***Spiritual Circumcision  
  
Colossians 2:18-19  
  
COL-428***

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This morning, we direct your attention to the Word of Truth in Colossians 2:16-17: "The Error of Legalism," segment number 40.

We have seen that the false teachers in the city of Colossae were claiming that it was God's will for Christians (church-age believers) to observe the Mosaic Law customs and rituals as their way of life. These false teachers, we saw in Colossians 2:16, were condemning Christians who did not practice the Mosaic Law dietary laws; who did not celebrate the Mosaic Law religious festivals; who did not observe the first day of each month as a holy day; and, who did not treat Saturday (the weekend Sabbath Day) as a holy day of rest from active labor and worship.

The apostle Paul declared that all of this teaching is false. This is false doctrine, and it is not to be practiced by church-age believers. Church-age believers do not operate under the Mosaic Law way of life.

Now, the legalists at Colossae were teaching that the observance of the Mosaic Law, and all of its rituals, was necessary to secure salvation. It was necessary to have a holy life. But it was a by-works system. It was dependent on human determination and on human will, and it was all human merit. It was not the grace gift of God. And grace is where it's all at. Without the grace of God in your life, you have nothing. How much of the grace of God? That's something else. Now, we're dealing with containers. Now, we're dealing with capacity. And if you do not walk out of this place this morning, with your container (your cup – your capacity) to have the grace of God poured into you, then we have not achieved our objective.

The legalists were stressing the need of the Mosaic Law ritual of physical circumcision for salvation – the removal of part of the human flesh in order to be saved. That is strictly a human work. The Mosaic Law circumcision symbolized a spiritual truth, which was the removal of the enslavement of the nature which is in man. And the Bible refers to the sin nature as "the flesh." And the Jews faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Messiah Savior is what would save them – not the removal of part of the flesh from the body. Salvation is never secured by human words and religious rituals. That is pure legalism, and it is totally rejected by a Holy God, and Ephesians 2:8-9 makes that clear.

Now, it is astounding how many people in religious groups, who know that to be the case, nevertheless, are still playing around with getting merit from God, and pleasing Him, by something that they do ritualistically. They burn the candle; they light the incense; and, they cross themselves. All of that is human effort. You would think that reason, eventually, would predominate, and they would say, "This is going nowhere. There's no power in rituals."

The Jews, to this very day, are still making this mistake. The object of their confidence is for salvation is what they do – not what the Lord Jesus Christ has done. And the result is pure disaster.

In John 5:45, the Lord Jesus Christ told the Jews then, and he tells them now: "Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father. The one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have set your hope. For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote of Me." Now, how did Moses write about the coming Lord Jesus Christ Messiah Savior? In all those rituals and ceremonies of the Mosaic Law – they were all symbols of the reality of the person and work of Jesus Christ. And the prophets repeatedly told them: "If your heart is not in it, there isn't anything. You cannot expect the blessing of God by some routines that you have gone through, that have no heart faith.

Then there is 2 Corinthians 1:9, where the apostle Paul points out this same concept. Paul says, "Indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves, in order that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God, Who raises the dead." We have the kiss of death upon us. We are born with a sin nature that dooms us to an eternity in the lake of fire. And are you going to remove that doom by trusting in yourself, or are you going to take the alternative, which is God's way of trusting in Christ to die for you? Are you going to die for yourself and make it? You never will. Or are you going to accept the death of Christ in your behalf?

There is God's way, and there is man's way. And while we say it's not by works, don't blow that off that that's self-evident. It isn't. That's why Jesus said that most of the human race never catches on to the principle of grace living, from salvation to the full counsel of the Word of God, the capacity for life on this earth, and to eternal riches. Christians today are the ones who, in fact, have the true circumcision – the circumcision of grace salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. And it is that spiritual circumcision that removes the condemnation and the domination of the sin nature. We become spiritually alive. Nothing is more wonderful than not to be a slave of the sin nature. And while we're born again, and now we have power to say, "No" to the sin nature, but before, we didn't, it is still possible for us to live our lives in such enslavement to the lust patterns of the nature, that the Lord shakes His head, and the angels of heaven weep. It is so easy to frustrate what the grace of God would do for us.

