

Philippians Series

Lesson #068

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Dean Bible Ministries

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How Can We be Righteous Before God?

Philippians 3:8–11



Php. 1:27, “Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, [NKJV]

Php. 1:28, “and not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God.”

In Php. 3 the focus is on standing firm against error.

Two sources:

- 1. The Judaizers: added human works to justification and/or spiritual growth (sanctification).**

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Gal. 2:14, “But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, ‘If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?’ ”

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ἀναγκάζω *anagkazō*
2 sing pres act indic
to compel, force;
this was an ongoing
action

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Gal. 2:16, “because we know that a man is not declared righteous by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be declared righteous by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be declared righteous.”

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Php. 3:1–2: Paul warns against the legalistic, grace-destroying teaching of the Judaizers.

Php. 3:3–6: Paul emphasizes the confidence factor.

Php. 3:3, “For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, [NKJV]

**πείθω *peithō* perfect tense act part masc plur
nom “to persuade; believe; trust; have
confidence”**

Php. 3:4, “though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so:”

πεποίθησις *pepoithēsis* fem sing acc confidence

Judaizers put their confidence in the cross *plus* obedience to the Law. This he described in Php. 3:3, 4 as confidence “in the flesh,” a synonym for human effort, human good.

**Human good + faith in Christ = nullification of faith.
Faith cannot be mixed with human morality, ritual observance, or legalism because this inherently rejects the sufficient, gracious gift of Christ.**

Faith + anything = nothing

Faith alone + Christ alone = justification

Php. 3:5, “circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee;

Php. 3:6, “concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.” [NKJV]

Four Related to
Genetic Heritage
(non-volitional)

1. Circumcised (parents’ decision)
2. Stock of Israel
3. Tribe of Benjamin
4. Hebrew of the Hebrews

Three Related to
Paul’s Decisions
(volitional responsibility)

1. Pharisee
2. Zealously persecuting the Church
3. Blameless in the righteousness of the law

What is the important question?

Job 9:2 “... But how can a man be righteous [צַדִּיק (*ṣādēq*) be just, righteous] before God?”

The issue is how do we obtain righteousness.

Rom. 4:1, “What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh?”

Rom. 4:2, “For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.”

Rom. 4:3, “For what does the Scripture say? ‘Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.’ ”

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λογίζομαι *logízomai*;

① a. to determine by mathematical process, *reckon, calculate; count, take into account;*

b. as a result of a calculation *evaluate, estimate, look upon as, consider;*

② to give careful thought to a matter, think (about), consider, ponder, let one’s mind dwell on;

③ to hold a view about something, think, believe, be of the opinion as in *Php. 3:13*

Imputation

The difference between real and judicial imputations:

- 1. Real imputations credit something to a person which truly belongs to him; thus, an affinity exists between what is received and the one receiving it. Real imputations include: Adam's original sin to the sin nature at birth (Rom. 5:12–21).**

2. Judicial imputations occur where the justice of God credits to a person what is not previously his own. There is no harmony, agreement, or affinity between what is being imputed and the person receiving the imputation, i.e.,

a. our personal sins to Christ on the Cross (Rom. 8:31–32) and

b. Christ's perfect righteousness to the believer at the point of salvation (Rom. 4:3–4; 2 Cor. 5:21).

3. **Imputation** derives from the Latin, *imputare*, “to reckon, to charge to one’s account.” The English means to charge someone with a fault or responsibility, or simply *to credit something to someone*.

The Greek *logizomai*, has the same basic connotation. It is important to recognize that imputation is a legal or forensic concept, as such it does not refer to a concrete substance someone has or owns, but to something which one has legally. Thus imputation would not be used of giving a gift or something concrete to a subject, i.e., John imputed a bottle of perfume to Mary for Christmas.

4. Imputation in Hebrew is the word:

חָשַׁב *chashav* vb “to credit, account, reckon, impute” i.e., keep accounting records. The root idea of the word is “to weave.” As such the basic idea of the word is thought in the sense of weaving together thoughts to produce new ideas. Thus the word relates to planning, devising, making a judgment, meditating, inventing, accounting. Thus it applies to the overall sense of accounting of sins in relationship to the books of judgment, keeping an accurate record of one’s sins.

