**True Confidence brings Joy**

**Philippians 3:1-11**

**3 Whatever happens, my dear brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord. I never get tired of telling you these things, and I do it to safeguard your faith.**

**2Watch out for those dogs, those people who do evil, those mutilators who say you must be circumcised to be saved. 3For we who worship by the Spirit of God are the ones who are truly circumcised. We rely on what Christ Jesus has done for us. We put no confidence in human effort, 4though I could have confidence in my own effort if anyone could. Indeed, if others have reason for confidence in their own efforts, I have even more!**

**5I was circumcised when I was eight days old. I am a pure-blooded citizen of Israel and a member of the tribe of Benjamin—a real Hebrew if there ever was one! I was a member of the Pharisees, who demand the strictest obedience to the Jewish law. 6I was so zealous that I harshly persecuted the church. And as for righteousness, I obeyed the law without fault.**

**7I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. 8Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ 9and become one with him. I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God’s way of making us right with himself depends on faith. 10I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead. I want to suffer with him, sharing in his death, 11so that one way or another I will experience the resurrection from the dead!**

Whatever happens, my dear brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord. I never get tired of telling you these things, and I do it to safeguard your faith.

**2**Watch out for those dogs, those people who do evil, those mutilators who say you must be circumcised to be saved.

Confidence pops out of the words

Joy and Confidence are tied together

Intro: Confidence

Over confidence or insecurity

King Alfonso quote

Nietzsche quote

Julia Roberts quote

Madonna quote

There is a deep insecurity or a false sense of security

Swagger

Joy and lies are wrapped up in the first two verses. Paul gets really angry about the guys who lie about where to put your confidence

People will lie to you to try to boost your confidence in yourself

1. **True Confidence comes from what God has done through Jesus**

**Vs 3-4**

**For we who worship by the Spirit of God are the ones who are truly circumcised. We rely on what Christ Jesus has done for us. We put no confidence in human effort,4though I could have confidence in my own effort if anyone could. Indeed, if others have reason for confidence in their own efforts, I have even more!**

1. **False Confidence comes from “the list” of who you are and what you do**

**Vs 5-65I was circumcised when I was eight days old. I am a pure-blooded citizen of Israel and a member of the tribe of Benjamin—a real Hebrew if there ever was one! I was a member of the Pharisees, who demand the strictest obedience to the Jewish law. 6I was so zealous that I harshly persecuted the church. And as for righteousness, I obeyed the law without fault.**

Accountants ledger

1. **Count “the list” and achievements all as garbage because it won’t give you true confidence**

**Vs 7-9**

**7I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. 8Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ 9and become one with him. I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God’s way of making us right with himself depends on faith.**

Confidence comes from depending on what Jesus has done for you

**Picture of Bono and Martin Luther in one slide**

1. **Life becomes about a relationship**

**Vs 10-11**

**3  10I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead. I want to suffer with him, sharing in his death, 11so that one way or another I will experience the resurrection from the dead!**

I can live with confidence because:

I am loved unconditionally

I have power over every evil thing and circumstance

I am

A relationship with Jesus becomes the center of confident living.

Name Drop Jesus

Paul was religious before he was saved, but his religion could not save him. He had to lose his religion in order to find eternal life! He begins this chapter by warning the believers against religion apart from Christ. The Jews called the Gentiles “dogs,” but here Paul uses the term “dogs” to describe the Jewish teachers who emphasized circumcision and keeping the Law. (We met those teachers in Acts 15 and Galatians.) In fact, he does not even call the rite “circumcision”; he calls it “concision,” which means “a cutting, a mutilation of the flesh.” True worship is in the Spirit (John 4:20–24) and not in the flesh; it honors Jesus Christ, not religious leaders; it depends on God’s grace, not on fleshly strength. How much of what passes for the Christian faith in this world is really only fleshly religion.

Paul had the best possible reputation as a Jewish rabbi. In birth and training, he far surpassed all of his friends (see Gal. 1:11–24). He was sincere too; his Jewish religion meant life and death to him. So sincere was he that he even persecuted those who differed with him. If any man could get to heaven on the basis of character and religion, it was Paul—and yet he was a lost sinner apart from Jesus Christ! When he met Christ, he considered all of his earthly and fleshly attainments mere rubbish! “I counted” (v. 7) is the way he puts it. He measured carefully, took stock of himself, and decided that all of his religion and worldly honors were not worth it. He wanted Christ!

