



ADVANCING
THE
GOSPEL

Philippians 3:1-11

Introduction

- Paul explains that the Gospel above all changes the way he views his own life and his own earthly status, as well as accomplishments.
- He compares his earthly prestige with his heavenly privilege, explaining that earthly prestige is left wanting in light of what one gains in Christ.
- Because of the incomparable value of Christ, Paul was able to endure suffering and hardship with great joy.
- Through Christ, Paul was filled with a powerful hope, looking beyond temporary circumstances to what awaits those in Christ.

Philippians 3:1-6

False Teachers

- In Philippians 3:1, he says, “finally brothers,” which is later repeated in Philippians 4:8. Paul often used the phrase for “finally” at points other than the end, meaning “moreover” or “additionally.”
- This repetition is connected to his command to “rejoice in the Lord,” his refrain for the letter, running through all his teachings and encouragements.
- Apparently, the Philippians needed the message because Paul points out that it’s no trouble for him to repeat it and he will do so because it’s for their benefit (verse 1).

False Teachers

- Paul directs his focus in verses 2-3 to contrast false teachers with the true signs of followers of Christ.
- Paul exhorts his Philippian friends to “Watch out for dogs” (verse 2).
- The repetition of “look out” (three times) is the strongest emphasis he could give in writing.
- If he were speaking this warning, it would come with a raised voice and perhaps clapping or stomping.

False Teachers

- Interestingly, Paul uses the word “dog” (*kuon/kunas*).
- This term was a very strong insult, implying “the most despicable, insolent, and miserable of creatures.”
- It was typically a term used by Jews against the Gentiles (Matthew 15:26), but Paul flips the term to speak against those bringing a false gospel.
- He goes on to call them “evil workers,” similar to the words used in Philippians 2:12–13 and 25.

False Teachers

- These false teachers, often referred to as Judaizers, were teaching that faith alone was not enough.
- The Judaizers believed one could only be a part of the people of God through circumcision, and Paul wants to be clear that this teaching is heresy and those teaching such claims were enemies of the Cross (Galatians 5:12).
- He calls this circumcision party “mutilators.” This is a play on the normal word for “circumcision” (*peritome*) with “mutilation” (*katatome*), both rooted in the word for “cut” (*tome*).

False Teachers

- True believers “worship by spirit,” Paul explains (verse 3).
- The root of worship is one’s spiritual relationship with God; not dependent on the flesh or heritage.
- The truly “circumcised” are circumcised in the heart by faith (Deuteronomy 30:6; Jeremiah 4:4; Romans 2:29).
- Paul continues to give further qualification to the child of God’s confidence.
- He gives three descriptions for the true people of God:

True Worship

- The true people of God worship by the spirit. True worship isn't about legalism and conformity to the law. Instead, Paul points the Philippians inwardly, a worship energized and focused by the Holy Spirit.
- The true people of God glory in Christ Jesus. The word for "glory" (*kaucheomai*) normally means "boast," as Paul states in 1 Corinthians 1:31, taken from Jeremiah 9:24, "Let those who boast, boast in the Lord."
- This is certainly meant to emphasize the gracious work of Christ on the believer's behalf.

True Worship

- The true people of God put no confidence in the flesh.
- Paul longs for his readers to know that the flesh is certainly not capable of saving itself. Only the gracious exchange by Christ, the righteous for the unrighteous, can do this (Romans 1:17; 1 Peter 31:8).
- There was a time in Paul's life when he had confidence in the flesh and in verses 4-6, he recites his pedigree. Paul gives his resume for earthly confidence, if it had any merit (verse 4).

Heritage

- There is no aspect of his life that could disqualify Paul, according to his Jewish tradition.
 - “circumcised on the eighth day” (verse 5) to the law (Leviticus 12:3).
 - “of the tribe of Benjamin” (verse 5) gives his tribal heritage.
 - “Hebrew of Hebrews” (verse 5) emphasizes the purity of his heritage.
- His statement here is reminiscent of 2 Corinthians 11:22, where Paul addressed the issue of boasting in earthly heritage.