So, there is a circumcision that counts in Christianity. And Christians are said, as we already saw previously in Colossians, are circumcised. Notice Colossians 2:11. Christians are circumcised in Christ during this church age. Colossians 2:11 says, "And in Him you were also circumcised in Christ, with a circumcision made without hands. This was not a ritual in the flesh, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ. It's not a physical circumcision that we have, but a spiritual one. It is made with our hands." It's not a medical procedure. The circumcision of Christ refers to the fact that once we are spiritually alive, we can beat the sin nature. That's it. We have cut off that flesh power within us, and neutralized it. Oh, it's still there. It's like a lion, or a mad dog, waiting to pounce upon you if you give it the chance. But the sin nature is under control for the Christian who is walking according to the principles of doctrine, and in fellowship with God the Holy Spirit. You are in the inner circle.

Removing part of the physical body in the Old Testament symbolized this removal of slavery to the sin nature – this living for God by the energy of the flesh – the removal of the body of the flesh. This is a truth that takes place at salvation, and it happens at the baptism of the Holy Spirit, when we are placed into Christ – when we trust in Him.

**Transgressions**

So, when it says, in Colossians 2:11, you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands," that happened when you were placed into the Lord Jesus Christ. At that point, the sin nature was now brought under control, if you wanted it to be. The unbelieving Jew and gentile today is spiritually dead in the uncircumcision of his flesh. They're still the slaves of the sin nature. We read, in Colossians 2:13: "And when you were dead (spiritually dead in your trespasses, and the uncircumcision of your flesh; that is, the domination of the sin nature within you – with that terrible condition of helplessness), then God made you alive, together with Jesus Christ, having forgiven us all our transgressions" – every transgression. Do you know what a transgression is? It's when I know the rule, and I break it: "I know the rule. Here's the path. And I step out of line." That's a transgression.

It's like in Rocky Mountain National Park, when you're up in the upper alpine areas. You're up in the tundra. These little, tiny, lovely plants that survive up there – they only have a short growing season. And they only grow a little bit, year-after-year, because of the altitude and the cold. And everywhere are the Park Service signs: "Stay on the path. Stay off the tundra." If you walk off the path, you'll be destroying a plant that has struggled for years to get to the place where it's now a half-inch high. If you step off the path, what have you done? You've transgressed. That's what the Greek word means: "Yes, this is what you want me to do, Lord. But hey, you notice my thumb to my nose toward your, Lord. I have a different plan. I have a different life." That's a transgression – stepping off the line.

The Word of God is constantly telling us: "This is the way of righteousness. It's not something we wonder about, and can't figure out. We know what it is, and we make our choice.

So, here it is. When we were in that terrible condition, that's when we were made spiritually alive. This circumcision that we have in Christ, spoken of in Colossians 2:11 is the death on the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ for the sins of the world. That's when that took place. That's when it was provided.

Romans 6:10: "For the death that He died, He died to the sin (singular) nature. That's when the back of the sin nature's control was broken. That's when the circumcision spiritually took place with the Christian, when Christ said, "I'll die in your place." Most of the human race said, "No thanks. I'll die for myself. No thanks. I'd rather do it myself." That's the whole point of the Christian life. That's the decision everybody has to make. Do I want to die on the basis of my merit; or, do I want to let Christ die in my place, and pay the price? For the death that He died, He died to the sin nature, once for all. But the life that He lives, He lives to God." You can live a life to God.

Now, if that's not important to you, then blow it off. Stay home, don't come to church. Go about your busy life as if you're going to be here forever, and then wonder why you have the crises. You wonder why the world is so appealing. You wonder why you find companions and goof-balls. These are people who, instead of ennobling your soul and enlightening you spiritually, have gotten you gaga in your emotional life, and that drains out, as it always does. It's the Word, and the Word, and the Word. If you don't have that, there is no sustenance.

