

## **PAUL'S LORDSHIP TESTIMONY**

A KEY text that helps us understand the nature of saving faith is found in Paul's personal testimony as relayed by him in Philippians 3.

### **Philippians 3:3 (NKJV)**

**3** For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,

### **Philippians 3:8–9 (NKJV)**

**8** Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ

**9** and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;

Paul uses "circumcision" to denote those who are in a covenant relationship with God. Paul in Philippians 3:3 applies this term to true believers who internally have circumcised hearts which reflects what outward circumcision was to signify. True believers alone fulfill the true meaning of spiritual circumcision – namely, denoting those who are in a covenant relationship with God (cf. Rom. 2:28-29).

Thus, the true people of God are those "who worship God in Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh". *Flesh* is used by Paul in a variety of ways but here he uses it in a very broad way to indicate anything related to human accomplishment, honor, or ability. The flesh has no capacity to make us right with God in any way. We can't do it! True believers realize this and have NO confidence in the flesh.

If you have any confidence in the flesh – in anything you can physically do or have done to you, then this verse does not define you. The true circumcision – that is the true people of God, HAVE NO CONFIDENCE IN THE FLESH! For those who have confidence in the flesh, it's all about the SELF-LIFE. For those who have NO CONFIDENCE in the flesh – it's all about Jesus.

Saving faith involves a definite choice of commitment. Paul counted everything loss so that he might gain Christ. Paul's conversion represents a great exchange. He gave up everything that he had previously considered RELIGIOUS GAIN for knowing Christ – "that I may gain Christ". In this "great exchange," Paul came to "the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord".

The word “knowledge” here in Philippians 3:8 emphasizes PERSONAL EXPERIENTIAL knowledge as opposed to just intellectual knowledge. It is the intense word for knowledge meaning “full knowledge”. Paul is not talking about the surpassing value of knowing the facts about Christ, but rather of knowing Christ personally. This word KNOWLEDGE denotes an intimate knowing – a truly PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP. The personal knowledge of knowing Christ as LORD is what was overwhelmingly significant to Paul.

Many people have intellectual knowledge – they know the facts about Christ but fail to appropriate the truth of it PERSONALLY to themselves (cf. Ja. 2:19). In contrast Paul is talking about PERSONAL appreciation and appropriation of the truth of “Christ Jesus my Lord”. To the true believer knowing Christ as Lord is the most important reality in their lives.

Counting all loss for Paul meant depending on Jesus alone as Savior (Phil. 3:3), but it also meant recognizing Christ as personal LORD! Philippians 3 is the most intimate passage on Paul’s personal testimony. On the road to Damascus as Paul came face to face with the truth of Christ in his heart he COUNTED Jesus as his personal Savior but also as His personal LORD/MASTER.

**Romans 10:13 (NKJV)**

**13** For “whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.”