

Two Safety Reminders: Rejoice and Beware by James Jennings

by James Malachi Jennings

Paul reminds us to rejoice in the Lord and beware of false teachers, specifically the Judaizers who believed in circumcision as a requirement for salvation.

Duration: 58:01

Scripture: Psalm 51:12, Jeremiah 9:25, Luke 10:20, Acts 15:1-2, Galatians 6:13, Philippians 3:1-3

Topics: "False Teaching", "Christian Joy"

Description

This sermon from Philippians emphasizes the importance of rejoicing in the Lord and being aware of false teachers who promote a works-based salvation. Paul warns against the circumcision party, urging believers to find their confidence in Christ alone. Rejoicing in the Lord serves as a preventative measure against falling into the trap of relying on external works for salvation.

Transcript

Well, it's a privilege to share the Word of God with you all. Let's turn to Philippians. The last two sermons I did were not from Philippians.

I was going through the letter. So it's been a couple of months. But that's fine, because Paul right here in chapter 3, he moves on from his affairs.

Before, he's talking about Timothy, Epaphroditus. He's dealing with his affairs here. Paul is in prison.

And he moves on from there to this letter that's being sent back to those at Philippi. So we're at a good place to pick it up again. Chapter 3, let's just go ahead and read verses 1-11.

1-11. Paul says this, Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you.

Look out for the dogs. Look out for the evildoers. Look out for those who mutilate the flesh.

For we are the circumcision who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh, though I Myself have reason for confidence in the flesh. You're going to see that a lot as we read this. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more.

Circumcised on the eighth day of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin. I was a Hebrew of Hebrews. As to the law, I was a Pharisee.

As to zeal, I was a persecutor of the church. As to righteousness, under that law, I was blameless. But whatever gain I had, I counted as a loss for the sake of Jesus Christ.

Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake, I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith. That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and may share His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, that by any means possible, I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Now, we're going to look at verses 1 and 2. Next time, I'll deal with verse 3. And after that, move on from there. But let's pray. Father, Lord, here we are, Your people, many of us, we've gathered here, the few who found eternal life, the treasure in the field, and Lord, here we are pressing on to glory.

And Lord, what a joy it is that You who began a good work in us are going to bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. And Father, I need Your help today. I'm utterly weak, but You have all the power in the universe.

And Lord, I just ask You would help me for one reason, that Your sheep might be fed. Lord, I just want to feed the sheep. I want these sheep here to be helped by something today.

And so Lord, in the midst of children, distractions, our own minds, I pray, Lord, You'd just feed the sheep here today that they would get some morsel from these verses that Paul intended for those at Philippi to get. And so Lord, we need You. I pray You'd be with our brother Tim as he's up in Colorado, probably preaching right now to the saints there.

Lord, be with our brother through elsewhere. Lord, we're very weak and needy. And that's why we're thankful that You're our God.

Our confidence, our trust, it's entirely in You. We have nowhere else to look. And so Lord, would You come this morning and meet with us? In Jesus' name, Amen.

Amen. So let's real quick read verses 1 and 2 again. Finally, my brothers.

Now, I do not want to spend a lot of time on the word finally. That word, it's better rendered as for the rest. Some will say, is Paul ending his letter? Is this part of the original letter to Philippians? I don't think we need to necessarily get into that.

So finally just means it's for the rest. Here he just dealt with his affairs in chapter 2. And now he's going in chapter 3. And as for the rest now, brethren, brothers and sisters. So I just wanted to explain finally.

And then Paul, he gives this imperative. Brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord. Now this is not the first time in this letter Paul has said rejoice or dealt with joy.

I have it circled in green in my Bible. In the book of Philippians, it's filled with Paul referring to joy. Yes, I will rejoice.

I rejoice that Christ is proclaimed. Complete my joy. Here he says rejoice in the Lord.

He doesn't say it like that specifically, but here he does, and then he says it like that in chapter 4. Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I will say rejoice. Then Paul says this.

Chapter 3, verse 1. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you. To write the same things... And then he kind of says it's not a trouble for me to do this. This reminder being repetitious, this is not a problem.

How many times we're repeating some warning or some reminder to someone, and we tell them this is not a problem. Don't apologize that I keep reminding you of this. And Paul says here, it is for your safety.

It is safe for you. I'm saying this for your protection. So Paul here is giving some reminders for the saints' protection as they press on to heaven.