Romans 8:3: "For what the law (the law of Moses) could not do, weak is it was through the flesh." There was nothing wrong with the Law of Moses. It gave terrific guidelines, but the flesh (here the word used for the nature) was so weak that it countered all of your good intentions. The Jew couldn't do it: "Sending His Own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh." Did you get that? Jesus Christ came in the likeness of sinful flesh. He came as a human being. But He was a little different, wasn't He? Can you figure it out? How was He like us, but not quite? It is because we're sinful flesh. We have a sin nature. He was born without one. That was the great difference.

So, Christ came fully human, minus the sin nature. Now He was back to Adam, before Adam sinned. Here was someone who could bear someone else's sin burden: "For what the Mosaic Law could not do spiritually for the Jews, weak as it was through the old sin nature, God did: sending His Own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh (minus that sin nature, but a bona fide human being) as an offering on the cross for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh. He beat the sin nature." The penalty, the wages of sin, is death. You pay it, or Christ pays it. Make your choice. And by this way through faith in the Son of God, and His death in our behalf, the sin nature is neutralized within us. No set of rituals will ever do that for you – not all of your good deeds; not all of your good intentions; and not all the sincerity of your soul. Boy, how Christians count on that. It's not going to make it.

Physical circumcision symbolically removed the control of the sin nature of a believer, while spiritual circumcision that we get through Christ, at the point of our salvation, actually does it.

Now, we have been looking at Philippians 3:2 – that wonderfully expansive and illuminating portion of the Word of God. The apostle Paul warns believers to beware of the dogs, meaning the legalists – the people who are telling you to go with the Mosaic Law; go with the rituals; and, go with your good intentions and your willpower. And he tells them: "Beware of these evil workers, and beware of the false circumcision" – that circumcision of the Jews, who believed that that physical circumcision was going to count. He said, "No, that does not count. That's just a mutilation.

Then, in Philippians 3:3, he says, "For we (Christians) were the true circumcision. And there he uses the Greek word "peritome" (the true circumcision) which is a spiritual act. This spiritual circumcision makes progress in the Christian life possible – progress to what? Progress to being a spiritually mature believer. Isn't it nice to associate with Bereans who are grown up Christians: with whom you can have an open freedom of fellowship; upon whom you can count; who will be there to help you in an understanding way when you need it; Christians who know that they can count on you; who know that you are treating them, and will treat them, with integrity; who know that you will treat them as a genuine brother and sister in Christ; who are so mature that they take in stride our weaknesses and our frailties; who know that Christ is on the throne; who know that God is in control; and, that we're moving to victory, in spite of the ups and downs of the battle at any point in time?

Spiritual circumcision is what is in mind here in Philippians 3:2. We are the true circumcision – we Christians. It makes possible our progress toward being mature. A spiritual maturity structure is built in our soul – the five sides of the spiritual maturity structure, so that we come into the prime of life.

You remember how Psalm 23 describes that prime of life, where grace floods over us. That is such a favorite song that is so glibly recited so often. Whole congregations, Sunday-after-Sunday, stand, and they repeat together the 23rd Psalm. And they get down to verse 5 in that psalm, and they say words that come off their tongue so glibly. Psalm 23:5: "You prepare a table before me in the presence of mine enemies. You have anointed my head with oil. I am your child. I'm a child of the King. And I'm anointed for the eternal kingdom in heaven. My cup overflows." Those are three precious words. Are you going to just blow them off? My cup overflows with what? "My cup overflows with the grace of God." My cup overflows with all the capacities that I need spiritually, physically, and socially in my employment; my business; and, my social relationships – the grace of God, such that, without it, I'm helpless, and: "My cup overflows."