Obedience

- “a Pharisee” (verse 5) Josephus, a Jewish historian from the first century, said Pharisees were “influential moral leaders who are esteemed most skillful in the exact explication of their laws.”
- “as to righteousness under the law, blameless” (verse 6) he had not violated any of the hundreds of laws, including all the purity and sacrificial rituals.
- He was not only a pure Jew by birth, he was a pure Jew by his adherence to the letter of the law.
- Paul teaches that confidence for the Christian is found in Christ alone.

Philippians 3:7-8

False Teachers

- Paul continues his attack against false teachings.
- He explains his view of this resume. In verse 7, he draws a parallel between “gain” (*kerdos*) and “loss” (*zemia*). These are economic and accounting terms.
- The Pharisees considered these characteristics and accomplishments to be central to their standing before God.
- Paul’s view of them as damaged goods speaks volumes about his transformed perspective on the world and theology.

Gain and Loss

- He says he considers it all loss in order that he might “gain” Christ, using the same word as at the beginning of verse 7.
- He is saying, “I used to think being a Pharisee was gain, but now I know that being a Christian is gain.” The implication is that he lost his place, identity and worth in this world, but has gained his life in return.
- The phrase is from Jesus’s teaching, “What shall it profit a man if he gains (*kerdaino*) the whole world and forfeits (*zemio*) his own soul?” (Matthew 16:26; Mark 8:36).

Gain and Loss

- Paul set his former life aside for the sake of Christ. His gain in return was beatings, prison, mockery, and countless other sufferings. But, his spiritual gain was Christ.
- Paul understood that eternal status, given by Christ, was more valuable than any earthly title or religious qualification.
- Paul measured worth by what he received in Jesus.
- Paul's mentality toward his identity and loss in this world was a tool in his mission to serve Jesus.

Philippians 3:8-11

Knowing Christ

- Paul's goal above all else is to know Christ (verse 8).
- He states that this "loss" could be considered as such because of the "surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord."
- The Old Testament idea of "knowing" is explained as "living in a close relationship with something or somebody, such a relationship as to cause what may be called communion."

Knowing Christ

- For Paul, knowing God was not a one-dimensional, mental assent to truth.
- It was a life-consuming knowledge connected to a person.
- This is because “knowledge is not simply an affair of intelligence.
- It is an affair of the heart, in the biblical sense of the heart as the center and source of the whole inner life in its full complex of thought, desire, and moral decision.”

Knowing Christ

- Paul viewed his suffering as evidence of his union with Christ and future “resurrection from the dead,” but he sees this future resurrection as the reason for hope to endure his present suffering (verses 10-11).
- Growing in the knowledge of Christ means growing in conformity to Him (Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18). And what does it mean to be conformed to Him but to imitate Him, humbly and sacrificially obeying God and serving others?
- When this is our goal in life, we will grow in our knowledge of God and the Gospel will advance. More importantly, the Christian will find true joy.

The Garden Tomb

The Garden Tomb

- Monday on Point of View at 1:00 pm, I will have the Director of the Garden Tomb in studio to talk about their ministry in Jerusalem.
- The Garden Tomb is a site of Christian worship and witness located in the heart of historic Jerusalem, just outside the Old City walls.
- In this garden there are several antiquities of interest that includes an ancient Jewish tomb, which many believe is the site of Jesus of Nazareth's burial and resurrection.



Golgotha

- According to the Bible, Jesus was crucified in a place named “the Skull” (Golgotha in Aramaic)
- In the mid-19th century, several Christian scholars suggested that the rocky escarpment, which can be viewed from the garden, marked the place of the Messiah’s crucifixion.
- They noted its proximity to a main city gate, its association with executions according to local tradition, and its physical resemblance to a skull.