And just like us, that's the road we're on, right? Me, you all, if you're a Christian, you're pressing on to heaven, and there's constantly reminders. Reminders for our safety, for our protection. The reminders are of that which is certain.

That word there, safe, it has the idea of that which is a certainty. This is a sure thing. And then verse 2. Now, you may say, wait a minute, don't go to verse 2. There's a paragraph indent right there.

Most of your versions probably have that. In the original, there's no paragraph indent right there at the start of verse 2. And I mention that, not so you can doubt your Bibles. I mention that so we can understand what Paul is trying to get across here.

Because if I read verse 1, I could just preach on that and it could stand alone. Paul is reminding them of the same things, and that is he keeps mentioning rejoicing the Lord, and he's saying that again, and it's for our safety. But I believe verse 2 is included in this.

And Paul, he holds up a sign. In the ESV, this sign in a way, it says, look out for the dogs. In the NASB and other versions, it says, beware.

You picture that. You see that on fences, on people's houses. Beware of the dogs.

It implies there's such a big dog back here, you don't want to rob my house because that big dog is going to maul you. It's going to eat you up. Now, I don't want any child leaving here today confused.

This is not referring to dogs like a canine, like a puppy. He's using it to describe a certain people. Now, we'll talk about who that people is.

Then he says on this same sign that he's holding up, it says beware of the dogs, and then you could say there's a parenthesis. He kind of puts some other terms that would maybe help you know who he's referring to. He says look out for the evildoers.

So these dogs are evildoers. Then he says look out for those who mutilate the flesh. Or, as the NAS renders it, look out for the false circumcision.

So there you've got this sign. And this sign I'm bringing to you all today for your safety. Beware the dogs, the evildoers, the false circumcision, those who mutilate the flesh.

So, the first question we need to ask is this. What are the same things that is no trouble for Paul, but he's reminding for our safety? Why do we have to figure out what the same things refers to specifically? Because once we figure that out, then we can ask the question, how do those things help me be safe? And what do I need to be safe from? What do I need to be protected from as a Christian? Why would the Apostle Paul in prison write to us and say this is not a trouble for me to write to you guys? This is actually for your protection. That I'm saying these same things I've already said before.

So the first question we need to ask is what does the same things refer to? And you can tell what I already believe it is. I believe it's these two commands. The first, rejoice in the Lord.

The second, look out for the dogs. Or, as we'll look at, you could reword that and say look out for false teachers. So, command you for your safety.

Rejoice in the Lord. Look out for the dogs. Now let's think of this for a minute.

Is that true or not? Is that what he's referring to? Look at v. 1. Paul, he says finally, my brothers and sisters. Then he says rejoice in the Lord. And then he says to write the same.

Does he say to write the same thing? Or things? Things. Things. It's plural.

He's not just referring to one thing. I think that's one reason why it helps me believe Paul here is not just saying to write the same thing. Rejoice in the Lord.

I'm saying this for your safety. He says things. Then he says right there, again, it's for your safety.

It makes a lot of sense to say look out for the dogs for your safety. I tell my daughter, we're on the east side, I tell her look out for the dogs all the time. Now I say look out for the pit bulls who aren't on a leash.

I care about her protection. I know those pit bulls that are meant to guard people's houses can end up killing my daughter if they break off that leash and get in my front yard. And I'll tell her, look out for the dogs.

How many times for her protection do I say to her, rejoice? It doesn't make a lot of sense yet. It will. So, the same things in v. 1. Paul says he's already written these.

So as we ask the question, what are the same things? There's something that Paul has already said. Now, he mentions joy throughout the whole letter. But Paul as an apostle throughout his whole ministry, how often is he saying to look out for false teachers? All the time.

Look at chapter 3. Look at v. 18. For many of whom I have often told you, and I'll tell you even with tears walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction.

Their God is their belly. And they glory in their shame with minds set on earthly things. There Paul says he's often mentioned to them about enemies, about false teachers, about those who are distorting the Gospel.

And he even says in Acts that sometimes they're going to come from within your own church. So it's very common for Paul to be reminding, beware of false teachers. And it's very common for Paul to be saying to people, rejoice! He does it throughout this whole letter.

Isn't that what he said in chapter 4? Again, I will say rejoice. Again. I know I'm saying this again.

Rejoice in the Lord. Again. Again.

So, whatever same things is, it's not a trouble for him to say it. It's safe for us. It's something repetitious.

It's something plural right here in the context. It's not just referring to one thing. Rejoicing in the Lord.

