



# Sermon Notes

**Topic:** This is Living

**Bible Passage:** Philippians 3:1-11

**Preacher:** Ps Sam Toms

**Date:** Sunday 14th September 2025

## Study Guide Overview

We live in a culture obsessed with achievement. From childhood (age 4 or 14) we ask: “*Am I enough?*” Our résumés, LinkedIn profiles, and carefully crafted self-presentations all try to answer “yes.” But Paul reminds us: **confidence in the flesh is empty.**

Some in Philippi believed circumcision was the “badge of belonging.” Paul dismantles this thinking. If anyone could boast in achievements, it was him: heritage, education, zeal, and obedience. His résumé was flawless. Yet he calls it *garbage* compared to knowing Christ.

The main point: **We don’t achieve salvation — we participate in it.**

- **The Great Exchange – Treasures:** Paul traded status and accolades for the surpassing worth of knowing Christ.
- **The Great Exchange – Worth:** Our value isn’t in performance or comparison but in Christ’s righteousness. Jesus + *Nothing* = *Everything*.
- **The Great Exchange – Knowledge:** Paul longs to *participate* in Christ’s life — His resurrection power, His sufferings, His intimacy.

In a world that rewards “achievement awards,” God gives us the greater prize: a **participation award in Christ**. It’s not about what we’ve done, but about joining Him — in His death, resurrection, and life.

## Small Group Questions/Discussions

Share something unusual, funny, or slightly exaggerated you’ve seen on a résumé or job application. Why do we feel the need to present ourselves that way?

### Step 1: Exploring the Text

- Paul lists his résumé of achievements (vv.4–6). What would a modern version of that résumé look like today (career, family image, education, reputation, religious activities)?
- Why do you think Paul warns so strongly against putting “confidence in the flesh”?



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## Small Group Questions/Discussions

### Step 2: Personal Reflection

- If your life were measured only by your résumé or achievements, what would it say? Which parts of it would you most want people—or God—to notice?
- Be honest: when you feel like you're "not enough," what do you instinctively run to for validation (success, money, reputation, religion, approval)?

### Step 3: Challenging Our Idols

- Paul calls everything he once valued *garbage* compared to knowing Christ (vv.7–8). What "good things" in your life might actually compete with Jesus as your ultimate treasure?
- If someone observed how you spend your time, money, and energy, what would they conclude you value most? Would it clearly point to Christ?

### Step 4: Participation vs Achievement

- Our culture prizes achievement awards. Paul invites us to a *participation award* — sharing in Christ's life, resurrection power, and sufferings.
  - Where do you see "achievement thinking" influencing your faith? (e.g., praying, serving, comparing yourself with others)
  - What might it look like for you to *participate* in Christ's sufferings or costly obedience, rather than trying to prove yourself?

### Step 5: Identity in Christ

- Verse 9 says righteousness is by faith, not performance. If you truly lived as though you had *nothing to prove*, how would that change the way you approach your job, your family, your failures, or your ministry?
- How does believing you are already "enough in Christ" both free you from insecurity and guard you against pride?

### Step 6: Intimacy with Christ

- Paul longs not just to know *about* Christ, but to *know Him intimately* (vv.10–11). How do you recognise the difference in your own walk with God?
- If someone watched your week, would they see that "knowing Christ" is your life's greatest pursuit? Why or why not?

### Closing Challenge (Surrender)

- What "résumé item" or personal achievement are you most afraid to lose?
- What practical step can you take this week to lay that down and lean fully into participation with Christ?

### Prayer Focus

- Thank God that salvation is a gift of participation, not achievement.
- Pray for courage to loosen our grip on self-made worth and to embrace the surpassing worth of knowing Christ.
- Ask the Spirit to free you from insecurity, pride, or comparison, and to deepen your intimacy with Jesus.