

Philippians (Chapter 3)

**Joy in the Lord and Christ's sufficiency no matter the circumstances,
that God may be glorified.**

Describe the most joyful day in your life. What made it so joyful?

Philippians Chapter 3:

v1

Joy and rejoicing in the Lord.

v2

What is Paul referring to here in verse 2? (Circumcision)

v3

What does Paul mean, "That we are the circumcision?"

Jewish circumcision is a circumcision of the flesh.

But our circumcision is not of the flesh but of the Spirit, or, as Paul says in other letters, it is circumcision of the heart.

So what is the circumcision of believers?

Romans 4:9-12 Circumcision was a physical act that represented the seal of righteousness that was credited to Abraham because of his faith before circumcision.

Circumcision was a physical sign or seal of the covenant between God and Abraham.

The righteousness credited to Abraham was because of his faith before he was ever circumcised.

Galatians 5:3 The circumcision of Abraham meant you were obligated to obey the whole law.

Galatians 5:4-5 So the righteousness again comes through faith just like with Abraham in Romans.

And note that it is through the Spirit.

We are going to look at scripture in a minute that says our circumcision is a circumcision of the heart by the Holy Spirit, not a circumcision of the flesh by the hand of men.

Galatians 5:6 The only thing that counts is faith.

So the Abrahamic circumcision was tied to the law. It represented a commitment, an obligation, as Galatians 5:3 states, to keep the law.

Circumcision was symbolic of setting oneself apart for God, a covenant between God and the Jews. Cutting off the fleshly foreskin represented cutting off the sin of his people Israel if they obey the law.

It was covenant of the law, a sign of commitment to God to obey His law.

But true righteousness comes through faith, even for Abraham, as we have seen.

Romans 2:25-29a

There it is. The true circumcision is circumcision of heart by the Spirit.

Galatians 2:20-21 Crucified with Christ, circumcised of my sinful, fleshly nature, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.

And it says, "I live by faith." Faith is the source of righteousness through God's grace, not through obedience to the law.

Fleshly circumcision could not remove the sin and replace it with righteousness because it required total obedience to the law.

So it is not circumcision of the flesh, the foreskin, that matters but circumcision of our fleshly nature.

Only circumcision of the heart, circumcision of the fleshly nature by the Holy Spirit so that we now live according to the leading of the Holy Spirit leading to righteousness, not according to the old sinful, fleshly nature leading only to more sin and disobedience.

Romans 6:2b-3 So we see a connection between circumcision of the heart and baptism.

Romans 6:4-7, 11-14 Dead to sin, circumcised from sin, alive to Christ, not under law but under grace.

Colossians 2:11 Circumcision by Christ. Jesus cut off our sinful nature.

Colossians 2:12 So again we see the tie to baptism.

Baptism is symbolic of the new circumcision of the heart.

Circumcision of the heart means circumcision of the old sinful nature, the sin cut off and replaced by the Holy Spirit with the righteousness of Christ through faith.

(2 Corinthians 5:21)

In Baptism we bury the old sinful nature, circumcise the old sinful nature, so our sin is left behind, buried under the water which washes us and cleanses us from the sin, and we are raised to a new life in Christ through the Holy Spirit dwelling in us.

Dead to sin, alive to Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:17 If in Christ we are a new creation, born again, the old has gone. It has been circumcised, and we have been baptized into a new life in Christ.

Romans 8:9-17 Not controlled by sinful nature but by the Spirit.

Dead to sin, circumcised from sin, alive to the Spirit and righteousness.

What does all this mean in relation to Abraham where this all started?

Ephesians 2:11-15a, 19-22 Gentiles and Jews were separated by circumcision, but Christ abolished the law in his flesh, and sin was crucified with Christ eliminating the requirement of fleshly circumcision and replacing it with circumcision of the heart by the Spirit so our old sinful fleshly nature has been circumcised from us, crucified with Christ, so we are new, born again into the kingdom of God. Gentiles and Jews united in Christ.

Galatians 3:26-29 We are sons of God through faith just as we said at the beginning that Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness.

We have circumcised the old sinful nature and been baptized into Christ.

We are all one in Christ Jesus, we are all Abraham's children and heirs according to the promise.

Romans chapter 8:9-17 that I mentioned earlier also says we are children of God, heirs of God.

Now that Paul has set the foundation for the Philippians, he next uses himself as an example of what he is talking about.

Paul used to live according to the flesh and fleshly circumcision:

Philippians Chapter 3:

v4-6

Paul describes when he lived by the fleshly nature under the fleshly circumcision.

Paul had perfected his sin nature.

He had it down to a T; and, in everything he did, he acted out of self-righteousness.

v7-8

I consider as rubbish all the things I used to value.

I circumcised the old sinful nature, receiving the new circumcision of the heart.

Jesus threw away my old sinful nature, so I could gain Christ.

v9

Now like Abraham I have the true righteousness that comes from God through faith.

My old self-righteousness has been discarded, circumcised.

v10-11

Again, through circumcision of the heart and through baptism, my old sinful nature, my old self, has been buried with Christ, and He has lifted me out of the water as a new creature, raised with Christ, becoming more like Him, becoming conformed into His image.

(Romans 8:29)

v12-14

It is a process. Sanctification is a process. Becoming more like Jesus.

(2 Corinthians 3:18)

v15-16

Live for Christ Jesus. Don't regress and fall back into your old worldly ways, the former ways of the fleshly, sinful nature.

v17-19

Follow men or women who are Christ-like examples, those who are mature in their walk and are further along in being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ.

Don't follow the worldly fellows into their destiny of destruction.

v20a

We are citizens of heaven and not of this world.

v20b-21

Christ will transform us to be more like Him, so let our hearts be circumcised and leave the old fleshly nature behind. (1 John 3:1-3)

v4:1

Stand firm in Christ Jesus.