I believe it's referring to rejoicing in the Lord and beware of false teachers. Beware of false teachers. One way I think that can help in reading this, look at chapter 3, verse 1. Read it remembering that there's not a paragraph indentation in the original language.

And read it assuming that when he says to write the same thing, it's kind of like Paul's interjecting a statement there based on the fact that he's thinking, well, you know what? They may think a certain... They're going to say, why are you saying this again? So he's already going to answer that question. And so you could read it like this. Rejoice in the Lord.

Look out for false teachers. Rejoice in the Lord. Look out for false teachers.

And Paul kind of interjects that one line saying, guys, to write the same thing, it's not a trouble, and this is for your protection. This is for your protection. So, that's the first question.

What does the same things refer to? When I'm putting forward, it refers to these two commands. Rejoice in the Lord. Look out for false teachers.

And those two commands are given for my protection. For my safety. There's something that is certain that's given to those at Philippi.

Interesting. Safe from what? What do I need to be safe from? Isn't that what the child asks? When you say, don't go there, it's not safe. What are they saying? They're thinking, why don't go there? Why is it not safe? Why is that dog not safe? That's not on a leash.

Why shouldn't I run up to the dog and pet it and give it a hug? What's so wrong about that? So, let's ask this question. Safe from what? And I've already said it. Look out for false teachers.

Safe from false teachers. And someone may say to that, what do you mean? We're in danger? Us in Grace Community Church are in danger of false teachers? We need to be aware. Paul says in Acts that they could rise up even among ourselves.

And not just here do we need to look out for those who come in with something false, but what you take in on the Internet. It's amazing people who've called the church phone and it's like they've ran into 20 preachers on the Internet and one of the preachers is good and 19 were false prophets. And they're getting 20 different doctrines thrown at them and they just feel totally confused.

And I'm wanting to run in for their protection and say you need to look out. You don't need to look at that guy. Don't listen to that filth.

What did Paul say in Galatians? He said, I'm astonished that you're so quickly deserting Him who calls. I'm astonished. Astonished.

Look, we've had that for ourselves. There are people that I have known who every reason I believe they were a true Christian, they were so dear and a close friend, and the most astonishing thing happened. They didn't look out for false teachers.

They gave in to that false teaching and they went out from among us. They went and joined a cult. This happens.

Paul says out there, there are deceitful workmen disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. 2 Corinthians 11. Matthew 7. What does it say about false prophets there? Do they come into the church as a wolf? Then we've got animals again.

Dogs, wolves. Do they come in as a wolf? What do they do? They put a disguise on sheep's clothing. They come in looking like a sheep.

So, what do we need to be safe from? Well, ultimately, think about a chain of things you need to be safe from. You need to be safe from false teachers, but more importantly, you need to be safe from the teacher themselves. You need to be safe from what? Their teaching.

You need to be protected from their ideologies that are wrong. Their teaching. Their doctrine that's wrong.

If you start giving in to wrong doctrine, and you join the false teacher, then you have another problem. Now you don't just need to be safe from the false teacher's teaching. You need to be safe from the false teacher's end.

What is the end? Look again at chapter 3, verse 19. What is the end of those who are enemies of the cross? It says their end is destruction. So what do we and you need to be safe from? Ultimately, we need to be safe from destruction.

And one way to end up in hell is to give in to false teaching, to not endure to the end, to not hold steadfast to the true truth, to the end, to be swayed by someone who's disguised themselves as an apostle of Christ, to give in to false teaching, and to follow after it. Many professing Christians do that. What does John say? 1 John 2. They went out from us, but they were not of us.

If they would have been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out to make it obvious that they were not of us. So, we need to be safe from false teachers.

More importantly, their false teaching. There's something in their doctrine that could sway you. We don't ever want to think I'm beyond being deceived.

It's a proud mindset. Rather, we want to hold really fast to our Bibles and in humility realize, you know what? There are some subtle teachings that I could so easily give in to. Legalism.

Many things. Imposing standards that the Scriptures don't teach. So don't ignore the repetition of this.

Don't. I've flown I think like four times in my life. So when I'm sitting there in the plane and the flight attendant gets up and she's telling me how to put my air mask on and where my life thing is, I'm listening.

You know what most people are doing? They're just like, when can I take my phone out again? Stop. I was amazed. I was flying and no one was listening.

It's like I was the only one. Don't be like that. Don't think you don't need to listen.

When Paul says, look out. When Paul says, I'm giving you the same things again as a reminder that this isn't a trouble for me, but guess what? People are out there trying to trouble you. Paul said in Galatians.

