

## Philippians 10-07-16a

This is Friday, the 16th of July, 2010. We continue our study in the book of Philippians. We're at the inception of Chapter 3. We'll take a moment as we begin our study, actually resume our study of Chapter 3, to go to the Lord in prayer.

It's an opportunity to square things away in our souls, focus our concentration, minimize our distractions, and ensure that there are no impediments or obstacles to the ministry of God's Holy Spirit to all of us as we look at this Scripture together. Shall we pray? Father, what a privilege it is for us once again to spend time in the fellowship and enthusiasm that each person here has for Your Word and for the truth that it contains. We thank You for the Lord Jesus for His work on our behalf, the life that we live because He has redeemed us and purchased us with His own blood and sanctified us and shared with us His calling and His priesthood and His election and His destiny.

We thank You that our lives are invested with meaning and purpose and direction. And we know that the Scriptures that are before us tonight are important to our growth and to our understanding, to our grasp of the individual plan that You have for each one of us. We ask Your blessing on us as we study this portion of Your Word together.

May each of us come away from this study refreshed and encouraged and motivated and wiser in the ways of Your plan so that we can live in a way that is pleasing in Your sight. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

We have seen in chapter 3 that Paul continues the essential theme of the letter to the Philippians. What is the theme? If we had to stop right now and say, okay, what's the big idea in Philippians? What has it been? What was the biggest thing in chapter 1? I, Paul, am in prison, but I am not beaten down. I'm not discouraged.

I'm having a great time. The gospel is being preached. I see the glass as half full, not half empty, right? What was the big idea in chapter 2? The attitude, the foundation, the kind of thinking that enables me to give you the sort of example that I gave you in chapter 1 is what was reflected in Jesus Christ.

It's the one that's reflected in Timothy. It's the one that's reflected in Epaphroditus. That was chapter 2. So now in chapter 3, he returns, and in all of this he says, you ought to be happy about this.

There is celebration. Remember the Greek word *kalkaomai*? Celebrate. Gratulate.

Gratulate. This is your new word for the week. It's a word.

Look it up. You can gratulate. If you're going to share that with somebody, you can con-gratulate.

But gratulation is in order because of what God has done, because of what Christ has done. Yes, we have to bear burdens. Yes, we have to endure challenges and testing.

But it is not unremitting misery. There is joy along the way, and it is ours if we look for it, if we wait for it, if we rest our confidence and our hope on the things that we've learned from God's Word. This is the big idea.

So rejoicing is a theme. Celebration is a theme. Recognition that the key to all of this is orientation, understanding.

It is the perspective we have on life. I am acquainted with at least one helicopter pilot. I've actually known several.

I know one helicopter pilot quite well. We both went into the Marine Corps. He was a pilot.

I was an artillery guy. Artillery guys are on the ground. Artillery pieces, generally speaking, are emplaced on the ground.

I have a ground-based perspective. All of the combat arms typically are on the ground. Your infantry, your artillery, your tanks, your engineers, working on the ground.

You get the same perspective. You're standing there. Your eyes are five or six feet above the deck typically, and that's the view that you have.

If you fly, you get up above. You can see a bigger perspective. You see the nap of the earth.

You see the contours. You can see much more. The same thing is true at sea.

It's one thing to be in a lifeboat, and your range of vision out to the horizon is probably about four and a half miles, five miles at most. You can stand up. You might be able to see five miles in any one direction to the horizon.

If you are 30-odd feet above sea level on the bridge of a destroyer, you can see 13.5 miles out to the horizon. What is your position? That determines how much you can see. What is your perspective? We are blessed by being believers that not only do we have the earthly, secular, human, mundane, everybody's got it perspective, but we have spiritual perspective.

We can see things through other eyes. This has been called lots of things. If you listen to Robert Thieme, Jr., he will call it the difference between human viewpoint and divine viewpoint.

This is the temporal perspective or the eternal perspective. You get this reading Lewis Barry Chafer. You can act like the earthly people or you can act like the heavenly people.

That's your C.I. Schofield perspective. Whatever you want to call it, because we are regenerate, because we have eternal life, we have, if we choose to use it, a different perspective. We can see

things in a different light, in a different way.

