

FIRST THINGS FIRST



The Priority of Learning

Matthew 6:33

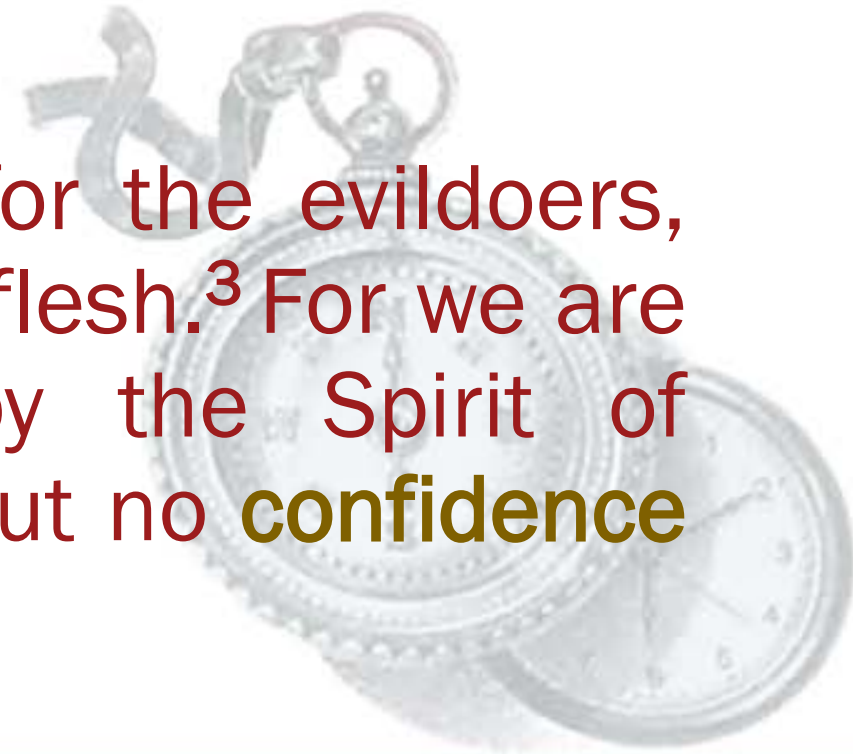
33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.



Philippians 3

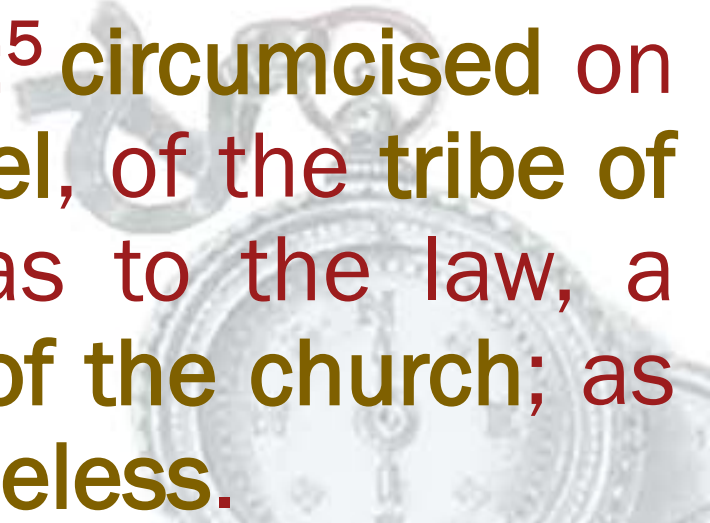
3: Finally, my brothers, **rejoice** in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you.

² Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh.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—



Philippians 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: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**; ⁶ as to zeal, a **persecutor of the church**; as to righteousness under the law, **blameless**.



Saul: a villain?

Numbers 25: While Israel lived in Shittim, the people began to whore with the daughters of Moab.² These invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods.³ So Israel yoked himself to Baal of Peor. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel.⁴ And the Lord said to Moses, “Take all the chiefs of the people and hang them in the sun before the Lord, that the fierce anger of the Lord may turn away from Israel.”⁵ And Moses said to the judges of Israel, “Each of you kill those of his men who have yoked themselves to Baal of Peor.”

Saul: a villain?

Numbers 25: ⁶ And behold, one of the people of Israel came and brought a Midianite woman to his family, in the sight of Moses and in the sight of the whole congregation of the people of Israel, while they were weeping in the entrance of the tent of meeting. ⁷ When Phinehas the son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose and left the congregation and took a spear in his hand ⁸ and went after the man of Israel into the chamber and pierced both of them, the man of Israel and the woman through her belly. Thus the plague on the people of Israel was stopped. ⁹ Nevertheless, those who died by the plague were twenty-four thousand.

Saul: a villain?

Numbers 25: ¹⁰ And the Lord said to Moses, ¹¹ “Phinehas the son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, has turned back my wrath from the people of Israel, in that he was **jealous (NKJV: zealous)** with my **jealousy (NKJV: zeal)** among them, so that I did not consume the people of Israel in my jealousy. ¹² Therefore say, ‘Behold, I give to him my covenant of peace, ¹³ and it shall be to him and to his descendants after him the covenant of a perpetual priesthood, because he was **jealous (NKJV: zealous)** for his God and made atonement for the people of Israel.’”