What did Paul obtain through faith in Christ? Righteousness, for one thing (v. 9). Paul had plenty of legal righteousness (v. 6), but he lacked that true righteousness that God demands and that He alone can give. It is one thing to be religious enough to get into the synagogue, and quite another to be righteous enough to get into heaven. Paul also obtained a personal knowledge of Christ. Salvation is not knowing about Christ; it is knowing Him (John 17:3). Paul also experienced resurrection power (see Eph. 3:14ff) in his life. Added to these blessings was the privilege of suffering for Christ (Phil. 1:29). Finally, through Christ he was given a new promise: the “out-resurrection from the dead” (v. 11). The Jews believed in the resurrection, that is, a general resurrection at the end of the age; but Christ introduced a resurrection of the just out from among the dead. This is called the first resurrection (1 Thes. 4:13–18; Rev. 20:5). When Paul says “If by any means …” he is not suggesting uncertainty but humility. To think that he, a murderer, should share in that glorious resurrection!

It is easy for us to get wrapped up in “things,” not only the tangible things that we can see, but also the intangibles such as reputation, fame, achievement. Paul writes about “what things were gain” to him (Phil. 3:7); he also mentions “things which are behind” and “things which are before” (Phil. 3:13). In Paul’s case, some of these “things” were intangible, such as religious achievements (Gal. 1:14), a feeling of self-satisfaction, morality. We today can be snared both by tangibles and intangibles, and as a result lose our joy.

But even the tangible things are not in themselves sinful. God made things, and the Bible declares that these things are good (Gen. 1:31). God knows that we need certain things in order to live (Matt. 6:31–34). In fact, He “giveth us richly all things to enjoy” (1 Tim. 6:17). But Jesus warns us that our lives do not consist in the abundance of the things that we possess (Luke 12:15). Quantity is no assurance of quality. Many people who have the things money can buy have lost the things that money cannot buy.

The key word in Philippians 3:1–11 is *count* (Phil. 3:7–8, 13). In the Greek, two different words are used, but the basic idea is the same: to evaluate, to assess. “The unexamined life is not worth living,” said Socrates. Yet, few people sit down to weigh seriously the values that control their decisions and directions. Many people today are the slaves of “things,” and as a result do not experience real Christian joy.

In Paul’s case, the “things” he was living for before he knew Christ seemed to be very commendable: a righteous life, obedience to the Law, the defense of the religion of his fathers. But none of these things satisfied him or gave him acceptance with God.

Like most “religious” people today, Paul had enough morality to keep him out of trouble, but not enough righteousness to get him into heaven! It was not bad things that kept Paul away from Jesus—it was good things! He had to lose his “religion” to find salvation.

One day, Saul of Tarsus, the rabbi, met Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and on that day Saul’s values changed (read Acts 9:1–31). When Saul opened his books to evaluate his wealth, he discovered that apart from Jesus Christ, everything he lived for was only refuse. He explains in this section that there are only two kinds of righteousness (or spiritual wealth)—works righteousness and faith righteousness—and only faith righteousness is acceptable to God.

Works Righteousness (Phil. 3:1–6)

*The exhortation (vv. 1–3)*. “Finally” at this point does not mean Paul is about to close the letter, because he keeps on going. The word means “For the rest,” and introduces the new section. Paul’s “finally” at Philippians 4:18 is the one that means “I am about to close.” Paul has warned the believers at Philippi before, but now he warns them again. “Look out for dogs! Look out for the workers of evil! Look out for the mutilation!” To whom is he referring in this triple warning? The answer takes us back into the early history of the church.

From the very beginning, the Gospel came “to the Jew first” (see Acts 3:26; Rom. 1:16), so that the first seven chapters of Acts deal only with Jewish believers or with Gentiles who were Jewish proselytes (Acts 2:10). In Acts 8:5–25, the message went to the Samaritans, but this did not cause too much of an upheaval since the Samaritans were at least partly Jewish. But when Peter went to the Gentiles in Acts 10, this created an uproar. Peter was called on the carpet to explain his activities (Acts 11). After all, the Gentiles in Acts 10 had become Christians *without first becoming Jews*, and this was a whole new thing for the church. Peter explained that it was God who had directed him to preach to the Gentiles, and the matter seemed to be settled.