That's what Paul is talking about. Anybody can get depressed being locked up in prison. Anybody can get depressed being persecuted.

Anybody can get down because circumstances are not ideal. Not everybody has the supernatural ability to rejoice in those very same circumstances. This is the province of believers who recognize that our momentary light affliction is working for us an eternal weight of glory.

That's our heritage. That's our birthright. That's part of our citizenship.

And Paul is emphasizing this to the Philippians. They are a relatively mature congregation. They are in a community that is largely comprised of former military, Roman army soldiers, those who have been around, who have seen a lot of things, who have a mature perspective.

So when we get to chapter 3, having given us these things, he says, as for the rest, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. We've gone over this. And then he says, here's the threat.

Keep an eye on, learn a lesson from, the dogs. And this is just the opposite of what they think they are. They think that they are not the dogs, that everybody else is the dogs, and that they are the righteous.

They are the beloved of God. They are the chosen people. They are the elect race.

They are the sons of Abraham who are in line for every good thing. And Paul says, beware of the dogs, the real dogs. They're running around calling everybody else a dog, and they are actually the unclean.

They are the unfavored. They are those who are in line for zero when it comes to inheritance. Beware of the workers of evil.

They think they're workers of good. They wallow in their own self-righteousness. They strut, and they congratulate themselves.

Beware of the cutters down. They think that they are the peritome, when they are actually the katatome. Instead of being peritome, the circumcision, those who are in the covenant relationship with God that was symbolized by that ritual, beginning way back with Abraham in the book of Genesis.

Instead, they have turned what was a great sign of the covenant into an ugly thing, a mutilation. We are everything these people think they are. We are the circumcision.

And by the way, this is sort of a metonymy of the part for the whole, if you will. It's a figure of speech, meaning these who are dogs, these who are workers of evil, and these who are not the circumcision, we are the circumcision. And by extension, we are the workers of good, and we are

the not dogs.

We are the chosen and beloved of God who worship God in the spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. We need to take a look at that last phrase of verse three, have no confidence in the flesh. Here's a question.

How much of our life today did we live in the flesh? It kind of depends on how you define your terms, doesn't it? I mean, I don't recall my spirit leaving my body at any point today. I think I pretty much was at the controls and operating my flesh all day long. Most of us are permanently glued together.

However you want to look at it, two or three different parts. If you see the body, soul, and spirit as three things, that's great. If you see it as the immaterial and material and as essentially two parts, that's great.

The Bible doesn't make a real fine distinction or emphasize it. It depends on how you want to look at it. I think, by the way, some of these theological debates is man bipartite or tripartite? What's the difference in the soul and the spirit? It's basically straining at gnats.

What's the difference in the soul and the spirit? What's the difference in the heart and the mind? I don't care. The Bible doesn't make a big deal out of that. And if the Bible doesn't make a big deal out of it, I'm not going to either.

Here he says, we who have no confidence in the flesh. What does he mean by the flesh? Well, thankfully, we've got quite a lot of illumination on this particular subject. And it's important because we lived this life today.

I'm pretty sure everybody listening to the sound of my voice operated in their physical body all day long today. Went to sleep in it last night, woke up in it this morning. We're in the flesh.

So what does it mean to have confidence in the flesh? Well, turn with me to Romans chapter 8. Romans chapter 8. Obviously, this is going to be a passage by the same author, the Apostle Paul. I think without even much exegetical illumination, the point of this is going to become clear. There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

And if you've been through Romans with anybody who's a competent exegete, you know that you can kind of put a line through that last half of verse 1. That kind of crept up there from verse 4. And what it actually says is there is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. Why? For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. Right away, it's easy to kind of start glazing over because it sounds like theology time.

What does that mean, verse 2? The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from

the law of sin and death. Here's the Psalm summary of verse 2. When you are mature, you don't need rules. Does that make sense? We make rules for the children in our house.

Don't put your finger in the light socket. Don't wrestle in the house. Don't play with matches.

Don't, don't, don't. Clean up your room. Brush your teeth.

Finish your food. Do your chores, etc. These are, pick up your toys.

