

Victory of The Lamb – July 19, 2020 – Finding Joy

Philippians 3:1-9 The Joy of the Completed Work of Christ – Pastor Bill Limmer

If you were applying for a job, and I know some of you actually are, what would your resume look like? The form probably looks a little like this: Name, address and contact info at the top, Next little section would be a professional summary statement. Follow by a section on experience, then skills, education and training, and finally activities and honors. **The point of a resume is to get you in where you are not.**

This is true for not only jobs but also friendships. We bring our resume to the table when we meet people. We all have a resume to face the world, ourselves, and God. It's how we get in. What does your resume look like?

Invariably, when I meet people and they find out I'm a pastor, the person automatically tip the conversation to them assuring me they are a good person, whether they are a Christian or not, or whether they go to church or not. They give me a resume.

Here is why. The underlying assumption is that good people go to heaven. ~~Do you agree?~~ Good Christians. Good Jewish people. Good people who believe in a creator God. Good people who have never heard about Jesus. Good people go to heaven. It is not anyone group but good people who go to heaven. The common denominator between all people groups is not a belief system, not a belief in who their God is, how they worship, but that they are good people.

And this a prevailing thought even among those who are or think they are Christian. For example, if I would ask you today if God asked, "why should I let you into my heaven?" What would you say? Some of you would say, I believe in God, and I believe in Jesus, and then some of you would add, and I do my best, I'm a good dad, I'm trying hard, I have never hurt anyone. And then we all say, I'm not perfect. Like we need to say that. Oh, I thought you were perfect. Isn't it funny that we all say that. We just assume the other person thinks we are perfect. Thanks for sharing. I thought you were perfect. I will erase that from what I thought about you. Here is a tip, just assume everybody knows that you are not perfect. Especially those who are closest to you – they know you are not perfect. They can say it for you, he is not perfect.

Let's say you are a Christian, and if you are not – just play along, and you believe in God and in Jesus and the whole deal but if I ask you why are you going to heaven you would end up telling me about good things you have done. Because you believe good people go to heaven. So, what is your resume look like? Remember: A resume is how we get into a place we are not.

Today we are continuing our series Finding Joy. And the Apostle Paul is going to help us find joy as answer the question **What is the fundamental need for your resume?**

Let's go to Philippians 3 and see Paul giving his resume. **If someone else thinks they have reasons to put 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; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.**

Here are some of the highlights of Paul's resume: Circumcised on the 8th day, with this he is saying is religiously pure from the beginning, he didn't convert into this later in life. He says he is from the tribe of

Benjamin, which is one of two out of 12 tribes that remained faithful to house of David. My lineage is pure. A Hebrew of Hebrews – he is racially pure. He is faultless in Pharisaic righteousness. He was a leader and an activist. This is his resume. This is Paul's case. The resume sets him above the other candidates. It's a head turner. He is the prime candidate. Don't need to look any further. He is in. Or so it would seem.

Paul shows us **the fundamental need for a resume is righteousness**. It is what we lean on and into. We all have a slightly different resume of righteousness. Our righteousness is what we take pride in, glory in. It's our baby. For some of us it is where we were born or our heritage, for others of us, it is our family, for others it is a skill of some sort whether that is musical, technology, sports or something else. For some of us it is our church. It is what we boast about. Do you want to see my T-shirts, my medals or my plaques for running. Or do you want to see my state championship rings for basketball. And better yet, if I would love to tell you about the Victory church family. We all have something that we point to that says, I deserve to be in. I am the one. I'm it. I'm in. We all do it.

Here is how all that started. After they lost the righteousness of God this is what Adam and Eve did. They sought their own righteousness and thought it would be good enough. Genesis 3:7 **Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.** We know we are naked, so we try to cover ourselves with our resume. Our list of accomplishments, glowing character traits, no matter how egocentric, tarnished, or short - this is our resume, this is our struggle, our case to get in. We have to get in.