But it was not settled for long. Paul was sent out by the Holy Spirit to minister especially to the Gentiles (Acts 13:1–3; 22:21). Peter had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles in Acts 10, and Paul followed his example on his first missionary journey (see Acts 14:26–28). It did not take long for the strict Jewish believers to oppose Paul’s ministry and come to Antioch teaching that it was necessary for the Gentiles to submit to Jewish rules before they could be saved (Acts 15:1). This disagreement led to the Conference at Jerusalem that is described in Acts 15. The result of the conference was an approval of Paul’s ministry and a victory for the Gospel of the grace of God. Gentiles did *not* have to become Jewish proselytes in order to become Christians!

But the dissenters were not content. Having failed in their opposition to Paul at Antioch and Jerusalem, they followed him wherever he went and tried to steal his converts and his churches. Bible students call this group of false teachers who try to mix Law and grace “Judaizers.” The Epistle to the Galatians was written primarily to combat this false teaching. It is this group of “Judaizers” that Paul is referring to in Philippians 3:1–2. He uses three terms to describe them.

*“Dogs.”* The orthodox Jew would call the Gentile a “dog,” but here Paul calls orthodox Jews “dogs”! Paul is not just using names; he is comparing these false teachers to the dirty scavengers so contemptible to decent people. Like those dogs, these Judaizers snapped at Paul’s heels and followed him from place to place “barking” their false doctrines. They were troublemakers and carriers of dangerous infection.

*“Evil workers.”* These men taught that the sinner was saved by faith *plus* good works, especially the works of the Law. But Paul states that their “good works” are really *evil* works because they are performed by the flesh (old nature) and not the Spirit, and they glorify the workers and not Jesus Christ. Ephesians 2:8–10 and Titus 3:3–7 make it clear that nobody can be saved by doing good works, even religious works. A Christian’s good works are the result of his faith, not the basis for his salvation.

*“The mutilation.”* Here Paul uses a pun on the word “circumcision.” The word translated “circumcision” literally means “a mutilation.” The Judaizers taught that circumcision was essential to salvation (Acts 15:1; Gal. 6:12–18); but Paul states that circumcision of *itself* is only a mutilation! The true Christian has experienced a spiritual circumcision in Christ (Col. 2:11), and does not need any fleshly operations. Circumcision, baptism, the Lord’s Supper, tithing, or any other religious practice cannot save a person from his sins. Only faith in Jesus Christ can do that.

In contrast to the false Christians, Paul describes the true Christians, the “true circumcision” (see Rom. 2:25–29 for a parallel).

*He worships God in the Spirit*. He does not depend on his own good works which are only of the flesh (see John 4:19–24).

*He boasts in Jesus Christ*. People who depend on religion are usually boasting about what they have done. The true Christian has nothing of which to boast (Eph. 2:8–10). His boast is only in Christ! In Luke 18:9–14, Jesus gives a parable that describes these two opposite attitudes.

*He has no confidence in the flesh*. The popular religious philosophy of today is, “The Lord helps those who help themselves.” It was also popular in Paul’s day, and it is just as wrong today as it was then. (By “the flesh” Paul means “the old nature” that we received at birth.) The Bible has nothing good to say about “flesh,” and yet most people today depend entirely on what they themselves can do to please God. Flesh only corrupts God’s way on earth (Gen. 6:12). It profits nothing as far as spiritual life is concerned (John 6:63). It has nothing good in it (Rom. 7:18). No wonder we should put no confidence in the flesh!

A lady was arguing with her pastor about this matter of faith and works. “I think that getting to heaven is like rowing a boat,” she said. “One oar is faith, and the other is works. If you use both, you get there. If you use only one, you go around in circles.”

‘’There is only one thing wrong with your illustration,” replied the pastor. “Nobody is going to heaven *in a rowboat!”*

There is only one “good work” that takes the sinner to heaven: the finished work of Christ on the cross (John 17:1–4; 19:30; Heb. 10:11–14).

*The example (vv. 4–6)*. Paul was not speaking from an ivory tower; he personally *knew* the futility of trying to attain salvation by means of good works. As a young student, he had sat at the feet of Gamaliel, the great rabbi (Acts 22:3). His career as a Jewish religious leader was a promising one (Gal. 1:13–14); and yet Paul gave it all up—to become a hated member of the “Christian sect” and a preacher of the Gospel! Actually, the Judaizers were compromising in order to avoid persecution (Gal. 6:12–13), while Paul was being true to Christ’s message of grace and as a result was suffering persecution.