We make rules. How many of those rules are necessary if you're an adult? Or a couple of adults? Roommates, spouses, whatever it may be. Do you have to make rules like that? Do I need a rule as an adult? Don't stick your finger in the light socket.

Brush your teeth. Pick up your stuff. Close the door.

Shut off the lights when you leave. Lock up. We don't need rules.

Why? Because we're mature. Rules are a substitute for thought. You make rules for people who can't think.

Or who are likely to run amok if you don't have rules and enforcement behind them. We have laws and they're enforced for running red lights and leaving an oil-leaking car out on the curb and so on. City ordinances and so on.

If people were responsible and thoughtful and considerate and if everybody acted as they should, we really wouldn't need these ordinances, would we? You wouldn't need neighborhood organizations that you have to join and pay dues to that say keep your lawn trimmed. If you did what you were supposed to do, you wouldn't need these rules. So the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

What is the spirit of life in Christ Jesus? If we could be consciously aware all the time that we are in Christ Jesus and we are alive to God and all of the things that we do by faith are laying hold of righteousness and storing up treasure in heaven and reflecting the glory of God and making the Lord Jesus proud of us, as it were, would we need any rules like don't defraud your neighbor, don't be inconsiderate, don't be bitter, don't be angry, don't be resentful, don't carry a grudge. Would we need any of that? The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus is so powerful that if we could keep a hold of it and never lose sight of it, we basically wouldn't need any rules because the spirit of life in Christ Jesus sharing his thinking and the viewpoint and perspective of heaven would be all the guide that we need. That's what he's talking about.

The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death. It is sin and death that make us need rules. It's the corruption and the defilement and the selfishness and the subjectivity that make rules necessary.

Nobody would murder, nobody would steal, nobody would commit adultery, nobody would covet, nobody would break the commandments if they were infused with the spirit of life in Christ Jesus all the time. It's not necessary. What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh.

What does the law apply to? What part of the law says be gentle? What part of the law of Moses says be courteous? What part of the law of Moses says bear with and be long-suffering? The vast weight of the law, the majority of the law is external. It's actions. It regulates actions and that's its weakness.

Why does our law code get bigger every single day? Every day in this country the law code gets bigger. It's growing like a coral reef. It's growing like a... That's right.

It's faster than that. It's growing. It's out of control growing.

You can't stop it. It's growing like the national debt. How's that? The law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh.

God, and if you look you'll see that *did* is in italics in verse 3 of Romans chapter 8. God, what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh. God, by sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh on account of sin, condemned sin in the flesh. So that, verse 4, the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit.

This is what Paul's talking about in Philippians. This is why he's saying look out not only for your own interests but also for the interests of others. That we are not guided by these superficialities and by self-interest.

Paul says, I don't take any pride in my fleshly qualifications. Born a Hebrew of the Hebrews, tribe of Benjamin, circumcised on the eighth day, Pharisee, and so on. He gives these qualifications in more than one place.

That's not what we live by. That's not what we walk by. And this is what even in the church today is constantly appealed to.

Well, you should live a good life because you need to be a witness to other people. You need to live a good life so that your testimony will help other people get saved. That's a fleshly constraint.

You need to be good because people are watching you. You need to be good because you don't want to besmirch the cause of Christ. That's why you need to be good.

Because of its effects, because of its consequences. You're going to be miserable if you're disobedient. You're going to be unhappy.

This sounds good, and you're probably thinking, well, now wait, some of those things don't sound

good. Think about it. Do we live to achieve earthly results? Are we doing what we do to be seen by men? What did Jesus say? I mean, that's a helpful way to put it.

What did Jesus say about doing what you do to be seen by men? And you say, well, but shouldn't we have a good witness and a good testimony? Well, yes, but that's not the reason that we live a righteous life, is it? To be seen by men? The Pharisees thought they were setting a great example. I think it's important for me to hold up this bag of money and drop it in the treasury so that other people will follow my worthy example and give to the temple. And oh, by the way, I'm sure they're going to think, what a righteous guy I am, but they probably wouldn't let themselves dwell on that too long.

They justified it by thinking, I'm setting an example. This is a witness. How many of the pagans would show their loyalty to God and set such an example for these poor huddled masses here as I'm doing? And it's wrong.