So it's no trouble to mention something to keep those who are trying to trouble you from troubling you. Paul wants to prevent that. He wants to protect you.

So don't sit there ignoring it. So, now we need to ask this question. Dogs? Circumcision? False circumcision? True circumcision? Okay, Paul here is not going after all false teachers.

He's going after a specific group that he feels we need protection from. And he gives us two commands to keep us safe. Rejoice in the Lord.

And look out for evildoers. So first, I want to think about look out for the dogs. What does that mean? Again, this is not a sign on your neighbor's house.

This is a sign on the road to heaven. You're going to heaven. Again, beware of the mutilators of the flesh.

Beware of the false circumcision. Beware of the dogs. Beware of the evildoers.

I mean, here you are going to heaven. You're going to the eternal city. And you're seeing these warning signs.

It's a given that these things are going to come. It's a certainty there's going to be false teachers who are specifically going to give certain lies to try to dupe you. Now, who is this group? Look at v. 2. The NAS and the way they rendered the mutilators of the flesh as the false circumcision.

Obviously, that helps. But let's read it how our ESVs read it. V. 2, he says look out for the dogs.

Look out for the evildoers. Look out for those who mutilate the flesh. And then you ask, who's he referring to? Look at v. 3. For we are the circumcision.

What's that imply? Whoever this group of people is, they're saying they're the circumcision. They're saying they're the circumcision. And as the New American Standard Bible renders it, they're the false circumcision.

We're the true circumcision. They're the false circumcision. The circumcision.

What's that? The Bible, it says there's a circumcision party. Not party like you go to a party. But party like Republican Party.

Democratic Party. We're in politics right now. What's happening? There's groups out there that are saying this is what we take a stand on.

This is our convictions. If you elect us, this is what we will impose. And here out there, we have a circumcision party.

Or another word to describe them is the Judaizers. The Judaizers is a word that comes out of the book of Galatians where it says those who want to get you to live according to Jewish customs. Those are the Judaizers.

They want you to get to live according to Jewish customs. So what was their party politics? They believed you had to be circumcised in order to be saved. We see that in Acts 15.

Some came professing Christians. Not those outside the church. It's those who are saying they're Christians, but they're saying in order for those who are non-Jews, who've not been circumcised, who've not had that piece of their body cut off, they need to have that cut off or they can't be saved.

They're not a true Christian. They need to follow not just that custom. They need to follow all of them.

But specifically, the Judaizers were bent on circumcision. They were bent on that. Circumcision as we know, in the Old Testament, it was an outward sign of being set apart to God.

You had many who were Israelites and they were circumcised on the eighth day. Did that make them a Christian? Did that save them? Absolutely not. It was an outward sign, one of the things that made them different than the rest of the nations.

Yet we read in Romans 4, Abraham received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So Abraham in the Old Testament, he was a Christian while he was uncircumcised. Circumcision did not save him.

It just was an external outward sign that made him different as part of the people of God, of the Israelites, of those who are Jews. The circumcision party, though, they look at that in the Old Testament. They ignore things Paul is saying.

They ignore what happened at the Council of Jerusalem. And they come saying you've got to be circumcised to be saved. Go ahead, so you can read it with your own eyes.

Flip to Acts 15. We have a sign, beware of the dogs, which is false teachers. What we're answering right now is who are these false teachers specifically? And that is the Judaizers, the circumcision party, and we're trying to describe who are they? What did they believe? What is their teaching like in order for me to be protected from that? And this will help us answer the question why there's a command to rejoice in the Lord to keep us safe.

Acts 15, verse 1, But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, unless you're circumcised, according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved. You can't be saved. And they have this Jerusalem Council.

They start sending letters out to others letting them know that is not a requirement for a Gentile. When a Gentile is saved, don't be going to them and saying you need to get circumcised or you're not saved. That's what the Judaizers were doing.

They were caught up on this. So, caught up on... Help me here. If you're caught up on people needing an external sign in order to be saved, what's another way to word that so we don't have to keep using terms that we can get kind of lost in? If you're caught up on needing an external sign to be saved, you're caught up in what type of salvation? A works-based salvation.

You're caught up in a reliance on works. I need Christ, yes, plus this. Christ plus in order to be saved.

So to describe these false teachers, who are the false teachers? Let's just word it like this. They're the Judaizers. They're teaching you need works to be saved.

They're teaching a works salvation. We have a lot of that going on today in our world. We'll look at some examples.

