

# Why Is Christmas Joy so Important?

## Philippians 3:7-11

### **Introduction**

Since Christmas is all about good news of great joy in Christ (Luke 2:8-11), and the focus of Philippians 3 is the great joy we have in Christ, we are taking two weeks before Christmas to learn about Christmas joy from Philippians 3.

We saw in Philippians 3:1 that Paul calls us to rejoice in the Lord, which means to feel pleasure and satisfaction in knowing, beholding, and worshiping him. This week we will see why this joy is so important.

### **What decision had Paul made? (vv. 7-8)**

Paul had stopped seeking his joy in anything other than Jesus Christ.

He had turned from whatever he used to trust for his joy—circumcision, racial pedigree, reputation as a Pharisee— and turned to seek his joy in Christ alone.

### **Why did Paul make this decision? (vv.8-11)**

Paul turned from everything else, to seek his joy in Christ alone –

Because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ (8)

So he might gain Christ (8)

So he would be found in Christ, clothed with his perfect righteousness (9)

So he would know Christ and his power and his sufferings (10)

So he would be raised from the dead (11)

### **What does this passage teach us about saving faith? (vv.8-9)**

Paul says that we are found in Christ, and clothed with his perfect righteousness, by faith (9), and by counting all things as loss (8). Those are two different ways of saying the same thing.

So this passage shows that saving faith involves turning from whatever else we used to trust to satisfy us, and turning to trust Christ alone to satisfy us.

So turn from everything else, and trust Christ to forgive you, change your heart, and satisfy you in himself. He will.



## **HOME GROUP DISCUSSION OF SUNDAY'S TEACHING**

*(Sometimes in our home groups we talk about Sunday's teaching, so we can work together on responding to God's Word — asking questions, sharing insights, talking together.)*

Does it make sense that *experiencing* joy in something is different from *seeking* your joy in something? Why or why not

What are you tempted to seek your joy in besides Christ?

What are some things you have counted as loss (stopped seeking your joy in) besides Christ?

In verses 8-11 Paul gives five reasons he has counted everything as loss compared to Christ. Which of these five reasons is most persuasive to you? Why?

Notice how Paul emphasizes knowing Jesus Christ. How is knowing Christ different from just believing the doctrine of Christ or obeying the commands of Christ?

Whose righteousness are you depending on to get you into heaven — your own, or Christ's? How can you tell?

Do you agree that saving faith includes turning from whatever else you used to trust to satisfy you, and turning to Christ alone to satisfy you? Why or why not?

What in your life is the biggest competitor with Christ for your joy? Share that with the group.

Do the five reasons Paul lists persuade you to turn from that competitor to Christ alone? Why or why not?

Pray for each other about these things.

