

Study 6

THE SURPASSING WORTH



Modern mosaic portraying St. Paul landing at Neapolis on his way to Philippi (in Koundouriotou Street).

Background

I once heard the story of a church goer who invited a non-Christian friend to come along to his church. The friend was inquisitive about all the standing, sitting, kneeling, weird song lyrics about lamb's blood, and why a funny wooden plate thingy was passed along without food on it? And then the preaching started.

"What's he doing?"

"Preaching."

Twenty minutes later the inquisitive friend heard the preacher announce with great gusto, "Finally."

"What does that mean?" he asked.

"Absolutely nothing" replied his Christian friend as the preacher continued on for another twenty minutes!

124. **Dr. Andrew Corbett**
25 May 2022 at 10:19:01 pm
Phil. 3:1 ¶ Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you.

125. **Dr. Andrew Corbett**
26 May 2022 at 7:26:19 am
1Th. 5:16 Rejoice always,

126. **Dr. Andrew Corbett**
26 May 2022 at 7:23:17 am
Rejoice in the Lord!

127. **Dr. Andrew Corbett**
25 May 2022 at 9:58:59 pm
1Tim. 6:3 If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness,

128. **Dr. Andrew Corbett**
25 May 2022 at 9:58:41 pm
Titus 1:9 He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.

129. **Dr. Andrew Corbett**
25 May 2022 at 9:58:18 pm
Titus 2:1 ¶ But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine.

130. **Dr. Andrew Corbett**
25 May 2022 at 10:06:20 pm
Phil. 1:28 and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God.

131. **Dr. Andrew Corbett**
26 May 2022 at 7:23:08 am
Phil. 1:27 ¶ Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel,

132. **Dr. Andrew Corbett**
26 May 2022 at 10:48:05 am
Phil. 3:2 ¶ Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh.

133. **Dr. Andrew Corbett**
26 May 2022 at 11:19:23 am
Matt. 7:6 ¶ “Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you.

134. **Dr. Andrew Corbett**
26 May 2022 at 11:19:36 am
Matt. 15:26 And he answered, “It is not right to take the

Some scholars consider Paul's opening statement in Philippians 3 to be like this preacher's. That is, to them, they thought Paul was intending to close his epistle to the Philippians at this point, but he got side-tracked and continued on. But Dr. Gordon Fee disagrees. He regards Paul having several themes that he intended to write to the Philippians about, and now he was about to close his epistle by dealing with the last of them. Some scholars also consider that this was not Paul's first epistle to the Philippians since he states that he was now writing to them about “the same things” (Phil. 3:1). But upon closer examination we will observe that this is *not* what Paul was saying at all.

124 ... 1. What does Paul ask the Philippians to do in **Philippians 3:1**? (Note **1Thess. 5:16**)

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Righteousness Through Christ

Paul's last epistles, of which Philippians was one, were each concerned with *doctrine*. One of the main responsibilities of an apostle was to maintain *sound doctrine*. One of the main responsibilities of an apostle was to maintain *sound doctrine* (**1Tim. 6:3; Titus 1:9; 2:1**). In the opening chapter of Philippians, Paul alludes to those who were opposing the Philippians (**Phil. 1:28**). This required, Paul tells them, ‘standing firm in one spirit, with one mind, striving side by side for the faith of the gospel’ (**Phil. 1:27**). The New Testament uses the term, *the faith*, to refer to ‘the beliefs of Christianity’. That is, *sound doctrine*. What Paul states in this closing section of his epistle was “safe” (ESV) or a “safeguard” (NET, NIV) for the Philippians. This final section of his epistle was designed to safeguard these believers from those who opposed them with false doctrine.

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The Principle of Context

132 The apostle's language in **Philippians 3:2** is quite strong. But what we in the twenty-first century may not appreciate is that the term *dogs* was a common

133 ... Jewish expression for hostile to the gospel (**Matt. 7:6; 15:26; Rev. 22:15**).

2. Note Paul's descriptions of those who were opposing the gospel in Philippians 3:2. He describes the same group of people in three ways. To understand who he is referring to requires reading this verse in context. Read Philippians 3:3 and discuss how the context reveals who is describing.

children's bread and throw it to the dogs."

Matt. 15:27 She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table."