Saul: a villain?

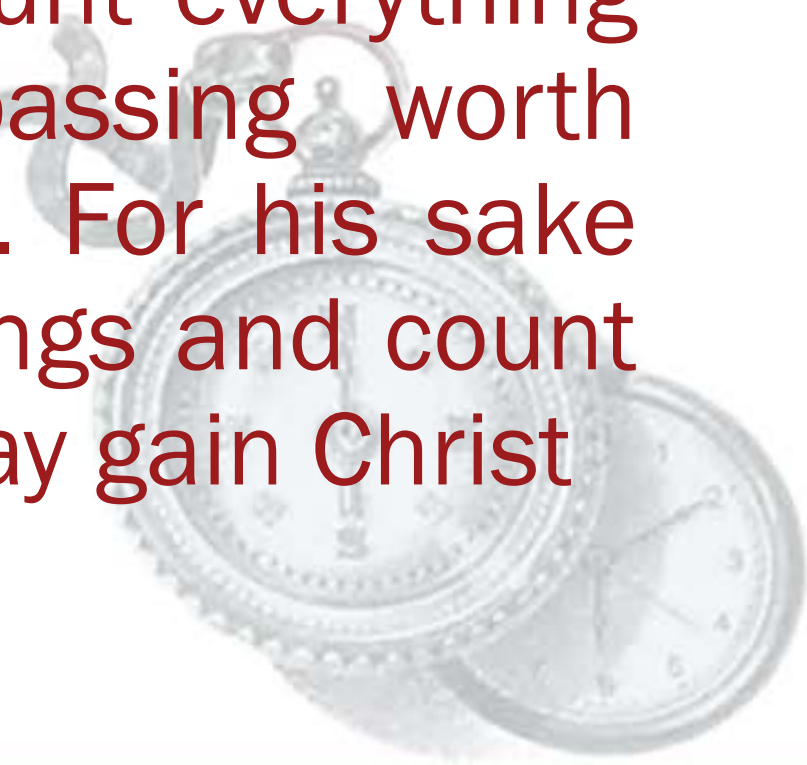
- **Saul desired the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven (a concept firmly rooted in the OT)**
- **His zeal was simply misguided**
- **Saul/Paul's theology was likewise firmly rooted in the OT**

Paul's Theology of the "Righteousness of God"

- "Righteousness" and "The Righteousness of God" in the Old Testament and in St. Paul (James Hardy Ropes)
- "The Righteousness of God" was not in reference to God's moral standard, but rather His unmerited acts of salvation on behalf of His people.

Philippians 3

⁷ But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ Indeed, I count everything 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