But that's what specifically they're wanting us to boast, to rejoice, to glory in our works. Specifically that of circumcision. In Galatians 6, verse 13, "...For even those who are circumcised do not themselves keep the law.

They desire to have you circumcised that they might boast in your flesh." And what does Paul go on to say? God forbid I boast in an external work of the flesh. But I'm going to boast in Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Why? Since God is One who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised by faith.

God declares righteous people not by works of the law, but by faith in His Son, Jesus Christ. So, in summary, the false teachers to look out for are those who teach a works salvation. And he describes them in an interesting imagery.

He describes them as dogs. Dogs. And if you read commentators, they'll be the first to tell you that us Americans have a hard time understanding dogs.

There are people who spend more money on their dogs than I spend on my kids. Not anyone here. I mean, you think of dogs? Puppy comes in your mind.

You don't think of a vicious scavenger that's roaming around. You don't need to turn there, but Psalms 59 kind of helps us understand dogs in a biblical time. 59.14, each evening, he's describing his enemies as dogs, and look how he describes them.

They come back howling like dogs, prowling about the city. They wander about for food, and they growl if they don't get their fill. That's not the type of dog you want to pet.

That's the type of dog you want to be aware of. And Paul is likening these Judaizers to dogs. Vicious scavengers who are going around the city, who are creeping into churches, and they're wanting to deceive people and lure them away from Christ.

Again, Paul is writing this for our safety, for our protection. They're wandering about for food and they growl if they don't get their fill. That's circumcision party.

They're wandering around trying to find us Gentiles and make sure we get circumcised and put us back under the Mosaic law. And they're running to the Old Testament and saying, forget about the New Testament. Look at this.

You need to be doing this. You need to be doing this. That's what the Hebrews Roots movement is all about.

It's a massively big movement right now through the Internet. It's just simply the Judaizers resurrected again. It's been going on for 2,000 years.

Dogs. Gordon Fee in a commentary, he wrote this, A culture that spends millions of dollars on dogs as pets can scarcely appreciate the basic contempt that ancient society had for dogs, who were both scavengers, eating whatever street garbage they could find, and vicious, attacking the weak and helpless. You hear that? Dogs back then attacked the weak and helpless.

As a kid, I tended to think about wolves attacking people, not dogs. But back then, dogs would attack the weak and the helpless. I'm trying to look out for dogs that want to come in here with their work salvation, no matter how subtle it is, run into the Old Testament even, trying to say, look, you need to be circumcised in order to be saved.

Then he describes them as this, Philippians. Look out for, and he calls them, evildoers. Evildoers.

Why evildoers? Well, I think one thing Paul's doing here is he's reversing what the circumcision party thinks and he's pegging them with it. Meaning, there's places where the Gentile is the one who's called the dog. And yet here, Paul is saying, no, you're the dogs.

And they look at the Gentiles and say they're the evildoers. Paul is saying, no, you're the evildoers. And then they look at the Gentiles and they say these are people who are just mutilated.

These people are messed up. And he says, no, all you're doing is merely mutilating your flesh. It does nothing to save you before God.

You can get circumcised. You can cut that piece of skin off. It's not going to do anything to get a righteousness before God.

Titus 1.10, it says, there are many who are insubordinate and empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision party. They must be silenced since they're upsetting whole families by teaching for shameful gain what they ought not to teach. Friends, I've seen that happen.

There are families, not saying from this church, but others outside that I have known, their whole family was upset and dissolved and ruined because of a false teacher coming in there trying to say, you need to start doing all these Jewish customs. If you're going to be a true Christian, you need to be doing all of this. Don't you see Psalms 119? It talks about meditating on the law of God and obeying the law of God.

Well, look at the law of God. It says all these things. You need to obey them.

That messes people up. Guess where the last place their eyes are in the midst of that bombardment of false teaching? Their eyes are not on Jesus Christ. No way.

They're on themselves. They're on their works. Not on Christ.

So, here these false teachers are. Dogs, evildoers, mutilators of the flesh, or the false circumcision. Now, let's ask this question.

What false teaching like this do we look out for today? I mean, in short, you can think narrow and try to find something that's really specific like the Hebrews Roots movement, or you could think in a broader way. But again, the issue in short is a works salvation. Anyone who's coming in and saying you need this.

Yeah, and plus Christ. We believe in Jesus too. Or maybe they'll put Jesus first.

