

REJOICE

IN THE LORD ALWAYS ■

A 6 Week Sermon Series on Philippians

Week Four: Our Resumes

Philippians 3:1-11 (Don't read the passage yet!)

1) **DON'T READ THE PASSAGE YET!** Take a couple minutes and do the following exercise suggested by Max Lucado:

Every job seeker or college applicant has had the occasion to put together a resume. Take a few minutes to compose a brief spiritual resume. Don't be bashful. List your spiritual gifts, and your God-given abilities. Jot down some of your most meaningful spiritual experiences.

2) Thank you for waiting to read the passage. Please go ahead and read it now.

- What impresses you the most about Paul's spiritual resume?

- Which credential do you think others in his community would have respected the most (either his Jewish or Christian community)?

- Which credential do you think he would have been most proud of before his conversion?

3) Looking at your own spiritual resume, what item, gifting, accomplishment, or experience are you most proud of? What brings you the most respect in the eyes of others?

(I'm not trying to encourage you to take pride in your spiritual gifts or background. But if we're honest with ourselves there are probably times when those things bring us: 1) a sense of pride, or 2) the respect or attention of others, and 3) there may be times when we are tempted to think that God loves us because of those things. It's important to identify them for the sake of our soul. It's better to be conscious of these things than be unaware of them.)

4) Paul's resume made him stand out from the pack. With his credentials he was ready to get a full-ride scholarship to Harvard. There were so many bragging points - some that he worked amazingly hard for and some that had nothing to do with his own effort.

How do you think Paul was able to set aside all those amazing accomplishments and say what he does in v. 7-9? While you ponder this you may also want to read about Paul's conversion in Acts 9:1-31.

See also Galatians 6:14-16.

5) Verse 10. Why in the world would Paul want to share in Christ's sufferings? There may be multiple reasons for this. Romans 8:16-17 provides one reason.

Parting Thoughts

Even in good churches we can be subtly encouraged to take pride in our spiritual resumes or to rely on them for our standing with God. Paul echos the words of a great praise song, “I will not boast in anything. No gifts, no power, no wisdom. But I will boast in Jesus Christ, his death and resurrection.” It is disconcerting to get to the end of our rope and realize that ultimately, we have nothing to offer. But it is certainly liberating and joy inducing when we realize that in spite of not being able to offer God anything that will mend our relationship with Him, He doesn’t care how little we have to offer. He loves us anyway.