It's wrong to do what we do in the flesh. It's wrong to do what we do because we are seen. This is why another thing that Bob used to say is, if you want to know what you're like, look at yourself when you're alone, when nobody's watching.

What do you do when nobody's looking? How do you act when you're not on stage, when the lights are not shining on you? What's your thought life? What's your mode of behavior? What are you like when you're alone? Many people are way different. Many of us may be way different. We shouldn't be.

We should be consistent. If we live our life in the Spirit and not in the flesh, then it doesn't matter what the flesh is doing or where the flesh is or how many other fleshies are looking at us. The Spirit is always present.

The Word of God is always present. The eyes of the Lord are ever upon us. And if we're living to please Him, when are you off camera for that? It makes a difference.

If we find ourselves changing based on the company that we're in, well, I'm one way with my family, and I'm a different way with my coworkers, and I'm a different way with my friends, I'm a different way. I am different in different contexts. This is a symptom of subjectivity.

Consistency will be one of the hallmarks of a Spirit-guided life because nothing changes. If we walk by means of the Spirit and not according to the flesh, nothing ought to be changing us. It doesn't matter who's looking.

It doesn't matter who's watching. It doesn't matter what people are saying, good, bad, or otherwise. It doesn't matter what the consequences are.

Good, bad, or otherwise. I am just as honest when I'm talking to somebody who saw what happened as when I'm talking to somebody who didn't see what happened. I'm just as honest

when I'm at my desk filling out a piece of paper as I am when I'm in front of a group of people.

It doesn't matter. So, what the law could not do and that it was weak through the flesh, anything that's based on the flesh is going to be weak. So let me ask you.

Here's a little quiz question. This is kind of like David Letterman used to have that thing, will it float? They would take all kinds of things, blenders, chainsaws, whatever, hunks of cheese, and they had a big barrel. They would say, will it float? They would just put it in there to see if it would float or if it would sink.

Another time he had a variation on that where it was, is this something or is it nothing? That was one of my favorites because you come up with these most off-the-wall things and just say, well, is this something or is this nothing? And women were walking around with grinders making sparks fly and there was music playing and then he would just introduce this thing. Is it something or is it nothing? Well, I've got a question for you. Is this walking by means of the spirit or walking by means of the flesh? Personal discipleship.

You and I are going to meet at 6 o'clock in the morning and I'm going to mentor you. Is that in the spirit or in the flesh? What does it depend upon? Mentoring. How about group counseling? Group therapy.

I'm just asking, in the light of what Scripture says, if you have to have the presence of the group to straighten you out, if you've got to have the presence of the mentor to straighten you out, is the mentor and the group made of flesh or are they made of spirit? What are they? Is it God or is it man? Now, you know I'm not saying that there's not such a thing as great fellowship and that there aren't occasions where older women will teach the younger, where older elders in the church, that's what they are, elders. They're supposed to be an example and counsel and so on. I'm talking about a system where, look, Fred, I know you've got a problem lusting after your secretary.

You and I are going to meet at 6 o'clock in the morning and I'm going to disciple you and I'm going to mentor you and I'm going to be a godly example for you because I'm not lusting after my secretary because I don't have one. Or my secretary is my wife, it's not an issue there. But, you know, anything that depends on the flesh.

And two situations might look the same and be different. It's possible for believers to get together and have fellowship and it is of the spirit. Because, again, you can't measure according to the flesh.

You have to find out is the spirit there or not. There are times when a group, is this a group? Do we talk? Do we share burdens at various times? I wouldn't call that group counseling or group therapy, but some might. Are there times when we're one-on-one? Parents with children? Friends with friends? Spouses with spouses? Any two individuals having a conversation in the Word?

Could somebody construe that as discipling or mentoring? If one's older or one's wiser or one's further along or one knows more or one's been through it and the other hasn't? Maybe.

But if you try to can that, if you try to formalize it, if you try to say this system will work, you have just distilled it down into the flesh and it isn't any longer of the spirit. Or, at best, it's very difficult for it to remain of the spirit. I wouldn't say that it never is of the spirit, but it's a problem and it fails.