- a. The judicial concept means to attribute something to a person as the judicial or meritorious reason of blessing or condemnation, reward or punishment.**
- b. To impute sin means to impute or assign the guilt of sin. This does not mean criminal or moral guilt, or immorality, but the judicial obligation to satisfy God's justice (~Charles Hodge, 2, 194).**
- c. Therefore the concept of imputation must relate to the function of assigning something in relationship to the justice of God.**

5. Real imputations include:

Adam's original sin to the sin nature at birth (Rom. 5:12–21),

eternal life to the human spirit (1 John 5:11–12),

blessings in time to the righteousness of God in us (Eph. 1:3; 1 Cor. 2:9),

blessings in eternity to the resurrected believer (2 Cor. 5:10).

6. Judicial imputations

The first judicial imputation is the imputation of our personal sins to Christ.

2 Cor. 5:21, “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

7. The second judicial imputation is that of Christ's divine righteousness to man.

Gen. 15:6, “And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.”

8. The result then is that man is declared righteous, he is not made righteous, sin is not overlooked. It is not just as if I had never sinned. He is declared by God to be righteous, not because of what he is or will be, but solely because he possesses the righteousness of Christ.

God pronounces their debt to justice paid by another so that they are now righteous in relationship to the standard of perfect justice.

Php. 3:7, “But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.” [NKJV]

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ἦν ἔν εἰμί eimi

**3 sing imperfect indic
to be, exist (sum)**

The imperfect tense indicates continuous action in past time. Paul is saying these merits were continuously worthless, they were never a positive.

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κέρδη *kerdē* κέρδος *kerdos* neut plur nom (n) gain, credit

ἡγέομαι *hēgeomai*

1 sing perf mid/passive indic 1. to lead, 2. to engage in an intellectual process, think, consider, regard; also an accounting term. As in James 1:2, “count it all joy”.

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ζημίαν *zēmian* ζημία *zēmia* fem sing acc *loss, forfeit, financial debit, penalty*

Php. 3:8, “Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ” [NKJV]

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What is the important question?

**Job 9:2, “... But how can a man be righteous [צַדִּיק (*ṣādēq*)
be just, righteous] before God?”**

The issue is how do we obtain righteousness.

Human effort, morality, ritual, and benevolence may be beneficial in the human realm, but it is dung as far as justification righteousness is concerned.

Isa. 64:6, “But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.”

Eccl. 7:20, “For there is not a just [righteous] man on earth who does good and does not sin.”

Psa. 14:3, “They have all turned aside, they have together become corrupt; There is none who does good, no, not one.”

Isa. 59:2, “But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.”

The standard is God's righteousness, not human righteousness, which is filthy rags.

God is perfect righteousness, not just more moral, but the very standard of all that is right and just. God's righteous standard is asserted again and again through the writings of the Hebrew prophets.

Psa. 11:7, “For the LORD is righteous, He loves righteousness [Heb. צִדִּיק , *tzaddiq*]; His countenance beholds the upright.”

Psa. 71:19, “Also Your righteousness [Heb. צִדִּיק , *tzaddiq*] O God, which reacheth unto high heaven; is very high, You who have done great things; O God, who is like You?”

Numbers 23:19, “God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?”

Psalms 119:142, “Your righteousness [Heb. צִדִּיק , *tzaddiq*] is an everlasting righteousness, and Your law is truth.”

The consequence of sin is death. Initially, spiritual death, which is separation from God. But this led to corruption of everything in the material world, which led to physical death of all living beings.

Gen. 2:17, “but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

Isa. 59:2, “But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.

Isa. 59:3, “For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; Your lips have spoken lies, your tongue has muttered perversity.”

God's love provides the answer.

Jer. 31:3, “The LORD has appeared of old to me, saying: ‘Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you.’ ”

Isa. 43:25, “ ‘I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; And I will not remember your sins.’ ”

John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

Rom. 5:8, “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

The answer then relates to our faith in Christ.

Gal. 2:16, “because we know that a man is not declared righteous by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be declared righteous by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be declared righteous.”

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πίστεως Χριστοῦ,

pisteos Christou

faith “of” Christ, an

objective genitive

not the faithfulness of

Christ, or Christ’s own

faithfulness.

Faith directed toward Christ