And here is the thing. **For most of us it is not our sin that keeps us from God it is our attitude about our righteousness that keep us from God.**

Paul says about his outstanding resume, **But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ.** Paul was checking over his amazing resume, of all his outstanding qualities, and he says, don't miss this, that is nothing compared to what Christ has done for me. Paul says my resume is garbage.

Paul is a scholar. He knows what he means and he says what he means. His words are measured. He says my resume, compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Jesus Christ is garbage. Only that is not what he says. The word garbage is a G rated word for what he says. The word garbage is really dog excrement, you know that stuff that smells when you step in it or pick up with your plastic bag or shovel. He said that on purpose. To show the clear and compelling contrast between his righteousness and the righteousness which Christ gives him. And so Paul says, I'm going to boast in Christ!

Christianity, the good news of Jesus isn't something to help us get over the hump, it is not a little extra sugar to sweeten the taste. **Christianity is a whole new resume.** For example: the good news is not that you used to not go to church and now you do. The gospel is not you used to not pray and now you do. The gospel is not *I have always gone to church, went to a Christian day school, high school, etc.*, Those things are all about works. That is why so many people stopped going to church and stopped taking their kids to church because it wasn't working. It was because their view of Christianity was about works instead of about Jesus. If Christianity isn't working for you, maybe it is because you have made it about your behavior, your resume, instead of about what Jesus has done for you and his resume.

I ran across this illustration this past week. A missionary in a far-a-way distant land was trying to share the gospel with a tribal chief. After meeting a number of times, the chief asked the missionary, "If I become a Christian, I can't kill my neighbor and cut off his head?" The missionary responded, "that's right." The chief continued, "If I become a Christian I can't take my neighbor's wife and make her my own." "That's right," said the missionary smiling. If I become a Christian, the chief asked, "I can't go loot the neighboring villages and bring back all the plunder." The missionary said, "that's right." The chief then responded, "I am 70 years old. I can't do any of those things anyway, I am already a Christian." Be honest, a lot of people think, that Christianity is about following rules. Maybe you did too. But now a whole new world is about to be open to you.

People are irreligious in two different ways with the same goal in mind. The goal is to keep control of their own lives and be their own Savior. and be their own Savior. COVID-19 has taught us a lot of things, one of the things is that we are not in control. And this has been a struggle. The irreligious control their life this way: *who knows if there is a god anyway? I will do what I want. I am in control.* The other way irreligious way to control life is to follow the rules, be better than others, go to church, be a pastor, refrain from wrong and then they are in control and God will owe them. We all want to be in control, and to be in charge, the only way a religious person can do that is to believe that God owes me. We treat God like he is the government. We follow the rules, pay our taxes, now fix the flipping potholes.

So for those of us who are Christians, or if you are considering Christianity, let me hit the release valve for you and call you to repentance. Repentance not just over your sins that you think, say, and do, but also to repent over your righteousness. The things you did that you thought brought you merit and placed God at your disposal.

Here is how you can know if you have been living under the law instead of the gospel. Either you see yourself as better than other people or you are full of guilt for the way you have lived, that you resume sucks and you are no good. You are either proud or guilty. That doesn't work. That is not Christianity.

But all is not lost. Don't presume you can stand before God in your own righteousness. Christ, and he alone, makes us worthy. **Our joy is in the work of Christ that saves us not only from our sins but from our righteousness!** Christianity says, *the only way you get in is by the resume that God gives you.* And the resume that God gives you is Christ's resume. And Christ's resume is actually for you no matter who you are. And Christ's resume is good for you no matter who you are. So everyone can get in because everyone can meet the requirements because Jesus met the requirements for you.

Here is the good news that brings not only relief but joy. 2 Corinthians 5:21 **God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.** You see Righteousness is our greatest gift from God. **Christianity recognizes that God gives you the perfect resume, the resume of Jesus Christ.** Jesus lived the life you should have lived. Jesus died the death you should have died.

Jesus is not just your example, not just your hero, not just your model, he is your righteousness. Christ is the fundamental need for your resume. **He is your in.**