135. Dr. Andrew Corbett

26 May 2022 at 11:19:04 am

Rev. 22:15 Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

136. **Dr. Andrew Corbett**
26 May 2022 at 12:14:09 pm
circumcised
137. **Dr. Andrew Corbett**
26 May 2022 at 12:19:44 pm
Gal. 4:10 You observe days and months and seasons and years!
138. **Dr. Andrew Corbett**
26 May 2022 at 12:19:29 pm
Col. 2:16 ¶ Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath.
139. **Dr. Andrew Corbett**
26 May 2022 at 12:42:08 pm
Eph. 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,
Eph. 2:9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.
140. **Dr. Andrew Corbett**
26 May 2022 at 12:42:18 pm
Salvation is by grace which is accessed through faith in Christ and His finished work.
141. **Dr. Andrew Corbett**
26 May 2022 at 12:53:58 pm
Phil. 3:3 For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh—
142. **Dr. Andrew Corbett**
26 May 2022 at 12:54:04 pm
All believers who could now worship God in the Spirit and glory in Christ Jesus because they had been saved by their faith in the Saviour.
143. **Dr. Andrew Corbett**
26 May 2022 at 12:46:16 pm
Phil. 3:4 though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more:
Phil. 3:5 circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee;
Phil. 3:6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.
144. **Dr. Andrew Corbett**
26 May 2022 at 12:59:13 pm
Because he was a devout Jew; he was circumcised; he kept the Law of Moses blamelessly - and yet none of this was sufficient to save his soul.
145. **Dr. Andrew Corbett**
26 May 2022 at 1:49:20 pm
Phil. 3:7 But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

The Judaizers were a group of Jewish Christians who believed that in order to be a true Christian a person needed to put their faith in Christ *plus* keep the Law of Moses. For men, this involved being c _____ d . This would have been no problem for a *Jewish* convert to Christianity (although the Judaizers also insisted on keeping the sabbaths, the ceremonial days - Gal. 4:10; Col. 2:16). But for a Gentile convert it was confusing and contradictory to the gospel they had received.

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One of the aspects of the *Principle of Context* is that no verse of Scripture can be interpreted in a way that it contradicts the overall message of Scripture.

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4. The Judaizers taught that righteousness was linked to being circumcised, but according to **Philippians 3:3**, who were the truly 'circumcised' and why?
5. Why did the apostle Paul know that ethnicity or the works of the Law could not save a person's soul, based on his comments in **Philippians 3:4-6**?

I Count Everything as Loss

Every bragging right that the Judaizers had — and claimed was necessary for salvation — the apostle Paul also had. But it could never make a person righteous before God.

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6. What value did Paul put on these religious efforts according to **Philippians 3:7**?
7. What value did Paul put on the opportunity now made available to every believer to know Christ? (**Phil. 3:8-10**)

146. Dr. Andrew Corbett

26 May 2022 at 1:49:30 pm

In this verse, Paul said that he counted all of these as a loss - of no value in saving a soul.

147. Dr. Andrew Corbett

26 May 2022 at 2:01:37 pm

as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ

Phil. 3:9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—

Phil. 3:10 that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,

148. Dr. Andrew Corbett

26 May 2022 at 2:02:17 pm

Paul stated that it was not just his religious efforts that he considered as “loss” - it was everything! Nothing could compare to the surpassing worth of knowing Christ. Compared with knowing Christ, it was all “rubbish”.

149. Dr. Andrew Corbett

26 May 2022 at 2:09:33 pm
Phil. 3:12 ¶ Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.
Phil. 3:13 Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead,
Phil. 3:14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

150. Dr. Andrew Corbett

26 May 2022 at 2:09:50 pm
Following Christ was a journey which required “straining forward” and “forgetting what lies behind” (good or bad). The goal in the Christian walk is to be transformed into the likeness of Christ. This requires commitment and discipline.

151. Dr. Andrew Corbett

26 May 2022 at 2:16:04 pm
Phil. 3:15 Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you.

152. Dr. Andrew Corbett

26 May 2022 at 2:16:15 pm
Paul identifies the “mature” who recognised that knowing Christ was goal of Christianity, and for those who not mature - the Lord would reveal to them that the goal of Christianity was to know Christ, not just to increasingly be religious.

153. Dr. Andrew Corbett

26 May 2022 at 2:20:39 pm
Phil. 3:16 Only let us hold true to what we have attained.

But I Press On

Becoming a Christian is not just an event, or a singular moment, it is a moment of soul transformation that leads to a new believer becoming a follower of Christ.

149 8. What did Paul say was involved in following Christ based on **Philippians 3:12-14**?

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There must have been some godly and solid leaders in the Philippian Church who knew how to shepherd and encourage their brothers and sisters.

151 9. In **Philippians 3:15** Paul seems to identify two kinds of believers. Which two kinds of believers does he identify and does he say that God will do to the lesser of these?

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153 10. How did Paul expect the Philippians to obey **Philippians 3:16** - and how can we?

Application Discussion

- Paul was very strong in condemning the false teachers upsetting the Philippians - even calling them “dogs”. How should church leaders condemn false teaching today?
- Paul paid a high price for following Christ - and said that it was worth it. What has been the price that you have had to pay in following Christ?
- How can a church congregation be guarded against false teaching?