

Philippians 3.1-11

1

- BGT Τὸ λοιπόν, ἀδελφοί μου, χαίρετε ἐν κυρίῳ. τὰ αὐτὰ γράφειν ὑμῖν ἐμοὶ μὲν οὐκ ὀκνηρόν, ὑμῖν δὲ ἀσφαλές.
- NET Finally, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord! To write this again is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you.
- NRS Finally, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is not troublesome to me, and for you it is a safeguard.
- KJV Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe.
- DRA As to the rest, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not wearisome, but to you is necessary.
- NAU 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.
- NIV Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you.
- NLT Whatever happens, dear brothers and sisters, may the Lord give you joy. I never get tired of telling you this. I am doing this for your own good.
- MSG And that's about it, friends. Be glad in God! I don't mind repeating what I have written in earlier letters, and I hope you don't mind hearing it again. Better safe than sorry--so here goes.

- Note that Τὸ λοιπόν / “finally” occurs again in 4:8. In 2 Cor 13:11, it is used as the introduction to the closing of the letter.
- χαίρετε has been a theme throughout the letter (Phil. 1:18; 2:17f, 28; 3:1; 4:4, 10). Especially note the repetition in 4.4. Also note the NRSV footnote to “rejoice” indicating that it could be translated as “farewell.” There is precedence for such a translation in secular literature and in 2 Cor 13:11.
- The preceding two points are important for those who suggest that chapter 3 is a separate closing independent of chapter 4.
- What are “the same things” that Paul is talking about? Does he refer to something he wrote in a previous letter? (Cf. MSG) Or is he referring to what he has already written in the letter or what he is about to write? (Note MSG and also the major break that the NRSV makes between the first and second half of this verse.)

2

- BGT Βλέπετε τοὺς κύνας, βλέπετε τοὺς κακοὺς ἐργάτας, βλέπετε τὴν κατατομήν.
- NET Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of those who mutilate the flesh!
- NRS Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of those who mutilate the flesh!
- KJV Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.
- DRA Beware of dogs: beware of evil workers: beware of the concision.
- NAU Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision;
- NIV Watch out for those dogs, those men who do evil, those mutilators of the flesh.
- NLT Watch out for those dogs, those wicked men and their evil deeds, those mutilators who say you must be circumcised to be saved.
- MSG Steer clear of the barking dogs, those religious busybodies, all bark and no bite. All they're interested in is appearances--knife-happy circumcisers, I call them.

- In both secular literature and elsewhere in the Bible (eg., Matt. 7:6; Rev. 22:15), “dogs” is a strong term of derision and criticism.
- κακοὺς ἐργάτας: cf. the similar phrasing in 2 Cor. 11:13.
- κατατεμνω is used in the LXX to refer to mutilations. (Cf. Lev. 21:5; I Kings 18:28) Note the word play between κατατομήν here and περιτομή in the next verse.

3

BGT ἡμεῖς γὰρ ἐσμεν ἡ περιτομή, οἱ πνεύματι θεοῦ λατρεύοντες καὶ καυχώμενοι ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἐν σαρκὶ πεποιθότες,
NET For we are the circumcision, the ones who worship by the Spirit of God, exult in Christ Jesus, and do not rely on human credentials
NRS For it is we who are the circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh--
KJV For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.
DRA For we are the circumcision, who in spirit serve God and glory in Christ Jesus, not having confidence in the flesh.
NAU 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,
NIV For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh--
NLT For we who worship God in the Spirit are the only ones who are truly circumcised. We put no confidence in human effort. Instead, we boast about what Christ Jesus has done for us.
MSG The real believers are the ones the Spirit of God leads to work away at this ministry, filling the air with Christ's praise as we do it. We couldn't carry this off by our own efforts, and we know it--

- Note the emphatic use and position of ἡμεῖς.
- “For we are the circumcision...” – This has got to sound as strange in Greek as it does in English.
- λατρεύω means “serve” but usually refers to the carrying out of religious duties. Cf. BDAG.
- καυχάομαι is a favorite term for Paul (35x) and refers to “taking pride in” or “boasting about.”
- Note the contrast between “Spirit” / “flesh” and between “in Christ Jesus” / “in flesh.”