Jesus, Jesus, and then they kind of add in this plus at the end. And this. If you don't have that, you're not saved.

Yeah, the Hebrews Roots movement. You've got to keep the Mosaic Law to be a true Christian. The Roman Catholic Church.

I mean, that is a massive one. Catholics have always held that certain sacraments are necessary for salvation. You have to have this.

Where are you telling me I have to have this? It talks about Abraham in the Old Testament being justified by faith. It talks about me right now being justified by faith. Putting trust and confidence in what Christ has done alone.

And you're trying to tell me do that and do these things? Any group that's going to say you need to perform a bunch of ritualistic acts. You need to do this ritualistic thing. Church of Christ denomination.

You have to have water baptism. You're not saved until you're immersed in the waters. They would say that our sister Katie, if she would have died before getting in the water right there, she wouldn't have went to heaven.

And that at the moment Katie dipped in the water and came out, boom, she is saved. She's secure. That's a false teaching.

You want to talk about upsetting families? If you're hearing that, that's going to upset the family. And if you as a believer give in to that, that's going to upset you. It's going to mess you up.

Paul wants us protected. Again, I did this Bible study on the last reformation. It's a massive movement in Denmark.

If you were there on a Tuesday night months ago. And in short belief, baptismal regeneration. You've got to be water baptized to be saved.

It's amazing the people who are being messed up by this teaching. And even yesterday, I had a guy, maybe a 15, 14 year old kid call me up from Michigan I believe. And he's got sucked into that.

And he's just saying, am I going to hell? Am I secure? He's totally fearful. That's what false teaching does. It's a glory to come in there and try to protect him and try to show him you don't need to have confidence in those things.

You can trust in Christ. And what Christ has done for you. What do they want? They want you to boast in your flesh.

They want you to boast in something external. It could even be the subtlest of things of dressing in a certain way. I mean, cults and false groups, they won't have a doctrinal statement saying you have to have all these things or a statement of faith saying you need to do all these things, but they'll subtly teach that in a subtle way pushing all those convictions on you where you feel like I'm not a Christian unless I do this or that.

That is it in a more subtle way. But we need to watch out. Now some would say, man, why is Paul saying this to those at Philippi? Is this really a temptation for those at Philippi? They're suffering right now.

What does Paul say in Galatians? What was one of the things? Why you should get persecuted? We just read that in Galatians 6. About why you should get persecuted. What was one reason you should get circumcised? In order that you don't get persecuted. And so if you give in to some of these external signs and you agree with these people, now you have all these people who hated you before because you were calling them a cult and false, and now they're all chummy with you.

They don't hate you. You're not being persecuted by them. The more broad and ecumenical you become, the less hate you're going to have.

You can just feel like we can just blend everyone together. We're all Christians. No, sir.

If your confidence is in any work you've done, if it's in the flesh, if it's in anything external, that confidence is going to put you in hell. Now, a little time left. So let's think of this second safety instruction.

Now we kind of understand the first. Look out for false teachers. Beware of false teachers who want you to trust in external work, specifically circumcision.

You need to follow the Jewish customs. You need to follow these things, or if you don't, you're not safe. You need those things.

And right when you do those things, they boast in that. They glory in that. They just say, look, that's happened.

They glory in the flesh. Do you say amen? Oh, okay. We don't glory in those things.

So, why? Look at your Bibles. Rejoice in the Lord. I don't believe Paul is just starting the chapter like that.

You know, oh well, rejoice in the Lord. No, I'm saying the same things again to you. It's not a trouble.

It's safe. What was one reason Paul remained and continued with us all? It was for our joy and progress in the faith. And here he says, rejoice in the Lord.

How on earth is a command to rejoice in the Lord going to keep me safe? How's it gonna protect me? If I tell you guys, brethren, rejoice, boast, glory, be delighted in the Lord. What Lord? He just said in chapter two, Jesus Christ is Lord. If I say brethren, boast, glory in the Lord Jesus Christ, he didn't count a quality with God a thing to be grasped.

He came as a servant. And he took your bad record on his own account and he suffered on the cross, under the wrath of God that you deserve. Rejoice in that.

Be delighted in that. Be delighted in the work of Christ. How does that help? Well, it helps as a preventative.

What's something that's done as a preventative? Preventative is something designed to keep something undesirable, such as illness, harm, or accidents from occurring. Medicine or other treatments designed to stop disease or illness from occurring. When someone gets a certain shot, I realize you can get the flu shot and you might get the flu.