The Garden Tomb

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Outside the Tomb

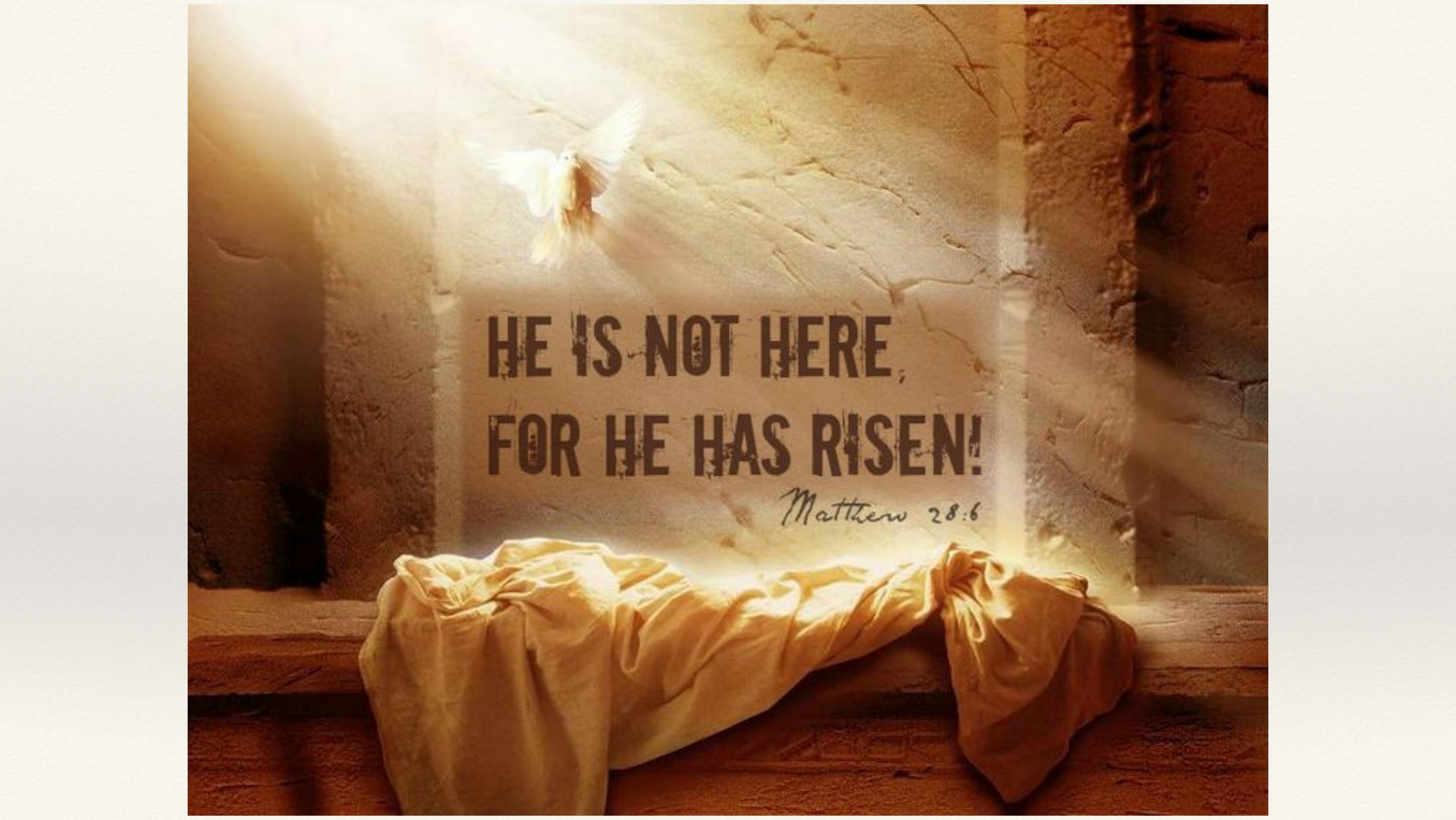
- In the gospels we read that “at the place where Jesus was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no-one had ever been laid” (John 19:41).
- Archaeological evidence suggests that this place was an agricultural garden in those days.
- Inside the garden an ancient Jewish tomb has been found.
- Could it be the empty tomb of Jesus?

Inside the Tomb

- The tomb is divided into two small rooms:
 - The antechamber is where they would prepare the body for burial.
 - The burial chamber is where the body was placed.
- A large stone would have been placed in front of the entrance.
- He is not here. For He is risen.

The Garden Tomb

Milliken Tomb

A white dove with its wings spread is flying in a bright, golden light that streams down from the top left corner. Below the dove, the text "HE IS NOT HERE, FOR HE HAS RISEN!" is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font. Underneath this text, the reference "Matthew 28:6" is written in a smaller, cursive script. In the foreground, a yellow cloth is rolled up and placed on a wooden ledge, symbolizing the empty tomb. The background is a textured, light-colored wall, possibly representing the interior of a tomb.

**HE IS NOT HERE,
FOR HE HAS RISEN!**

Matthew 28:6