

Philippians 3:8-14 *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 ⁹ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; ¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, ¹¹ if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. ¹² ¶ Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. ¹³ Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, ¹⁴ I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

John 12:12-19 *The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, ¹³ took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out: "Hosanna! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' The King of Israel!" ¹⁴ Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written: ¹⁵ "Fear not, daughter of Zion; Behold, your King is coming, Sitting on a donkey's colt." ¹⁶ His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and that they had done these things to Him.*

Who are you going to sign with? Part II

This morning in our Scripture readings we have seen who and what our God is and what He has to offer. We can see what He

has to offer, as the prophet Zechariah points out, by the fact that Christ comes riding into Jerusalem, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of donkey. What we can learn from Him riding in such a manner on the first day of the celebration of the Passover? We can learn that Christ did not come to gain earthly wealth for Himself or for His people. We can learn that Christ did not come to gain earthly glory for Himself or for His people. He came to give Himself for His people! We can learn that He loves us more and He has more to offer than all the false American gods.

Last Sunday we just scratched the surface of the pantheon of false American gods and how what they have to offer is rubbish compared to what Christ has to offer. Today, with the one True God so clearly before us and what He has to offer, I wanted to bring up a few more false American gods, that by comparing them to Christ, we with Zechariah may shout for joy.

What did Christ not come into Jerusalem to do? Not to bring Himself or His followers earthly glory but heavenly. That is the opposite of the American god of glory. If you ask someone

what they do on Sunday morning, some more common answers are: They watch the Sunday morning news programs or work out. These are both aspects of the God of glory. They want glory and honor from men for their knowledge and/or intelligence and/or athletic prowess or fitness or muscle or hotness. Is it wrong to pursue fitness of mind and or body? Absolutely not! Even the Bible points to these earthly pursuits as profitable. I Timothy 4 says, “bodily exercise profits”. It would not be wrong to pursue as close to earthly perfection as you get in a sport or discipline trying to qualify for the Olympics and a gold medal or for a break through in science and a Nobel prize or the recognition of your peers but the problem would be if these things came above Christ in your life. The whole passage in Timothy reads **1 Timothy 4:8** *“For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.”*

Christ rode in lowliness to be delivered unto death for our sins. He rode to death in lowliness that you might ride into heaven in glory. That is why we shout for joy. Paul knew this glory and

perfection were waiting for him in heaven. He says in our *text* *“Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.”*

Christ rode into Jerusalem to obtain this for Paul and for me and you. And He did obtain it. And Jesus send out the Holy Spirit to lay hold of Paul and me and you. He made us believers. He called us out of the darkness of the worship of false worldly gods who can offer a little for this world but nothing for the next and called us into knowing and believing that Christ loves us the most, sacrificed the most for us and offers the most. What Christ offers is perfection and glory. Perfection and glory in heaven. These sinful and weak and disease ridden and decaying bodies will be perfected, fit as can be, and disease and death free. Our souls will be stripped of its sinful nature, our sins forgiven (which in truth we have already in Christ) and the glory of an adopted Son of God, the King of heaven. Who are you going to sign with, not just today but everyday the person who rode into Jerusalem not to bring earthly riches or glory to Himself but perfect eternal Heavenly

glory and riches to you or with a false American god?

Another common American god who might hit closer to home is family. What do you do on Sunday? “Oh I don’t go to church, it is my day to spend with family.” Like physical and mental exercise, family is of great value. Beside for God there is no greater blessing than a happy marriage and family. But marriage and children, which God created and gave us as a blessing, should not be our god, should not be the main focus of our life. Doing so brings God’s wrath. Doing so is a fool’s game that ends in tears.