Because of what this Scripture says, those who live according to the flesh, look at verse 5, those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh. Well, I don't want to have to tell Fred in the morning at our mentoring discipling session that once again I had my secretary come in and take needless letters because I wanted to look at her. I don't want to have to tell Fred in the morning that I... What kind of accountability is that? That's of the flesh.

That's a fleshly restriction. It reminds me of the demoniac. We went through that thing where they bound him and he would always break the fetters and shatter the chains.

Nobody could bind him. He couldn't keep clothes on him. Those were human efforts to solve his demon problem.

The flesh is weak because it's external and it's intermittent, it's momentary. Spiritual solutions are always there, always available, and they don't depend on anybody or anything except God. Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh.

This verse, when I learned it in Bible camp and so on, always, oh, you know, this is when I want a new toy or I want a new bicycle or I want a new .22 caliber rifle or I want a new watch or a new pocket knife. I thought it was covetousness. Those in the flesh set their minds that this was just stuff orientation.

I just want stuff. And that's not it. It can be godly things.

People were getting all wrapped around angels. People get wrapped around the latest fad. I'm going to go to this seminar.

I'm going to get into this program. I'm going to read this book. And, you know, one of the most recent ones, and I know some of you have read this book, and I'm sorry, but that shack thing, I'm telling you, that is of the devil.

That is one of the worst books I've ever read in my life. It is blasphemous. And if you got something out of it, God bless you.

I couldn't get anything out of it. And there's a good book. If you want a detail about what's wrong with it, read the book *Burning Down the Shack*.

And seriously, but it's just like a lot of other things. It slips under our guard because it feels good.

And the guy's a good writer.

I'll give him that. It's a compelling read until Aunt Jemima shows up. And I absolutely lost it there.

The God of the universe, the God of my salvation, is not schlepping around a kitchen making flapjacks. That, to me, is just blasphemy. Can you imagine Ezekiel or Job or Joseph or David or any other biblical party that ever came anywhere near the God of the universe denigrating Him by packaging Him in human flesh? There's only been one time that God has been made flesh, and that's the Lord Jesus Christ.

And anybody else that tries to fleshify God, why do you think God said in the Ten Commandments, Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image? You cannot represent God in flesh, in anything other than the Lord Jesus Christ, and you are treading on way thin ice to attempt it. And feel free to disagree. That's an opinion.

That's not a biblical teaching. I was more shocked by that book than by anything I've run across in a long time. I could not believe.

The thing was on bestseller lists for over 100 weeks. It has sold millions and millions of copies. Churches have done studies out of this book instead of this book.

I'm telling you, for what my opinion is worth, that thing is right out of the pit of hell, and I make no bones about it. I'm sorry if anybody's feelings are hurt, but I'm telling you, you need to go back and take another look. The theology in that thing is grotesque.

It takes away accountability. It takes away the work of Christ. What was Christ? Was some kind of a Mexican gardener or something? I just can't even.

Read. If you want to know why I am so offended and why I'm almost inarticulate about it, get the book *Burning Down the Shack*, and you'll know. So, this is of the flesh.

You cannot fleshify the things of God. You can't dumb them down. You can't simplify them.

Those who are living according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh. Those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. What are the things of the Spirit? What's the fruit of the Spirit? Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness.

You cannot get those off the shelf. Jerry Reed used to play a hot lick on his guitar, and then he'd say, you can't get that at your local five-and-dime. The guy's been playing for 40 years, and he can do things that make it sound like he's got 11 fingers on each hand.

And you can't get that at your local five-and-dime. It's not in the flesh. It's not available in the flesh.

It's something of the Spirit. To love your enemies, to do good to those who hate you, to pray for

those that spitefully use you, you can't get that in the flesh. It is of the Spirit.

It's that elevated view. It's that higher perspective that's not available to the unbeliever, and it's not available to the baby believer, and it's not available to the carnal believer. It is a height that is built up over time by the Word of God and a foundation that is laid in the soul.

Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, and that's the Lord Jesus Christ. We don't need human help to understand God. We need divine help to understand God.

We need the Holy Spirit impressing on our hearts the truth of this book. This is how we come to know God and His character. Not fairy tales.