It might not be a preventative. It might give it to you. But why do they get that? They're taking a measure in order to not get something.

And so I believe that's how Paul is using rejoice in the Lord. I'm saying this again to you guys, but there's something in commanding you to rejoice in the Lord that is actually for your protection and safety. And it's that if you're busy rejoicing in the Lord and glorying in the work of Christ, when these false teachers come and they're trying to say, hey, James, if you get circumcised, you'll be a real Christian.

You're kind of like, what? Circumcision? Who cares about that? I'm busy looking over here and delighted in the God-man Jesus Christ who left heaven and became a servant for me. You want me to give in to that? Are you kidding me? That's so pathetic. That has no appeal.

The husband who's rejoicing in the wife of his youth, he's loving his wife. His marriage is good. You know what? That's a big preventative to keep you from the adulterous woman.

But the husband and wife disunified. Their marriage is not going well. They're not communicating.

That man is pretty vulnerable now for Satan to send an adulterous woman and tempt him at work. You see? But if that man's satisfied in the wife of his youth, guess what? That's a preventative. So as Christians, if I'm busy delighting in the Lord, rejoicing in the Lord Jesus Christ, how is that for my safety? It's for my safety in that if I'm satisfied in Him, you can throw all these other things at me and I'm not going to sway because I'm boasting and glorying and rejoicing in what Christ has done for me.

In Acts 15, they took this letter and they sent it to churches. Here these guys are finding out we don't need circumcision. These Gentiles, we don't need to be circumcised.

And you know what it says? They rejoiced because of the encouragement. That simple truth, therefore, these Gentiles caused them to rejoice. They were rejoicing.

Thank God. That's encouraging. I don't need to get bound up in that.

So, are you the true circumcision? True circumcision. Physical circumcision counts for nothing. What counts? A new creation.

Isn't that what Paul said? You've got to be born again. Not a physical thing. Not I got baptized.

Not I got circumcised. Not I'm in a Christian family. Not I've done all these rituals.

No, the true circumcision are those who are born of God. They're born again. And he says in v. 3 here, they worship God by the Spirit.

They glory in what? Christ. And they put no confidence in the flesh. Now, I want to look at v. 3 and another sermon more in depth.

But that's the true Christian. Look at that. They're glorying in Christ.

They put no confidence, no trust in the flesh. If you ask them why are you going to heaven, nothing comes out of their mouth about well, I go to this church, or I did this, or I got baptized. It's not coming out of their mouth.

Those who out of the abundance of their heart have their mouths speak and they boast in external works, it's very revealing to what they're trusting in. But it has no hope. We read at the beginning Paul's testimony.

Paul says in v. 4, I had reason for confidence. He's kind of saying to these guys, look, this circumcision party, they're going to try to tempt you with things. Guess what? I outbeat everyone.

I had every external work there was and guess what it profited me to get a righteousness before God? Nothing. Zero. Nothing.

He counted it as a loss. Paul's testimony here in a way is a testimony of the total failure. The total failure of your own works to save you.

It's just a testimony of that. Your own works are a total failure to purge away your sins. Your own works are a total failure to break the power of sin.

And yet, what does Paul say? But I counted all these things as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing, intimately knowing, Jesus Christ my Lord. And in Christ, we have, v. 9, a righteousness not of my own that comes from the works, but that which comes through faith in Christ. Paul's testimony here is also a testimony of the total delight you can have in Jesus Christ.

It's a testimony of the total failure of works to save. It's a testimony of the total delight. He says, I count everything as a loss.

Everything. All these works and everything else as a loss for having Christ. There's a lot more here in these verses that I want to deal with in the next opportunities I have to preach.

But even here, Paul's testimony. Why did he give that? What do all these things mean? In Acts 15, you know what happened? They were describing the conversion of Gentiles. And you know what that caused people to do? Rejoice.

It says they were describing in detail and it brought joy to all the brethren. I think one reason Paul gives his testimony for us here today is for us to actually rejoice. To rejoice in the Lord for saving Paul who was a Pharisee of the Pharisees.

And his testimony always makes me rejoice just because it's a simple reminder I have no reason to trust in any work to save me. It's absolute nonsense. Wait, it's nonsense, but doesn't it say right here? Don't you need to do that? People will creep in.

Paul wants us saved. So in closing, a couple thoughts, applications. So in summary, I'm trying to put forward Paul's thought here and why he wrote this.