When the Holy Spirit turned Saul into Paul, he lost his family. He had come from a wealthy respected Jewish family and after the Holy Spirit made him Paul, a follower of Christ, it appears that his family disowned him and had nothing to do with him. You know what Paul said? He said compared to gaining Christ, his family was rubbish. He considered it loss. Notice he doesn’t say that family has no value. Paul here uses the word loss. This Greek word implies a big loss like losing a whole ship of cargo or losing an arm or a leg. Losing his family was a big painful loss but

compared to gaining Christ, even something as great as family was rubbish. Enjoy family and serve family, but don’t make it your god. Don’t serve it above God. That brings perdition to you and to your family.

If you put your spouse or children before God, if you make them your god, what do you have at the end of your life? Nothing! Your family pictures, your good memories, your children, can’t get you out of hell. They can’t forgive your sins. They can’t give you eternal life. And the times you had with them were fleeting and often marred by sin. And furthermore, serving the god of family often leaves you with nothing, even well before you die, as death decays and takes your spouse and family and you, dementia, alzheimers, car accidents, stroke, cancer.

You love your spouse, your children, your siblings, your parents? Great! Put God before them. It is what is best for you and them. If your following of God’s Word means breaking of church fellowship with a sibling? So be it! That lack of fellowship is a witness to them that even denying one point of scripture puts them

in spiritual danger. You pointing out sins to a child makes them angry with you and not talk to you? So be it! That silence is a witness to them calling them to repentance that they might come to Christ for forgiveness.

If you put Christ first and teach your family to put Christ first too, that is real love for your family because then what will they have? Everything. It is Christ who gets us out of hell. It is He who forgives our sin. It is He who gives eternal life and our times with Him is not fleeting. Because of Him, our time with Him, who loves us most, and our times with our family, who Christ has laid hold of and who have not signed their soul over to some other false god, will not be fleeting and marred by sin, but eternal and marred by no sin in heaven. Who are you going to sign with not just today but everyday and who are you going to teach your family to serve Christ or a false American god?

There are many more false American gods than we have talked about these last two weeks, but there is one more that we should talk about - the god of self-righteousness . It is so easy for

us to assume that since where we are on Sunday mornings is in church that the god we are serving is the true God. But our flesh is so sinful and self centered and Satan is so subtle and sneaky that it is very easy for us to fall into serving the god of self-righteousness. It is very easy for us to think we are, with Zechariah, following behind Jesus, singing for joy and praising Christ's name, but really be going before Christ trying to steal His praise.

Paul had served such a god. He had believed he had been serving and worshiping the one true God but who he had truly been serving and worshiping was himself. "Look what I have done. I have been better than all those people. I do more for the church than so and so . I am pretty good . I am not a liar like that person."

This type of attitude where we forget how sinful we are and forget that heaven is not something we deserve, so easily sets in. It is so easy for what we say and do to not be about bringing God glory but bringing me glory. Paul had served this false god and tried to establish and maintain his own righteousness. Fought tooth and nail against any who dared to accuse him of sin. Pointed the

finger at others to distract and downplay our own failings.

What does serving such a god give you? A lot of finger pointing, hurt feelings, resentment and in the end, hell, because no amount of arguing or excuses or finger pointing at others or comparing yourself against others is going to fool God. His omnipotence and His Holy Law is going to cut away all the paper walls of our own supposed rightness and goodness and we will be left naked and exposed as sinners, sinners who deserve Hell.

But what does serving Christ, following behind Christ, singing His praise and glory for coming on colt the foal of donkey to die for us sinners bring? A righteousness, not of the law, but God's own righteousness through faith. That is what it brings. The righteousness of faith, follows behind Christ, not claiming any merit, not trying to defend or excuse our sins and make them look like anything other than what they are, and receives through faith the very righteousness of God. Not our righteousness, but God's righteousness. Christ's righteousness given to you by faith. A righteousness that will stand up in court, that will stand up to the

law and find you blameless and innocent and will give you heaven.

So I ask one final time, as we see Christ ride to die, not for His gain but for yours, who are you going to sign with, not just today but everyday? Christ or a false American god?

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