Not flights of fancy. Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh. Those who live according to the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

For to be carnally minded is death. If you're going to try to get by with human efforts, human devices, human techniques, human step programs, human therapies, human approaches, solutions that depend on people to be there and to be consistent and to never fail. A woman's having trouble in her marriage, goes to the pastor.

Oh, pastor, I just feel unloved. I heard somebody, I was out there building something the day before yesterday. Is that the day before yesterday they put that thing together, that aluminum thing? What is this, Friday? It was yesterday.

It was last night. Time flies when you're fatigued. It was last night.

I was listening to the radio while I was building something, and there was a guy and his wife, and they had a whole bunch of problems in their marriage because they had no life in Christ. And it was at the point where she always had her back to him. And one day he noticed that they had agreed to divorce, but he was a procrastinator and he never got around to signing the paperwork, so they were just living as roommates.

And it was so bad that she could not look at him any time he was in the house. And whenever he was talking to her, all he could see was the back of her head. And one day he grabbed her by the shoulders and he turned around and he said, why don't you look at me? And she said, I can't.

When I think of everything that I dreamed of when we first got married and all the hopes and had our children and everything that I imagined that our marriage and our home life would be, it hurts me to look at you. And subsequent events, they got their spiritual life squared away, and now they go around and talk about these things. But what struck me is that to be carnally minded is death.

There was no answer. He tried everything. He said, I'll reform.

I'll be a better husband. I'll do this and I'll do that. And there is no power in it.

There is no power to fix things like that that are broken. There is no power to change and be a different person and to depend on fleshly things. You could hear this program and say, wow, boy, I sure don't want to have a bad thing like that happen to me.

And by the way, this guy is a comedian by trade. He was a secular comedian before and now he's a Christian comedian. But his life was so bad that there was nothing to smile about.

He couldn't work because he couldn't be humorous. He couldn't tell a joke. His life was a total shambles.

And he couldn't fix it. He couldn't figure a way out. But somebody was praying for him.

Somebody had given him some Bible class tapes from a church here in the area. And it was a study on Ecclesiastes of all things. And he couldn't even pronounce the name of the book.

He had stuck these tapes up on a shelf months and months and months earlier and never listened to them. And everything was in a complete shambles. His wife was wanting to leave.

And as a last desperate act, he popped in one of these tapes and played it and heard himself described. I'm trapped. There's no way out.

Nothing has any meaning. Nothing goes beyond this life. There's nothing permanent.

There's nothing fixed. And God used that power to bring him around. And it's a totally different thing.

To be carnally minded, to be fleshly minded, is death. We can't rejuvenate ourselves. We don't have that creative power.

To be spiritually minded is life and peace. Rules, resolutions, practices. I will change.

I am going to do the following things. It has no power. It's just all death.

It's the flesh trying to resurrect the flesh. And it's all dead. It's the spirit that gives life and peace.

Why? Because the carnal mind is enmity against God. When we're thinking in fleshly terms, even the best of fleshly terms, you're an enemy of God. God's whole paradigm, God's whole plan and purpose is based and centered in invisible divine power.

That's the essence of it. You cannot fleshify God. You can't fleshify His power or His plan or His truth.

The only time that's ever been done is in the God-man, Jesus Christ. It's the only time God was

made flesh. It's the only time the Word was made flesh and dwelled among us.

That's when we beheld His glory. The glory as of the only begotten of the Father. The only begotten of the Father.

There's no other begetting. There's no other incarnating of the Father except Jesus Christ. And any attempt to do so is enemyship with God.

You're not just not with the program. You're against the program. You are undermining and attacking the program.

In Paul's day, in the days of the Philippian church, this was the circumcision, the Judaizers, the ones that said, it's kind of like even in the Old Testament, the Jews are forever trying to amalgamate and syncretize and blend things together. In the Old Testament, they wanted to mix Canaanite religion and Amorite religion with the religion of God, with the law of God. In the New Testament, once Christianity caught on and some of them began to realize this is the real deal, but they said, well, but we're not going to replace Judaism.

We'll incorporate it. We'll expand Judaism to encompass Christianity, but that doesn't mean that you can get away from the law. And it made sense to them.

Why would the law go away? The law is just righteous and good. Even Jesus said, there's nothing wrong with the law. I didn't come to destroy the law.

