

Philippians 3:1-3

Who Let the Dogs Out?

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Philippians 3:1-3

1 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things again is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you. 2 Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision; 3 for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh,

Finally ... but not so finally

Finally, my brethren ...

Greek (loipos)

the rest of the things that remain

- Wuest: to the rest; as to the rest
- Who have we been talking about?
- What group of people did Chapters 1 & 2 deal with?
- What have we been talking about?
- Who/what might then be “the rest”?

Rejoice! Rejoice! Rejoice! Rejoice!

rejoice in the Lord.

- Exact word (*chairō*) 4 times already:
 - 1:18 *Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice*
 - 2:17 *I rejoice and share my joy with you all*
 - 2:18 *I urge you, rejoice in the same way*
 - 2:28 *when you see him again you may rejoice*
- Many other related words in many other verses:
 - 1:2,3,4,7,18 (×2), 25, 29
 - 2:2,9,17 (×2), 18 (×2), 28 (×2)
- What does it mean to rejoice?
 - What are we to rejoice in?
 - What is the basis of our rejoicing?

Not this again

To write the same things again is no trouble to me,

Greek (oknēros)

sluggish; irksome; disturbingly tedious

- Same word in Romans 12:10-11
 - *10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; 11 not **lagging behind in diligence**, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;*
- Do we ever get tired of doing the same thing?
- How many times do we have to tell someone something until we get frustrated?

... and I'll say it again.

To write the same things again is no trouble to me,

- Paul had no problem reminding the saints again and again to “rejoice in the Lord” .
- Is it hard for the Christian to rejoice?
- Why does Paul remind us to rejoice so many times?
- What might inhibit our rejoicing?
 - Wrong focus
 - Lack of understanding
 - Lack of faith
- What is opposite of rejoicing?

Just to be safe

and it is a safeguard for you.

Greek (asphalēs)

firm; that which can be relied upon; will not fail

- Paul is consumed with our spiritual well-being.
 - Hence, it is not tedious for him to say the same thing.
- Rejoicing—the safest course of action for the believer
- What does it guard us from? (a.k.a. What are the alternatives?)
 - Worldly perspective
 - Fleshly living
 - Legalism

The Others

- In the context, the opposite of “rejoicing” is legalism.
- The Judaizers were continuing to add aspects of the law to grace.
 - The same type of situation as Paul addressed in Galatians.
- The main issue for the believer is life by faith or life by the flesh.
 - Are we going to rest in what Christ has already done, or are we going to put our confidence in the flesh?
- As we shall see, Paul uses strong words in describing the “others”.
- Paul’s message:

BEWARE!!!

Does your dog bite?

Beware of the dogs,

- “Beware” used three times in the verse
 - Wuest: constantly observing with a view to avoiding
 - Repetition implies more than a casual alertness
 - Contrasts with the “safeguarding” of the last verse
 - Pertains to our spiritual security.
- Why “dogs”?
 - Held in low esteem by Greeks and Jews alike
 - Dirty scavenging animals
 - Similar to Jesus calling the Pharisees “vipers”
 - Rumaging through the refuse

They are not with us

beware of the evil workers,

- “Evil” workers contrast with Epaphroditus and Timothy
 - “Fellow” workers with Paul
 - Interest and love for the Philippians aligned with Pauls
- The Judaizers—not in concert with Paul, Epaphroditus, and Timothy
 - Continually nipping at Paul’s heels
 - Perverting grace by adding law
 - Providing false information
 - Intent may not be evil; content of their teaching is

You “workers”

beware of the false circumcision;

- Interlinear translation: circumcisers
 - Required physical circumcision as part of their salvation.
 - Interspersed grace with law
- Alternate translations for “false circumcision”:
 - Mutilation (forbid by the Mosaic law)
 - Concision
 - Implies division (maybe?)
- Teaching is
 - Mutilated
 - False
 - Divisive

The real deal

for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh,

Them	Us
Circumcisers	Circumcision
Division	Unity
Evil	Faithful
Works	Rejoicing
Law	Faith

Colossians 2:9-14

*9 For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, 10 and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority; 11 and **in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ;** 12 having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.*

Colossians 2:9-14 (cont.)

13 When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, 14 having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

Let the right one in

for we are the true circumcision,

- What does it mean to be the “true circumcision”?
 - Separated from sin, the world, and the flesh
 - Consider the Law
 - Operates in the flesh
 - Deals with sin
 - Has power in this world
 - True circumcision is done to us by God
 - Relates to our identification with Christ
 - How many ways can Paul represent our identification with Christ?
- What results from this true circumcision?

Where do you worship?

who worship in the Spirit of God

Greek (latreuō)

to perform sacred services, to offer gifts, to worship God in the observance of the rites instituted for his worship

- Wuest: refers to the service of Jehovah by His peculiar people, the Jews
- Worship by the Spirit
- Not a matter of doing earthly duties
- Not something we do on our own

Glory days

and glory in Christ Jesus

- Interlinear translation: boasting in Christ Jesus
- Related to a word often translated “rejoice”
- It is all about Jesus
 - All credit is due to Him
 - All focus is to be on Him
 - We ought to be beholding Him
- How does our life “boast” about Jesus?

The great debate

and put no confidence in the flesh

Greek (peithō)

to be persuaded, to suffer one's self to be persuaded; to be induced to believe

- Wuest: coming to a settled persuasion regarding something
- Implies there is a debate occurring
 - The Judaizers—the false teachers
 - Paul—the truth teacher
- We decide who we listen to
- We can be persuaded by either

Lean on me

and put no confidence in the flesh

- Interlinear translation: *The ones in the Spirit of God serving ... not in flesh relying.*
- We have died to the flesh—how then can we rely on it?
- Nothing good can come from the flesh, ever
 - The Judaizer expected something good to come by fleshly effort
 - Did God ever intend for good to come by means of fleshly effort?
- Our safeguarding is in rejoicing in what Christ has given us
- Our security is in Christ, and has nothing to do with what we do or do not do

Expanded and explained (1)

1 As for the rest of what I have to say to you who share a birthing into the family of God with me, let me preface it with this pivotal and essential truth: you must of logical necessity express that grace-given joy which springs from and has its basis in the Lord who He is, what He has done, and who we are in Him. To write the same things again, as I have before, is no bother to me even by repetition, and it is a foolproof spiritual safeguard for every single one of you and the church body as a whole.

Expanded and explained (2)

2 You must of logical necessity, based on your eternally fixed position in Christ, be in continuing cautious awareness of the pack of those legalists who are viciously & indiscriminately attacking & spiritually scavenging unclean food, of the ones who are basically evil in what they seek to accomplish, of those who seek to make a name for themselves & falsely presume to impress God by mutilating their followers in a manner that is in keeping with pagan rituals & practices

Expanded and explained (3)

3 for we who are in Christ in our position are by the expression of that position in our present condition - the very life of Christ continuing to have the circumcision which is a mark on the heart, exclusive of gender, since we worship in the Spirit of God so as to focus our attention upon & behold Jesus Christ & find ample reason to glory in the unique person & accomplishments of Christ Jesus, & place absolutely no confidence in human credentials