4

BGT καίπερ ἐγὼ ἔχων πεποιθήσιν καὶ ἐν σαρκί. Εἴ τις δοκεῖ ἄλλος πεποιθέναι ἐν σαρκί, ἐγὼ μᾶλλον·
NET --though mine too are significant. If someone thinks he has good reasons to put confidence in human credentials, I have more:
NRS even though I, too, have reason for confidence in the flesh. If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more:
KJV Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:
DRA Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other thinketh he may have confidence in the flesh, I more:
NAU 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:
NIV though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more:
NLT Yet I could have confidence in myself if anyone could. If others have reason for confidence in their own efforts, I have even more!
MSG even though we can list what many might think are impressive credentials. You know my pedigree:

- Note that this is a simple conditional construction with the indicative >> If anyone thinks (and apparently some do)...

5

BGT περιτομή ὀκταήμερος, ἐκ γένους Ἰσραήλ, φυλῆς Βενιαμίν, Ἑβραῖος ἐξ Ἑβραίων, κατὰ νόμον Φαρισαῖος,
NET I was circumcised on the eighth day, from the people of Israel and the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews. I lived according to the law as a Pharisee.
NRS circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee;
KJV Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;
DRA Being circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews. According to the law, a Pharisee:
NAU circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee;
NIV circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee;
NLT For I was circumcised when I was eight days old, having been born into a pure-blooded Jewish family that is a branch of the tribe of Benjamin. So I am a real Jew if there ever was one! What's more, I was a member of the Pharisees, who demand the strictest obedience to the Jewish law.
MSG a legitimate birth, circumcised on the eighth day; an Israelite from the elite tribe of Benjamin; a strict and devout adherent to God's law;

- How are Paul's claims to Jewishness being heard in the Greco-Roman city of Philippi?

6

BGT κατὰ ζήλος διώκων τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, κατὰ δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐν νόμῳ γενόμενος ἄμεμπτος.
NET In my zeal for God I persecuted the church. According to the righteousness stipulated in the law I was blameless.
NRS as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.
KJV Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.
DRA According to zeal, persecuting the church of God: According to the justice that is in the law, conversing without blame.
NAU as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.
NIV as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless.
NLT And zealous? Yes, in fact, I harshly persecuted the church. And I obeyed the Jewish law so carefully that I was never accused of any fault.
MSG a fiery defender of the purity of my religion, even to the point of persecuting Christians; a meticulous observer of everything set down in God's law Book.

- Does Paul understand “zeal” to be a good thing?
- Note that Paul truly understands that he was “blameless” with respect to the law. Cf. Luke 1.6; 1 Thess 3.13; Phil 2.15 for others for whom the possibility of such blamelessness appears to be real.

7

BGT [Ἀλλὰ] ἅτινα ἦν μοι κέρδη, ταῦτα ἤγημαι διὰ τὸν Χριστὸν ζημίαν.

NET But these assets I have come to regard as liabilities because of Christ.

NRS Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ.

KJV But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

DRA But the things that were gain to me, the same I have counted loss for Christ.

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

NIV But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.

NLT I once thought all these things were so very important, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done.

MSG The very credentials these people are waving around as something special, I'm tearing up and throwing out with the trash--along with everything else I used to take credit for. And why? Because of Christ.

- Paul is talking here about “gain/profit” and “liability/loss.” From what realm does this language come?
- Note that vv 7-11 are a single sentence.

8

BGT ἀλλὰ μενοῦνγε καὶ ἠγοῦμαι πάντα ζημίαν εἶναι διὰ τὸ ὑπερέχον τῆς γνώσεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ κυρίου μου, δι' ὃν τὰ πάντα ἐζημιώθην, καὶ ἠγοῦμαι σκύβαλα, ἵνα Χριστὸν κερδήσω

NET More than that, I now regard all things as liabilities compared to the far greater value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things--indeed, I regard them as dung!--that I may gain Christ,

NRS More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ

KJV Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,

DRA Furthermore, I count all things to be but loss for the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ, my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them but as dung, that I may gain Christ.

