



SERIES: Philippians (May / June) “Finding Joy in the Journey”

SPEAKER: NAT CRAWFORD

Saturday, June 5, 2021

Scripture: Philippians 3:9

TITLE: Don't Go Back

Have you ever seen that photo of a kid whose hand is stuck in the cookie jar? Her hand is holding tightly to the cookie, but she's crying because she can't get her hand out? The parent says, "Drop the cookie, and your hand will go free. You are voluntarily being trapped. Let it go and be free!" I find that image quite humorous, that is, until I see how much I can be like that child with sin, with compromise, and even with legalism.

Paul knew the freedom of letting go of the things that voluntarily hold us up. What do I mean by that? Let's turn back to Philippians 3:9 (NLT) for the answer:

"I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God's way of making us right with himself depends on faith."

Over the past few verses, Paul has been talking about how people cannot save themselves. If anyone could, according to Paul, he could have. He was a religious zealot who followed the Law. But once he met Christ, he realized his self-righteousness was really self-destructive. He was destined for Hell.

It's safe to say that Paul's eyes have been opened to the burden of religion, and desires greatly for people who are in its bondage to be free. But for us as Christians, we can voluntarily walk back into unnecessary slavery. It's like a prisoner who is free to go, and after exiting the prison cell, walks back in. It's like a prisoner who's had the handcuffs removed, only ties a rope around his hands again. Or it's like the child who can free his hand from the cookie jar. It has no power over him. He simply needs to let go.

If we're not careful, we go back into our old habits of sin and destruction. But we don't have to. If we're not careful, we start sliding in our faith. Ultimately, if we're not careful, we'll do what Paul is talking about: falling into legalism - that seditious practice of adding to the sufficient work of Christ.

There are so many ways we can try to undercut the sufficiency of Salvation by grace through faith. The moment we add one additional religious act as a prerequisite for Salvation (confession, communion, or attending church, for example), we cheapen grace and call God a liar.

Paul says, "Believe! Trust in God's grace. Then rest. Yes, obey. Yes, do the right thing, but stop trying to save yourself. It won't work."

So here's my challenge for you today: How do you need to rest in God's grace? I can slip either into license to sin, or legalism far too easily. I have to constantly go back and say, "Whoa, Nat. You're not resting." Or at times, I say, "Whoa, Nat, you're coasting."

So where is it you're not resting in God's grace? Find it. Admit it. Confess it. Then ask God for the Spirit's power to rest and not coast. The Spirit has the power. We need to receive it and rest.

When we rest in God's grace, He will win the day for us.