In this intensely autobiographical section, Paul examines his own life. He becomes an “auditor” who opens the books to see what wealth he has, and he discovers that *he is bankrupt!*

*Paul’s relationship to the nation*. He was born into a pure Hebrew family and entered into a covenantal relationship when he was circumcised. He was not a proselyte, nor was he descended from Ishmael (Abraham’s other son) or Esau (Isaac’s other son). The Judaizers would understand Paul’s reference to the tribe of Benjamin, because Benjamin and Joseph were Jacob’s favorite sons. They were born to Rachel, Jacob’s favorite wife. Israel’s first king came from Benjamin, and this little tribe was faithful to David during the rebellion under Absalom. Paul’s human heritage was something to be proud of! When measured by this standard, he passed with flying colors.

*Paul’s relationship to the Law*. “As touching the Law, a Pharisee … touching the righteousness which is in the Law, blameless” (Phil. 3:5–6). To the Jews of Paul’s day, a Pharisee had reached the very summit of religious experience, the highest ideal a Jew could ever hope to attain. If anybody was going to heaven, it was the Pharisee! He held to orthodox doctrine (see Acts 23:6–9) and tried to fulfill the religious duties faithfully (Luke 18:10–14). While we today are accustomed to use the word “Pharisee” as the equivalent of “hypocrite,” this usage was not prevalent in Paul’s day. Measured by the righteousness of the Law, Paul was blameless. He kept the Law and the traditions perfectly.

*Paul’s relationship to Israel’s enemies*. But it is not enough to believe the truth; a man must also oppose lies. Paul defended his orthodox faith by persecuting the followers of “that pretender,” Jesus (Matt. 27:62–66). He assisted at the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7:54–60), and after that he led the attack against the church in general (Acts 8:1–3). Even in later years, Paul admitted his role in persecuting the church (Acts 22:1–5; 26:1–11; see also 1 Tim. 1:12–16). Every Jew could boast of his own blood heritage (though he certainly could not take any credit for it). Some Jews could boast of their faithfulness to the Jewish religion. But Paul could boast of those things *plus* his zeal in persecuting the church.

At this point we might ask: “How could a sincere man like Saul of Tarsus be so wrong?” The answer is: *he was using the wrong measuring stick!* Like the rich young ruler (Mark 10:17–22) and the Pharisee in Christ’s parable (Luke 18:10–14), Saul of Tarsus was looking at the *outside* and not the *inside*. He was comparing himself with standards set by men, not by God. As far as obeying *outwardly* the demands of the Law, Paul was a success, but he did not stop to consider the *inward sins* he was committing. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus makes it clear that there are sinful *attitudes* and *appetites* as well as sinful *actions* (Matt. 5:21–48).

When he looked at himself or looked at others, Saul of Tarsus considered himself to be righteous. But one day he saw himself as compared with Jesus Christ! It was then that he changed his evaluations and values, and abandoned “works righteousness” for the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Faith Righteousness (Phil. 3:7–11)

When Paul met Jesus Christ on the Damascus road (Acts 9), he trusted Him and became a child of God. It was an instantaneous miracle of the grace of God, the kind that still takes place today whenever sinners will admit their need and turn to the Saviour by faith. When Paul met Christ, he realized how futile were his good works and how sinful were his claims of righteousness. A wonderful transaction took place. Paul lost some things, but he gained much more than he lost!

*Paul’s losses (v. 7)*. To begin with, he lost whatever was *gain to him personally apart from God*. Certainly Paul had a great reputation as a scholar (Acts 26:24) and a religious leader. He was proud of his Jewish heritage and his religious achievements. All of these things were valuable to him; he could profit from them. He certainly had many friends who admired his zeal. But he measured these “treasures” against what Jesus Christ had to offer, and he realized that all he held dear was really nothing but “refuse” compared to what he had in Christ. His own “treasures” brought glory to him personally, but they did not bring glory to God. They were “gain” to him only, and as such, were selfish.

This does not mean that Paul repudiated his rich heritage as an orthodox Jew. As you read his letters and follow his ministry in the Book of Acts, you see how he valued both his Jewish blood and his Roman citizenship. Becoming a Christian did not make him *less* a Jew. In fact, it made him a *completed* Jew, a true child of Abraham both spiritually and physically (Gal. 3:6–9). Nor did he lower his standards of morality because he saw the shallowness of pharisaical religion. He accepted the *higher* standard of living—conformity to Jesus Christ (Rom. 12:1–2). When a person becomes a Christian, God takes away the bad, but He also takes the good and makes it better.

*Paul’s gains (vv. 8–11)*. Again we are reminded of Jim Elliot’s words: “He is no fool to give what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.” This is what Paul experienced: he lost his religion and his reputation, but he gained far more than he lost.