NAU 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 so that I may gain Christ,

NIV What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ

NLT Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the priceless gain of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I may have Christ

MSG Yes, all the things I once thought were so important are gone from my life. Compared to the high privilege of knowing Christ Jesus as my Master, firsthand, everything I once thought I had going for me is insignificant--dog dung. I've dumped it all in the trash so that I could embrace Christ

- Note the chiasmic structure of vv. 7-8.

[Ἀλλὰ] ἅτινα ἦν μοι κέρδη,

ταῦτα ἤγημαι διὰ τὸν Χριστὸν ζημίαν.

ἀλλὰ μενοῦνγε καὶ ἠγοῦμαι πάντα ζημίαν εἶναι

διὰ τὸ ὑπερέχον τῆς γνώσεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ κυρίου μου

ἵνα Χριστὸν κερδήσω

καὶ ἠγοῦμαι σκύβαλα

δι' ὃν τὰ πάντα ἐζημιώθην

9

- BGT καὶ εὐρεθῶ ἐν αὐτῷ, μὴ ἔχων ἐμὴν δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ νόμου ἀλλὰ τὴν διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ, τὴν ἐκ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει,
- NET and be found in him, not because I have my own righteousness derived from the law, but because I have the righteousness that comes by way of Christ's faithfulness--a righteousness from God that is in fact based on Christ's faithfulness.
- NRS and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith.
- KJV And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:
- DRA And may be found in him, not having my justice, which is of the law, but that which is of the faith of Christ Jesus, which is of God: justice in faith.
- NAU 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,
- NIV and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ-- the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.
- NLT and become one with him. I no longer count on my own goodness or my ability to obey God's law, but I trust Christ to save me. For God's way of making us right with himself depends on faith.
- MSG and be embraced by him. I didn't want some petty, inferior brand of righteousness that comes from keeping a list of rules when I could get the robust kind that comes from trusting Christ--God's righteousness.

- διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ is a critical phrase. Note carefully how the translations render it. (The issue is whether Χριστοῦ is a subjective or objective genitive.)

10

- BGT τοῦ γνῶναι αὐτὸν καὶ τὴν δύναμιν τῆς ἀναστάσεως αὐτοῦ καὶ [τὴν] κοινωνίαν [τῶν] παθημάτων αὐτοῦ, συμμορφιζόμενος τῷ θανάτῳ αὐτοῦ,
- NET My aim is to know him, to experience the power of his resurrection, to share in his sufferings, and to be like him in his death,
- NRS I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death,
- KJV That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;
- DRA That I may know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings: being made conformable to his death,
- NAU that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;
- NIV I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,
- NLT As a result, I can really know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead. I can learn what it means to suffer with him, sharing in his death,
- MSG I gave up all that inferior stuff so I could know Christ personally, experience his resurrection power, be a partner in his suffering, and go all the way with him to death itself.

- Note that Paul states that there are three things he wants to know, and then he follows that with a circumstantial participle phrase (συμμορφιζόμενος τῷ θανάτῳ αὐτοῦ). What is the 'circumstance' this participial phrase might be suggesting?
- Recall that κοινωνία has already been identified as an important concept for Paul in 1.5 and 2.1.

11

BGT εἴ πως καταντήσω εἰς τὴν ἐξανάστασιν τὴν ἐκ νεκρῶν.
NET and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.
NRS if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.
KJV If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.
DRA If by any means I may attain to the resurrection which is from the dead.
NAU in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.
NIV and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.
NLT so that, somehow, I can experience the resurrection from the dead!
MSG If there was any way to get in on the resurrection from the dead, I wanted to do it.

- One might have expected this last phrase to continue the thought of the previous verse and the things Paul wants to know. Is Paul suggesting uncertainty about whether he will experience the resurrection or not?
- Do note that this is the “If...” part of the conditional. What is the “then” part? Is it verse 7?