale. Ah, at last! I've been waiting 15% off. What do we celebrate? If you're in the genuine circumcision, if you're in the genuine realm of those who have God's heart, your genuine joy and genuine celebration is in Christ, the things of Christ.

Nothing gets you as excited as seeing God at work and seeing the plan of God go forward and learning new truth and seeing exciting things in Scripture. Now you're getting there and you're not depending on your flesh. It's relatively simple.

What does God require of you, oh man, but to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God? He's got to grieve God's heart sometimes. But that's what we have. Well, so Paul is going to now illustrate.

He's given us this great principle and in verse 4 he's going to illustrate. We'll pause here and take our break and when we come back we're going to see this great resume, this curriculum vitae from the Apostle Paul.