

# Contagious Joy

## *Part 12 – Leaving a Legacy That Lasts*

Philippians 3:1-6

June 21, 2009

### **Introduction:**

At 9:19 a.m. on Monday, October 25<sup>th</sup>, 1999 a Learjet left Orlando International Airport with Payne Stewart and his business associates. By 9:44 a.m. air traffic control had lost radio contact as the plane climbed toward 39,000 feet over Gainesville, Florida. Shadowed by Air Force F-16 and A-10 fighter jets, the plane apparently continued on autopilot for some 1400 miles until it ran out of fuel and crashed in a field outside of Mina, South Dakota almost 4 hours later. While theories abound on what happened, the tragedy of such an event provokes all of us to ask “Why?” But more importantly, how would you respond if it happened to your family? It gives us pause to ask:

- ❖ What’s really important in life?
- ❖ Am I ready to meet God should I die unexpectedly?
- ❖ What kind of legacy would I leave for my family and friends?
- ❖ Ultimately – what really counts from an eternal perspective?

### **Transition**

When our frail humanity is exposed and the temporary nature of our existence is exposed, life is reduced to its simplest denominator. We come to... how did we live our lives? Would you have any regrets? Would you live differently if this were the last day of your life?

Of course you would! You’d live in light of eternity! Paul gives us that kind of perspective in Philippians 3. In prison, towards the end of his life, he frames life’s big questions in the context of a comparison of his old life before Christ and the radical transformation that followed. He does some hard analysis and so

should we. Paul gives us the framework for leaving a legacy that lasts!

As Paul looks back on his life, he looks back at the things that made a difference in his life and he gives us his insights into what was really important. On this Father's Day Sunday, ask yourself this simple question: **What is the legacy of my life?**

## I. A Final Warning (v. 1-3)

B. **Rejoice:** safeguard...good for you to hear it again and again!  
Joy, in spite of, not because of!

### C. Remember

1. Paul warns about “**the dogs**” (v. 2)

*<sup>2</sup>Watch out for those dogs, those men who do evil, those mutilators of the flesh. (NIV) Psalm 22:16*

- a) A reference to the roving packs of animals in the streets of the city, a Middle Eastern form of reproach. Not the cuddly “Marley and Me”!
  - b) Dogs = Jesus and anything else. It stands for a works gospel.
  - c) Anything that would cause you to put confidence in yourself vs. God. He directs our attention to what really matters.
2. **Evil workers:** Those who say you have to earn your salvation. Enough is never enough. When you never know how much is enough to satisfy God, you live with shame, guilt and obligation. II Cor. 11:3
3. **False Circumcision:** If circumcision is good, castration is better.
4. **Put no confidence in the flesh:**

## II. A False Confidence (v. 4-6)

Paul says that if anyone had room to boast, he could. It was a kind of boastful legalistic approach! Legalism is substituting

3. **Application:** Are you basing your life for Christ on what you do for Him? Pride is a destructive thing! It's a fatal mistake.

### Table Talk:

1. Which of Paul's "credentials" do you find yourself identifying with?
2. What is the passion of your life?
3. **Dads:** What is the legacy you are leaving for your kids?
4. How does "living in light of eternity" affect your ...
  - Choices and decisions?
  - Approach to your job?
  - Involvement in church and ministry?
5. What does the "fellowship of his sufferings" mean for your life?
6. **Parents:** Close your devotional time by praying over each of your kids and the legacy you will leave in their lives.

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rules and regulations for my relationship with Christ! The legacy he would leave before he became a Christ-follower was based on all the wrong things!

*v.4 – "If anyone else things he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more".*

#### A. **Rituals:** "Circumcised the 8<sup>th</sup> day"

1. Earliest possible identifier of Jewish religiosity. He was born a Jew, not a Gentile. It was the mark of a chosen one!
2. His parents were orthodox; the eighth day was correct & precise.
3. We have our own rituals today: baptism, communion, baby dedications, catechism, confirmation, etc.

#### B. **Race:** "Of the nation (people) of Israel"

1. Wasn't a convert or proselyte; he was an Israelite by race! The Israelites alone could claim Jacob as their ancestor.
2. He uses the highest title of God's ancient people; had all the rights of being God's chosen people. Only they had the covenant with God! Apple of God's eye.
3. **Daddy's Favorite!**

#### C. **Right Family:** "Of the tribe of Benjamin"

1. His family had preserved the genealogy through Jacob's youngest son... a matter of special pride. Psalm 68:27 and Rom. 11:1
2. The Holy City lies on the border of the tribal territory of Benjamin; only Benjamin born in the Promised Land.
3. 1<sup>st</sup> king in Israel comes from Benjamin. Perhaps he was named after Saul! Tribe had post of honor in the army.
4. Benjamin was one of two southern tribes (in Judah) that remained true to the house of David; signifies loyalty, faith & purity.

5. **Application:** My grandpa was Christian. Your Christian heritage isn't enough!

D. **Religion:** "A Hebrew of Hebrews"

1. Parents had retained their Hebrew language and customs though living in Tarsus. Not Hellenistic but rather schooled by Gamaliel in Jerusalem (Acts 22:3). With great effort, his parents made sure he retained their mother tongue.
2. All descendants of Jacob were Israelites, but only those who used and adhered to the sacred language were Hebrews!
3. Though dispersed around the world (in Rome, Alexandria, etc.), a Hebrew would stubbornly refuse to be assimilated into the dominant culture nation of residence.
4. Example: Daniel not wanting their names changed. They enculturated them by teaching them a new language, so they would forget about their heritage.

E. **Rules:** "As to the law a Pharisee"

1. By birth an Israelite, by education a Hebrew... by choice a Pharisee; one of the separated ones; a term of honor not reproach. They weren't all hypocrites. Many were very devout and sincere... but sincerely deluded!
2. The Pharisees took the strictest, most exacting view of the Law of Moses. He didn't just try to slide by; he placed enormous pressure on himself to live the Pharisee life!
3. There were 619 additional commandments. Since it was considered work they couldn't...
  - a) Eat an egg if it were laid on the Sabbath
  - b) Scratch a mosquito bite
  - c) Look in a mirror for fear of seeing a grey hair and be tempted to pluck it out
  - d) [Shabbat elevator in Israel.](#)

4. Word Pharisee used 99x in N.T. (This is only occurrence outside of gospels and Acts.)

F. **Resume:** "As to zeal, a persecutor of the church"

1. Not only did he have the genealogy, but also he had the resume to go with it!
2. He wasn't just compliant and cooperative. He was combative! He saw disagreement worthy of death; he saw Christianity as a heretical sect!
3. He was God's hero in killing the heretics; he persecuted them with a clear conscience. Persecute – Lit means to track down like a hunter; to cause to run
4. He held the coats of those who stoned Stephen in Acts 7:58

G. **Reputation:** "As to the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless"

1. Lit – "blameless" – His achievements
2. His strict observance of the manmade regulations of the law was as impressive as it was obsessive! 614 ceremonial, moral & interpretive traditions.
3. He borders on claiming perfection as it relates to ritual. He adheres to a scrupulous conformity to the law.
4. He thought he was perfect and proud of it!

H. Summary

1. His pedigree was impeccable based on the internal measures of birthright. **He had it all by birthright and did it all by behavior.**
2. He got the Heisman of Holiness; He was the MVP of godly men, got the gold medal for obedience, won the Pulitzer of Preaching, and received the Nobel Prize for all-around righteousness!