*The knowledge of Christ (v. 8)*. This means much more than knowledge *about* Christ, because Paul had that kind of historical information before he was saved. To “know Christ” means to have a personal relationship with Him through faith. It is this experience that Jesus mentions in John 17:3. You and I know *about* many people, even people who lived centuries ago, but we know personally very few. “Christianity *is* Christ.” Salvation is knowing Him in a personal way.

*The righteousness of Christ (v. 9)*. Righteousness was the great goal of Paul’s life when he was a Pharisee, but it was a self-righteousness, a works righteousness, that he never really could attain. But when Paul trusted Christ, he lost his own self-righteousness and gained the righteousness of Christ. The technical word for this transaction is *imputation* (read Rom. 4:1–8 carefully). It means “to put to one’s account.” Paul looked at his own record and discovered that he was spiritually bankrupt. He looked at Christ’s record and saw that He was perfect. When Paul trusted Christ, he saw God put Christ’s righteousness *to his own account!* More than that, Paul discovered that his sins had been put on Christ’s account on the cross (2 Cor. 5:21). And God promised Paul that He would never write his sins against him anymore. What a fantastic experience of God’s grace!

Romans 9:30–10:13 is a parallel passage and you ought to read it carefully. What Paul says about the nation Israel was true in his own life before he was saved. And it is true in the lives of many religious people today; they refuse to abandon their own righteousness that they might receive the free gift of the righteousness of Christ. Many religious people will not even admit they *need* any righteousness. Like Saul of Tarsus, they are measuring themselves by themselves, or by the standards of the Ten Commandments, and they fail to see the *inwardness* of sin. Paul had to give up his religion to receive righteousness, but he did not consider it a sacrifice.

*The fellowship of Christ (vv. 10–11)*. When he became a Christian, it was not the *end* for Paul, but the *beginning*. His experience with Christ was so tremendous that it transformed his life. And this experience continued in the years to follow. It was a *personal* experience (“That I may know Him”) as Paul walked with Christ, prayed, obeyed His will, and sought to glorify His name. When he was living under Law, all Paul had was a set of rules. But now he had a Friend, a Master, a constant Companion! It was also a *powerful* experience (“and the power of His resurrection”), as the resurrection power of Christ went to work in Paul’s life. “Christ liveth in me!” (Gal. 2:20) Read Ephesians 1:15–23 and 3:13–21 for Paul’s estimate of the resurrection power of Christ and what it can do in your life.

It was also a *painful* experience (“and the fellowship of His sufferings”). Paul knew that it was a privilege to suffer for Christ (Phil. 1:29–30). In fact, suffering had been a part of his experience from the very beginning (Acts 9:16). As we grow in our knowledge of Christ and our experience of His power, we come under the attack of the enemy. Paul had been a persecutor at one time, but he learned what it means to be persecuted. But it was worth it! For walking with Christ was also a *practical* experience (“being made conformable unto His death”). Paul lived for Christ because he died to self (Rom. 6 explains this); he took up his cross daily and followed Him. The result of this death was a spiritual resurrection (Phil. 3:11) that caused Paul to walk “in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4). Paul summarizes this whole experience in Galatians 2:20, so take time to read it.

Yes, Paul gained far more than he lost. In fact, the gains were so thrilling that Paul considered all other “things” nothing but garbage in comparison! No wonder he had joy—his life did not depend on the cheap “things” of the world but on the eternal values found in Christ. Paul had the “spiritual mind” and looked at the “things” of earth from heaven’s point of view. People who live for “things” are never really happy, because they must constantly protect their treasures and worry lest they lose their value. Not so the believer with the spiritual mind; his treasures in Christ can never be stolen and they never lose their value.

Maybe now is a good time for you to become an accountant and evaluate in your life the “things” that matter most to you.

What makes a Christian Joyful?

Intro:

Verse 1. Whatever Happens… just have joy! You can!

Verse 2 There are people who are going to try to change the message. They make me really mad.

I am really ticked off because it will steal your joy! It is going to come in sounding so good (circumcision does not sound good) it will be all about you and take these steps and you are in!

They will tell you it is about you. They will put you at the centre of the good news.

Good News is this:

Why did Paul get so angry about these guys? Because they convinced some people the opposite of these three points

It’s not the big “I”

1.We Worship by the Spirit of God

2.We rely on what Christ Jesus has done for us

3.We put no confidence in human effort

Personal Testimony: The List

It’s all about the list. My list, what I’ve done.

