

## PAUL'S DEFINITION OF A CHRISTIAN

Philippians 3:1-3

**Intro:** In our two previous sessions the assigned Scripture readings were John 4:1-24 and Psalm 96. Our emphasis has been upon worshipping God.. In John 4:23-24 we read:

23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

In Psalm 96:9 we are exhorted with these words: "O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth." This reminds us that there is no beauty like the beauty of holiness as He sees it in the lives of us, His people. It is most perfectly and beautifully displayed in the character and life of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Tonight I want to call your attention to the first three verses of Philippians 3. Let me read these verses for you. (Read.)

I like to think of verse 3 as one of the many times that the Apostle Paul gave us what amounts to be *A Definition of a Christian*.

There is a kind of a play on words between the words "concision" in verse 2, and the word "circumcision" in verse 3. A "concision" in Greek is the word *kata tomay*; the word "circumcision" is *peritomay*. The first is a mutilation of the flesh which is what circumcision was in the sight of God when it was observed only as a ritual or a religious ceremony, but without any real expression of the heart. Circumcision, on the other hand, when observed by faith was a renunciation of the flesh, and an expression of true faith in God, and in the Lord Jesus Christ. That is why the Apostle Paul said what he did in verse 3. He meant that a true believer, although not actually circumcised in the flesh, is circumcised in heart, and that, after all, was what really matters.

More than that, Paul added that a true believer:

**I. WORSHIPS GOD IN THE SPIRIT.**

**II. REJOICES IN CHRIST JESUS.**

And consistently with what is called the circumcision of the heart, a true Christian is one who:

### **III. HAS NO CONFIDENCE IN THE FLESH.**

This does not mean that we observe any of these perfectly, but they are all to be found in the life of anyone who really knows the Lord Jesus Christ, as his, or her, Savior.

We have all three Members of the Godhead in verse 3. Worshiping in the Spirit refers to the dependence we exercise in the Holy Spirit when we worship God. And rejoicing in Christ Jesus is something that a true Christian will always do, and tonight I want to emphasize that that is what we are doing tonight. When we observe the Lord's Supper, which portrays the most terrible death anyone ever died, yet at the same time we rejoice in it. We rejoice not because of the way the Lord had to suffer, suffering some of which could be seen, and most of which could not be seen., but we rejoice because of what was accomplished by the death.

But let me point out to you the way that Paul referred to our Lord here. He called Him, "Christ Jesus."

We all know that the Apostle referred to our Lord in different ways. Many times as the Lord Jesus Christ. Sometimes as Jesus Christ. Sometimes just as Jesus. Once I know of as the Lord Christ. Sometimes just Christ alone. Why the variety? Well, let me deal with this one that we have in our text tonight: "Christ Jesus."

Christ means the Anointed One, and is His Messianic title. But from Peter's confession which brought the blessing of God we know that it also speaks of His Deity.

Jesus, on the other hand, was the Name given to Him as a Man, a human being.

So when we put the two together we have the Son of God, Deity, Who became Man. The term Christ Jesus begins with His Deity, and moves to His humanity. It was the God-Man Who died for us—not just God, and certainly not just Man, but the God-Man.

And it is in Him that we rejoice. Why? Not just because He died for us, and provided a perfect redemption, but because He was the only One Who

could possibly have redeemed us from our sins. He had not sin of His own, but He became the Great Sin Bearer Himself, and He offered one sacrifice forever that never needs to be repeated. He successfully put away our sins by the sacrifice of Himself.

Consequently when we put our trust in Him, we renounce all dependence upon the flesh, upon any supposed merit that we might think that we had, and we rejoice in Him alone, and not in any way because of what we have done for ourselves.

**Concl:** May the Lord enable us to see this tonight, and not only make this hour a time of great blessing for us all, but also for us to be reminded of this distinguishing characteristics of one who really knows the Savior. And God will be glorified in our time together as we rejoice in Him.