Let's look again at v. 1. In Paul, he gives an imperative, rejoice in the Lord. So he's calling you to rejoice in the Lord. And then he kind of gives some details on why he's writing these things.

And he's saying it's no trouble and it's actually for your protection. So, you rejoicing in the Lord is for your protection. And for your protection, I want you to look out for false teachers.

So he's giving us these two things. Rejoicing in the Lord is a preventative. As you're rejoicing in the Lord, it will actually keep you from giving in to any of these lies.

As you're glorying in what Christ has done. And then he says you need to be on the lookout. You need to be where? You need to be watching.

Looking out. Not paranoid. But there's a sense there of knowing there are people who will come with the work salvation and I need to be aware of that as it comes in in its subtle forms.

So, obviously one question this makes me ask my own self. In closing, are you looking out for false teachers that want you to boast and put your confidence in your works? Am I just aware of that? Am I looking out for that? Number two, are you looking out for them by not being just consumed? False

teachers? Where are the false teachers? But by being consumed, look at Christ. Rejoice.

Rejoice means to delight. To delight in the Lord. To rejoice in the Lord.

To be glad in the Lord. Do I have my eyes on Christ and am I delighted and satisfied in Him? If you want to pick one of the two things to leave here today and say I need to really be obeying that imperative, go out rejoicing in the Lord. Not going out paranoid looking out for false teachers in the circumcision party and the last reformation and all these people out there.

What did He say in Luke? Luke 10. They cast out demons. And they came rejoicing.

They had cast out demons. And Jesus said, don't rejoice in this, but rejoice that your name is written in heaven. And that's the thing we've got to rejoice in.

That our names are written in heaven. And your name is written in heaven if you've put your confidence and trust in what Christ alone has done. And that what's on your paper to justify you before God, your resume, you've crossed everything off.

All you had on your resume was I'm a filthy, wretched, vile sinner deserving of eternal condemnation. All the little things you thought were good, nope, nope, nope. And Christ takes His perfect resume, His perfect record, and He puts that on your books.

And you're declared righteous before God. How did you receive that? Works of the law? No. Faith.

Just taking God at His Word. Believing God. Trusting Him.

I can't save myself. I'm tired of relying on works of the law. Look, if any of you are here today and you're relying on works of the law, I'll tell you, your life's not full of joy.

Your life's full of bondage. That's what it creates. A bondage of have I done enough? Am I secure like that 14-year-old kid or 15-year-old kid who called me? I mean, even bondage.

Going all over the place. Tossed to and fro by false doctrine. If you're a Christian here and you say, you know what, I need more joy in the Lord.

What did David pray after a fall in adultery? In Psalm 51, he prayed, Lord, restore to me the joy of Your salvation. Restore that. Give me more joy that I could glory in Christ and boast in His blood being shed and Him being a sacrifice for my sins.

So do you know Christ? Is your confidence in Christ alone? Or are you here today, did you ignore the sign, beware of the dogs, and actually walk in to a false teacher? Are you trusting in any work? If I took you out from out there and had you come up here and gave you the mic and said, tell all of us why you're going to heaven, what would you say? If I said, what's your confidence of being right before God? What would you say? Would you glory and rejoice before us all in Jesus Christ and Him crucified? Or would you mention some work you've done? If that's you and you'd mention some work, turn from that. That's a path of condemnation. But Christ in Him, there is life.

Jeremiah 9.25, He says, I'll punish all of those who are circumcised merely in their flesh. The uncircumcised of the heart. The Gospel is good news because Christ, He doesn't just forgive you, but He circumcises your heart and gives you a new heart and breaks the power of sin so you no longer continue

in it.

This is good news. This is stuff to rejoice in. So, I say all this for your protection.

It's no trouble for me. I want you all, I want myself, to rejoice in the Lord, to delight ourselves in the Lord Jesus Christ in Whom there is pleasure forevermore, to delight ourselves in the fact we count everything as a loss for the surpassing worth of knowing Christ, and I want you all to be aware of legalistic, false teaching that tells you you need some external or some work in order to be justified before God. So rejoice.

Look out. Be safe. Let's pray.

Father, we thank You for sending Your Son. Thank You, Lord, for giving us life. Would You help us to press on? Rejoicing in You.

Again, I will say, rejoice, rejoice. Lord, give us more delight, more joy in the blessed Savior. And Lord, if any here don't have that joy and pleasure and intimacy of knowing Christ, I pray, Lord, You'd open their eyes.

They would no longer put trust or confidence in the flesh. They'd put their boast in You, the living God. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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