So, God is there. God has provided the grace. How big is the grace of God? Well, the grace of God, when you fully understand it finally, hits you between the eyes with the impact that Vasco Balboa experienced when he came over that rise with the Spanish explorers. And the year 1513, he gazed out across what he called the Pacific Ocean. It was so calm. It was so beautiful, as he stood there on the California coast. And he was dumbfounded by the vastness of this ocean. Now, Balboa never really experienced how vast it was. It is a magnificently vast ocean, and it raises great emotions.

Charles Lindbergh had himself flown. He was diagnosed with cancer, and he was dying. And it was just a matter of time. He had been (I think it was) to the Mayo Clinic in New York. And he got special permission that he was fit for air travel, so he could go back to his home on Maui, and there to die and be buried, which he is. And it's a great thrill to be able to stand there, and look at that pile of stones the way that the Hawaiians, do know what a great man lies there in that grave.

Just before he died, he had traversed this great Pacific Ocean. He was flying over it, and knowing it so well, in all of its magnificent grandeur. He got out of bed that morning, and it was a struggle. His strength was rapidly waning. And he just stood at the window and looked out, from the Hawaiian island of Maui, across the Pacific. And then he turned, and struggled back into bed, with the rest of the strength he had left. And shortly thereafter, then, he died. In World War II, I had the occasion to go from the west coast of California, the San Francisco area, and to fly across the Pacific Ocean. It was a flight, because it was so vast, that we didn't fly at night. And it took a few days of island hopping.

So, we took off from Hilo Airport in Hawaii, and headed for Johnson Island. It was a little speck of land, a half-mile wide, and two miles long, with a big airstrip. And the first night was there. And then, the next morning, we took off again toward the Marianas, and landed at Guam. All the while, we were looking down, mile-after-mile, as far as your eye could see, the vastness of this water body that God had placed there – the Pacific Ocean. And then we went on to the Kwajalein, almost down on the equator, and then up toward to Okinawa, and then out in that final stretch into Shanghai – all over the vast Pacific Ocean.

Balboa didn't know how magnificent it really was. But, ironically, four years later, in 1517, Balboa died. And that year, another explorer (a spiritual explorer) came on the scene, and the explosion that he caused, for the first time, enabled people to understand the Pacific Ocean vastness of the grace of God. His name was Martin Luther. And, suddenly, grace became a reality. Suddenly, all of those Mosaic Law, ritualistic legalisms of the Roman Catholic Church, which were taking people into the lake of fire – Luther discovered the Pacific Ocean of grace. It was the grace of God that saves. It was the grace of God that sanctifies. It is the grace of God that makes life magnificent here, and rewarding in all eternity.

The Word of God got out. You and I know it so well. But how much of that grace of God is overflowing your cup? More to the point, how big is your cup? If you went to the Pacific Ocean with a thimble, and dipped it in the water, you would have a thimble of water. But what was left out there was infinitely greater. And that's all you would have. If you came back with a cup and dipped it in, you'd have a cup of water. And that's all you'd have. But there's this vast ocean. It doesn't make any difference. My container is the size of a thimble, or a cup. That's all I can handle. But if you came back with a pail and dipped in, you'd have more. But still, all you had was what that would hold. And there was a vast ocean out there. If you came back with a barrel, you could fill the whole 55 gallons of that barrel. But you'd have no more of the Pacific Ocean, and the piece of grace than what that barrel would hold. You could come back with a tanker truck, and load up barrel-after-barrel. But after you were through, that's all you had – a tanker truck-full. And the vastness of the ocean was still there. That's it with us and grace.

However, Martin Luther came across that hill and he found the vastness of the Pacific Ocean of God's grace. And how much we have of it is what you're going to determine by the size of your container. You will have no more of the grace of God functioning in your life: in power; in joy; in making your life worth living; and, carrying through now, and an eternity, with rewards. That is because a grateful God will not forget your sacrifice of service.

This is just as when, at a military funeral, that flag is folded from off that casket. And then, one of the military personnel takes the flag, and he goes to the survivor (the wife or the husband). And he uses the words, "We give you this flag in behalf of a grateful nation."