“It’s a mind-blowing concept that the God who created the Universe might be looking for company, a real relationship with people, but the thing that keeps me on my knees is the difference between Grace and Karma…

You see, at the centre of all religions is the idea of Karma. You know, what you put out comes back to you; an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, or in physics – in physical laws – every action is met by an equal or opposite one.  Its clear to me that Karma is at the very heart of the universe.  I’m absolutely sure of it.

And yet, along comes this idea called Grace to upend all that “As you reap, so will you sow” stuff.  Grace defies reason and logic. Love interrupts, if you like, the consequences of your actions, which in my case is very good news indeed, because I’ve done a lot of stupid stuff.

That’s between me and God. But I’d be in big trouble if Karma was going to finally be my judge. I’d be in deep shit. It doesn’t excuse my mistakes, but I’m holding out for Grace. I’m holding out that Jesus took my sins onto the Cross because I know who I am, and I hope I don’t have to depend on my own religiosity.

The point of the death of Christ is that Christ took on the sins of the world so that what we put out did not come back to us, and that our sinful nature does not reap the obvious death. That’s the point. It should keep us humbled….its not our own good works that get through the gates of heaven…

If only we could be a bit more like Him, the world would be transformed.  All I do is get up on the Cross of the Ego; the bad hangover, the bad review. When I look at the Cross of Christ, what I see up there is all my shit and everybody else’s. So I ask myself a question a lot of people have asked: Who is this man?  And was He who He said He was, or was he just a religious nut?  And there it is, and that’s the question.  And no one can talk you into it or out of it.”

All text taken from Chapter 11 of Bono on Bono: conversations with Michka Assayas, 2005 (Hodder).  [Buy the book.](http://www.abebooks.co.uk/Bono-Conversations-Michka-Assayas-Hodder-Stoughton/6829654479/bd)

Religion is counting up. It is keeping score. It kills the joy because you cannot win or if you feel you are winning, you are never secure and you become a snob.

Being awash in the love and acceptance of God through Jesus Christ. I want to know that.

Paul had wanted to narrow it down, detail it out, button it up, “nail it” so that he could feel good about himself.

In religion, the purpose of obeying the law is to assure you that you’re alright with God. As a result, when you come to the law, what you are most concerned about is detail. You want to know exactly what you’ve got to do. You won’t gravitate toward seeking out the intent of the law – you’ll tend to write into the law all sorts of details so you can be assured you are meeting them. But in the life of Christians the law of God – though still binding on them –functions in a completely different way. It shows you the life of love you want to live before the God who has done so much for you. God’s law takes you out of yourself; it shows you how to serve God and others instead of being absorbed with yourself. You study and obey the law of God in order to discover the kind of life you should live in order to please and resemble the one who created and redeemed you, delivering you from the consequences of your sin. And you don’t violate or whittle it down to manageable proportions by adding on man-made details to it.

Keeping the Sabbath day for one the obedience is a burden and an enslavement – for the other it is a delight and gift. Religion is fundamentally advice. The gospel of Jesus begins and ends with NEWS. These are completely different things. One leads to burden and insecurity and selfish snobbery and the other leads to freedom and peace love and JOY.

Paul – why did he get really mad with the guys who said you have to get circumcised? He called them dogs because they were going to twist things and make it about us and what we do…and Paul had lived long enough in that joyless world! Jesus takes us out of that myoptic, self absorbed world and into a wonderful place of JOY where you celebrate something that has already been done rather than something you have got to do!

There are many people who say that Christianity is like all other religions – let’s all just agree together but when you see that it is always about lists and conformity and getting other people to conform to my list. It is always how we begin to think and it just sucks the joy out of life like a wet blanket.

Christianity is not a list, it’s a life.

Illustrate: I am running into the lineup to be first before everybody else and I am looking back and feeling so good about being ahead of everybody else and bam I run into a flag pole and I am out on my back.

We become tribal and judgemental and self-obsessed instead of truly caring for others.

I want to “know Christ” is about having our imaginations completely consumed with the person of Jesus. What would it be like to live like that? That kind of power, that kind of life that can walk through suffering looking forward to joy, and experience a kind of resurrection in ones spirit and ultimately in the body after death.

Garbage can on stage – hockey jersey dump degree (learning intellect) Dodge ball trophy (accomplishments and recognition what I have won and I am better than others, success) hammer (what I have built in my career) family picture (my legacy) credit card (security) keys ( my belongings and toys)

What’s the game? In Pauls day it was religious living. That was the most esteemed thing. It gave him confidence.