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## LOSS VS. GAIN - redux

Repetition. Does it seem redundant? Superfluous? Verbose? Unnecessary? It's a tool of a master teacher. Used by Jesus, and by Paul. In Philippians 3:1 he says **"Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you."**

We need to be reminded to "rejoice in the Lord" because we get bogged down in our circumstances. But Paul was also warning his readers about religious zealots who perverted the grace of God into legalistic rituals. He did this many times in his letters, as he shared his personal testimony how Jesus saved him from sin and self, including self-righteousness.

Religious people of his day and ours put unwarranted confidence in their works-righteousness. But Paul shows how to be reconciled by grace through faith, pointing in verse 3 to those **"who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh."** (Notice here, by the way, the Trinity, Father, Son, Spirit).

Many in his day trusted rituals. Paul turns the tables on those who demanded that Gentile believers in Christ must also be required to follow Jewish traditions of the Old Covenant. Rather, Christians are children of the promised New Covenant. Ezekiel 36 and Jeremiah 31 and elsewhere promise that God would transform His people from hearts of stone to hearts of flesh. True faith is inward and spiritual, not an outward show of works-righteousness in the flesh.

Jesus, the personal fulfillment of all promises of Scripture (2 Cor 1:20), said true worship is of the **"Spirit and truth"** (John 4). Paul demonstrates many times (Romans, Galatians, etc) how true children of Abraham are those, by grace through faith, "born again" by putting their trust in Jesus, the promised Son of God. Our confidence for salvation is not anything we can do, but only in what Jesus has done for us.

2 Corinthians 5:17 declares: **"From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh... Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to Himself"**

Apart from Christ, we've got it all upside down. What we think is gain is loss! Getting right with God is NOT by keeping rituals of the flesh, but by receiving Jesus Christ. It's all of the Spirit, not the flesh.

Verses 9-10-11 spell it out, showing the past, present, and future of salvation. Verse 9 describes salvation past-tense, our "justification" by being "in Christ." Paul explains **"being 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."** The moment we receive Christ as Lord and Savior, we are made right with God, "justified," because He credits Christ's righteousness to us.

Verse 10 describes "Christ in you," salvation present-tense, our "sanctification" as we are being made holy. Paul explains, **"that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and may share in His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death."** That's why he tells us to rejoice in the Lord. Because the trials that surely come to those who trust and obey Jesus are simply part of preparing us to live in heaven.

Verse 11 describes salvation future-tense, our "glorification" -- like this: **"that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead."** Paul means, whatever we must go through in this life is worth it. Because just as Christ rose from the dead to give us new life in Him, we will one day be raised to be forever WITH Him in glory.

You're saved by trusting in Christ's work instead of your own work. Once saved, your life is all about **"working out"** what God is **"working in"** you. And that's the **"good work"** that Paul says in Philippians 1:6 that God has BEGUN in you and will most assuredly COMPLETE for you.

Rejoice in that Good News today - and repeat it to everyone around you!