When you get to heaven, the flag of your grace salvation will be unfurled, and the Lord Jesus Christ will say, "I give you this reward here as a grateful God for your service to the work of Christ and to the church." How much service? Well, it won't be any greater than the grace you have. It won't be any more effective than the grace you have. And if all you have is a thimbleful, that's all you're going to have. Don't kid yourself. This container, and the size of it, is determined by your knowledge of the principles of doctrine. And you don't get that by reading the Bible at home. And you sure don't get it by sitting at home. You get it by being here for morning and evening church services. And you get it by meditating upon what you've heard, and then applying those things in the magnificence of its possibilities. Those of you who have done that know exactly what I'm talking about, and you know what it is to have your cup, not only full, but big and running over. And that guidance of God, that you know is there, makes you constantly, through the day, find yourself saying, "Thank you, Lord. That's right. That's where I put that. Thank you, Lord. That's right. That's what I needed to do. Yes, Lord. That's right. I got to get on that. That's the solution. I thank You, Lord. I didn't see that. That's what I need to do. What am I going to deal with this father? What a good idea" – those intuitive thoughts, and the reality is there.

Now, if you have a thimble-full of grace, you're going to get a thimble-full of guidance, and you're going to get a thimble-full of divine service. Spiritual circumcision makes it possible for you to build a container. That's what it's all about. And if your local church is not letting you down, and if that person in the pulpit is not a clown, focused on himself and his cuteness, but is capable of focusing you on the Word of God, your container is going to grow as big as you want to make it.

**Legalism**

Legalism will hinder building your spiritual maturity structure container, because legalism depends on the sin nature. Legalism is an act of spiritual reversion and human good, to gain divine favor. And Galatians 5:4 says that that's falling from grace. You're not going to build a container on your own. It is the grace of God that's going to build it.

Jewish circumcision was often an empty ritual, devoid of faith in God – pure legalism. But Abraham knew the difference. Abraham had physical circumcision, and he understood the spiritual implications. And the result was that Abraham built a container for the grace of God that overflowed beyond anything that he could have imagined, or anything that he could have hoped for. And what our father Abraham experienced, so can you.

In Romans 4:9-12, the apostle Paul says, "Is this blessing then upon the circumcised (the blessing of grace salvation and grace empowerment) or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say: 'Faith was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness.' How then was it reckoned: while he (Abraham) was circumcised, or uncircumcised. It was not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised." His physical ritual had nothing to do with the size of the container he built, and the grace of God poured into it and overflowed: "And he received the sign of circumcision – a seal (a sign) of the righteousness of the faith which He had while uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be reckoned to them." God said that: "Abraham was saved by trusting in Me (in the coming Messiah Savior) *before* he was circumcised. His circumcision only reflected his spiritual capacity that now he could develop and build in his soul.

So, placing spiritual value on physical circumcision just hinders the benefits of grace in your life (Galatians 5:2).

No, at the end of Philippians 3:3, spiritual circumcision is identifiable by three features. These are the three characteristics. And if these this is not true of you, then there's something short in your life characteristics. This is what a spiritually circumcised person who is operating with a great container for grace is characterized by. In the Greek language, these three are all connected together: "For we (we Christians) are the true circumcision." We're the true spiritual circumcision. Therefore, this is what is true of us. First, we worship in the Spirit of God.

**Worship**

This word "worship" looks like. This is the Greek word "lutroo," and it is a word that means "a religious service or homage to a deity." We do homage to God. How? "Oh, I light a candle? Oh, I sprinkle holy water."