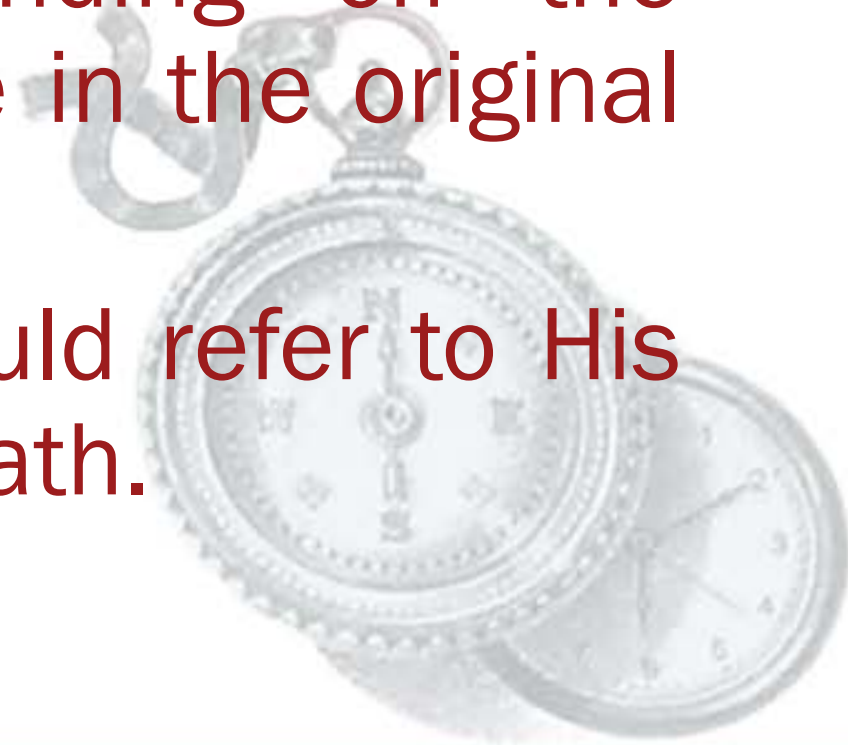
Philippians 3

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—



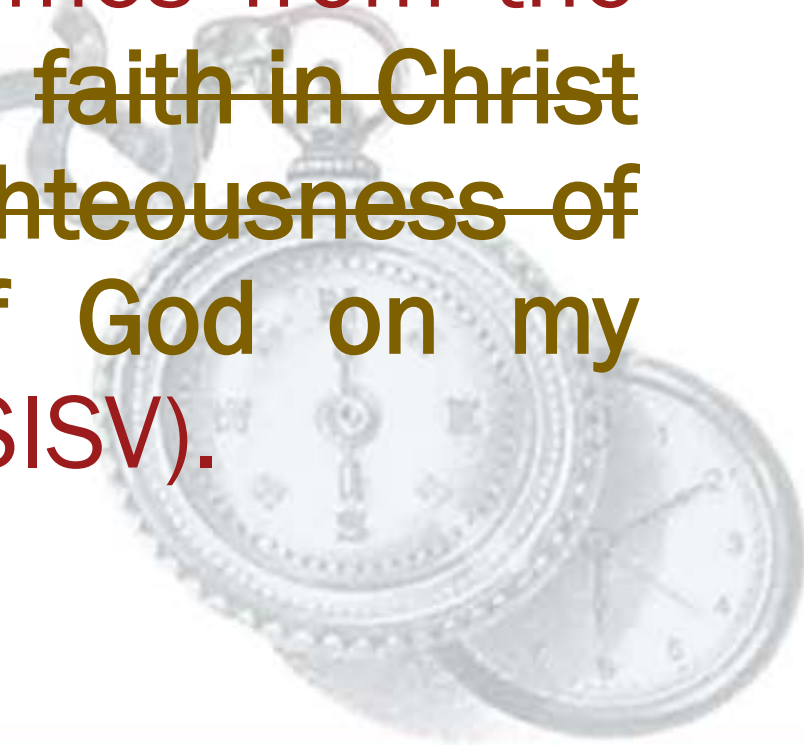
Philippians 3:9

- “Faith *in* Christ” can be translated as “the Faithfulness *of* Christ” depending on the possessive or objective genitive in the original Greek text.
- “The faithfulness of Christ” would refer to His faithful obedience in life and death.



Philippians 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 faithfulness of Christ, the **righteousness of God** unmerited saving grace of God on my behalf that depends on faith— (MSISV).



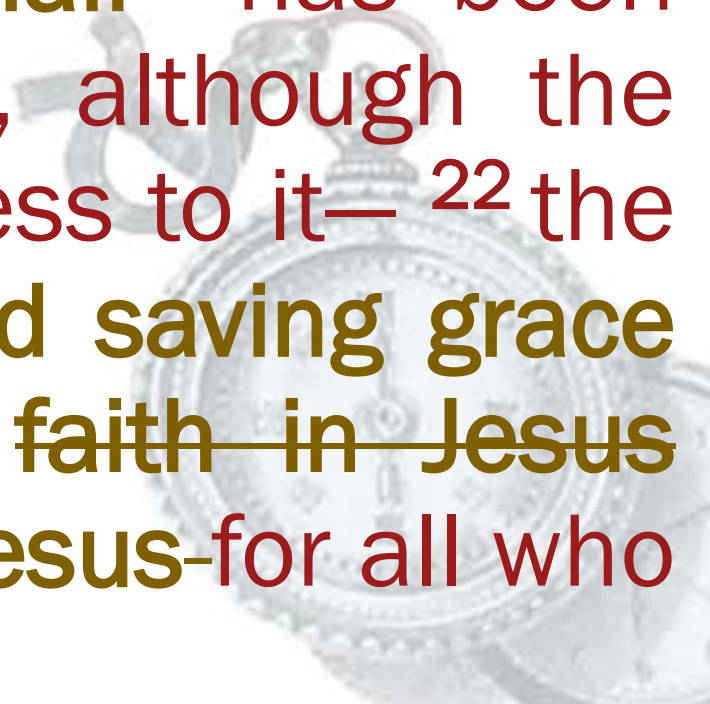
Romans 3 ESV

²¹ But now the **righteousness of God** has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— ²² the **righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ** for all who believe.



Romans 3 MSISV

²¹ But now the ~~righteousness of God~~ unmerited saving grace of God on my behalf has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— ²² the ~~righteousness of God~~ unmerited saving grace of God on my behalf through ~~faith in Jesus Christ~~ the faithfulness of Christ Jesus—for all who believe.



So what is the big deal about learning?

- **Colossians 1:10-** so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and **increasing in the knowledge of God;**
- **Hebrews 6:1-** Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and **go on to maturity...**
- **1 Peter 2:1-** So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. ² Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may **grow up into salvation...**

So what is the big deal about learning?

- **2 Peter 1:** ³ His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the **knowledge** of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, ⁴ by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. ⁵ For this very reason, make every effort to **supplement** your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, ⁶ and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, ⁷ and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. ⁸ For if these qualities are yours and are **increasing**, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the **knowledge** of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Knowledge of the Holy One
should be our greatest
pursuit.