I came to fulfill it. Who is the circumcision? What does Paul say in Philippians? Who is the circumcision? We are the circumcision, who have no confidence in the flesh, who rejoice in Christ Jesus and worship God in spirit, not in ritual, not in fleshly forms. I would submit that you have to be careful about worship paradigms.

When the paradigm becomes the objective or when the emotional experience that is fostered by the worship paradigm becomes the objective, oh, I'm so down. I just want to go to church. I always feel good when I go down there.

Hear me now. The goal is not to feel good. That's not the purpose of worship.

I know it says rejoice, rejoice. Boast, celebrate. But that's not the goal.

You don't go to church to feel good. We don't live this life to feel good. Feeling good, having peace and having joy is a byproduct of pursuing the goal, which is to be conformed to the image of Christ.

And it's fatal to mix those up. Because if we do what we do because we want to feel good or we want to feel loved. I heard somebody telling a gal who was sobbing and had all kinds of personal problems on the radio.

And they said, you know, you need to get into a good church because those people will comfort you. That is not the reason to go to church, to get comforted by a bunch of people. Now, if you are in a good church and if you're there for the right reasons, will you be comforted by people? Of course.

But it is not the reason to go. You cannot confuse results with causes. You can't confuse the blessings that are associated with things and the goal of doing that thing.

They're not the same. There's so much horribly sloppy thinking, so much false motivation. You do not go to church for fellowship.

You do not go to church to feel good. We assemble because it pleases God. We assemble because it is necessary to our spiritual life.

We assemble because it is part of life in the spirit. We learn the Word of God because it is essential to our life in the spirit. And when you put first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, all these other things are added unto you.

You can purchase an airplane ticket with your credit card and they give you frequent flyer miles or points on a catalog where you can buy barbecue grills and stuff. But I don't fly. I don't go down and buy a ticket because I want to get points for the barbecue.

Well, let's see if we can go fly somewhere. 150 more points, we can get that nice doormat or that wind chime or whatever it is. Let's fly somewhere.

I mean, it would be silly, wouldn't it? That these wonderful little byproducts and benefits would become the goal? But that's exactly what happens in Christian worship. I want to feel good. I'm going to go to church because, boy, that's just so uplifting.

I just always come away refreshed. That's not the reason to go. There are times when we ought to go to church and come away chastened and chastised.

What is the Word of God profitable for? Joy and uplift. It is, but that's not what the verse says. What does the verse say? Instruction, rebuke, correction.

Two out of the four things. Doctrine, that's neutral. But then in the middle of the sandwich you've got reproof and correction.

Hebrews says that rebuke and correction is not fun. There are times when we ought to come away from church feeling like we did when our parents got after us. I believe I'm going to go hide in my room for a while and wait for the storm to pass.

Wait for the sun to come back out from behind the clouds. That's part of what God does for us. Whom the Lord loves, He chastens.

And sometimes we need that. You don't go to feel good and the first time you don't feel good, you quit. You don't stick in a relationship until it doesn't feel good and then say, well, that was fun while it lasted, but I'm divorcing you.

That wedding was great week before last, but this thing's getting kind of tedious now. You don't get married to feel good. You don't.

But if you get married for the right reasons, you're going to feel great. It's a byproduct. It's one of the wonderful blessings that comes when you get married for the right reasons.

Joy and peace are byproducts when you come to God and live in the Spirit for the right reasons. And it's a shame that I even have to talk about this, and I don't to you all, but in the world at large, when you listen to what's going on in Christianity, it's appalling. It's catastrophic.

The things that are just accepted as de rigueur, the order of the day, that these things are going to be a part of Christian life. Well, of course, that's what I'm going to do, and that's how I'm going to operate, and it's in the flesh. This is what Paul is talking about in Philippians when he says, no confidence in the flesh.

I'm not basing my spiritual life on fleshly paradigms, fleshly incentives. I do what I do because I am alive in Christ Jesus. The Spirit of God dwells in me, and I want to bear the fruit of the Spirit, which is intangible, immaterial, invisible, and doesn't depend on anything with regard to the flesh.

We've got to pause here and take our break. When we come back, we'll move forward in Philippians chapter 3 via Romans chapter 8.