I once was at a service. It was a wedding service. It so happened that the couple who has been married are now very devoted Berean tapers. Oh, boy, are they devoted. And they're in touch with us regularly with everything they are and have. And I was just an observer. And because the young lady's family was Roman Catholic, and the man's family was Lutheran, they had both the priest and the pastor together. And the priest did his bit. And at one point, he pulled up his little stick that had this little perforated top, and was full of holy water, and he sprinkled it around, on the bride and groom. And then he handed it to the Lutheran pastor, and I thought, "Hot dog, we're going to have some comedy here." What should the Lutheran pastor, who knew that ritual doesn't mean a thing, and that that water in there isn't holy? He shook his head. And I said, "Bravo." The whole church turned and looked at me. No, I didn't do that. That pastor just shook his head, which is what he should have done. This is a dramatic moment. This young man and young wanted to be married: "And I'm going to sprinkle holy water around on them?" This ritual is meaningless, where they should have been reading Scriptures that focus them on: "This is what it's going to mean if I'm going to be a husband, or if I'm going to be a wife."

So, here it is. I'm worshiping. And I'm not worshiping in anything that is simply routine emptiness. This is present tense – continued worship. And it is active: "I choose to do it." The Mosaic Law had a system of worship through rituals and ceremony. It was an external system of symbols representing spiritual realities.

1. **Worship in the Spirit of God**

Then he says, "I do this worship in the Spirit of God." The Spirit here is the Holy Spirit, and it really is by means of the Holy Spirit – not by means of Mosaic Law rituals. Under grace (under the church age), God the Holy Spirit indwells every believer. He indwells him to guide us in our worship. He guide you through your knowledge of doctrine, to praise and honor God the Father."

Worship of the genuine circumcision saints today is not a ritual. It is performed by learning Bible doctrine. You have, for almost 40 minutes now, been engaged in an act of supreme worship. The word "worship" comes from the English word "worthship." You have been learning the worthiness of the Lord Jesus Christ. You have been here learning of the worthiness of God your Father, and what he thinks. And you have taken the trouble to be here, and to pay attention. And that is how you have worshiped him – not in some ritual that you can do without even thinking about it.

The Holy Spirit uses the doctrines of the Word of God to plant in your human spirit, and He will then lead you through that in your life. You may meticulously observe all the outward rituals, and be lost in reversionism – the old sin nature flesh. The principle is in John 4:24. This is what worship (true worship) is all about. God is Spirit. Those who worship Him, worship Him in Spirit and in truth. And if your preacher hasn't given you the truth of the Word of God, you don't know how to worship Him. It takes doctrine stock to do that.

1. **Glory in Christ Jesus**

Secondly, he says that: "We glory in Christ Jesus." The word "glory" looks like this. It is the Greek word "kauchaomai." This word means "to boast" or "to exalt:" "I'm rejoicing." We rejoice in Christ Jesus. And when the apostle Paul uses the term “Christ Jesus,” that has a special meaning. "Christ Jesus" is different from "Jesus Christ." When he is talking about Christ Jesus, he is stressing the fact that here was the Holy God – the second person of the Trinity, in heaven, preexistent, and He took upon Himself the duty of coming down to this earth in order to provide salvation for us.

Notice Philippians 2:5-7. It describes this act where Christ, in heaven, takes on Himself the role of the pain of dying in our place. Philippians 2:5: "Have this attitude in yourselves, which is also in Christ Jesus (not Jesus Christ, but Christ Jesus), Who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as a thing to be grasped." He was in the form of God. He was Spirit. He was God. He was part of the Godhead. But He did not think of this as something that He had to grasp. This was because, in order to substitute for us in death, He had to take on a human body, which was sinless, so that He had to become a God-Man. And thereafter, He would never be just a Spirit being. He would forever now be a God-Man. And He was ready to make that choice: "But He emptied himself, taking the form of a bond servant, and being made in the likeness of men again." Again, there you can see the "likeness" – not quite like us. He didn't have a sin nature, but the rest was exactly like us: "And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on the cross.

The term "Christ Jesus" means Who He was. He didn't owe us anything. He's in heaven. He's part of the Trinity. And He says, "I'll take on a human body. I'll walk out of this glory, and I'll pay for sin. That stresses the grace of God. It stresses His preexistence, but it stresses an act of enormous grace. That's all: favor and kindness, without which we are doomed.

However, sometimes the apostle Paul used the term "Jesus Christ," just in passing, to tell you that this stresses Jesus Christ as the rejected, crucified, and glorified one. In Philippians 2:9-11, Paul uses Jesus Christ in this term – the one stressing His glory now, following His crucifixion. Philippians 2:9: "Therefore, also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus, every name should bow, and of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Here, it is testifying to His glory.

So, the term "Christ Jesus" speaks of His grace, while "Jesus Christ" speaks of His of glory. And the apostle Paul, in Philippians 3:2, ""We glory in Christ Jesus." So, what are we glorying in? We are glorying in the grace of God. We are rejoicing, not in the ceremonies picturing this work, but in the real thing – the grace of God.

Philippians 3:7-11: "But whatever things were gained to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss, in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus." And there it is again (this grace aspect – knowing this gracious person: my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things. And I count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ." The apostle Paul says, "I've lost my money. I've lost my possessions. I don't even have a house to live in. I'm an itinerant preacher. I was a famous, respected, noted, Pharisaic, rabbi teacher. And now, I'm spit upon by Jews and gentiles alike. Verse 7: "Whatever things were gained to me."

OK, how about your things? What are those things that you think are so precious to you? What are those things of such gain that you want to hold in your bosom, and such things that you rejoice in, and such things that you say, "Ah, all is well with me." No, your things will not make everything well with you. But how you *use* your things – now, that will make things very well with you indeed.

"Whatever things were gained in me, those things I have counted as loss for Christ's sake." When I gain things, I'm very tempted to lose a bit of my focus on the Lord Jesus Christ. I lose a little bit of focus on getting my container big enough to have overflowing grace in it.

"More than that, I count all things to be loss, in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord, I don't care what I have. I don't care who I am. The thing that's surpassingly valuable to me is that I know the pouring of His grace into my life. That's where it's at. He is ready to do that. He has an ocean of grace. But how big of a container have I built with doctrine in my walk in the Spirit, in fellowship with my Father. Christ Jesus, my Lord, for whom I've suffered the loss of all things, I count them but rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him – not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Mosaic Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith." That's the righteousness that counts, not the one that comes from your works.

So, genuine circumcision today looks to the divine good of Christ Jesus on the cross, not to the human good working of the sin nature through the Mosaic Law, or the works that they perform.

So, we Christians – what do we do? First of all, we worship in the Spirit of God. Secondly, we glory. We exalt (we take great pride) in the grace of Christ Jesus, and not in the Law of Moses.

1 John 3:1-3 summarizes our glorying in Christ Jesus, our exulting in Him. That's what a spiritual circumcision brings a Christian to do – all for the Lord's glory. Have you ever used that term: This is where it's from – 1 John 3:1-3. This is how it's all going to work out: "See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God, and such, we are. For this reason. The world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are the children of God. It has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that when He appears, we shall be like him because we shall see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope fixed him, purifies himself, just as He is pure.

We are not perfect now. When people irritate you (other Christians), and they disappoint us, remember this verse: "We glory in Christ Jesus," which means that we rejoice in what grace can do. Just look at that clown and say, "God, I thank You that he is someday going to be just like Jesus Christ, and be totally lovable, though he's not too hot now." And you might think Him that you too will someday be totally lovable, though some of you find that very hard to believe. But you will be improved. And everyone who has this hope is going to keep playing the game of purity. You're not going to try to deceive God or man. You are, because of your spiritual circumcision, going to walk in the realities of the Christian life. You are going to seek to be Christ-like.

We, the true circumcision, worship in the Spirit of God, not in empty rituals and routines. And we glory (we exalt) in Christ Jesus, and His grace to us. Then we have a real kicker. Those who are spiritual circumcision, put no confidence in the flesh. They put no confidence in the sin nature. How stand you there, dear Christian, in your confidence in yourself; in your sin nature; or, in how smart you are to think about: "this is the way it ought to be, and this is what God thinks? How well do you do on that? Please join us next Sunday morning as we look at that.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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