

Sample Small Group Lesson
“Discovering a Treasure of Infinite Worth” Philippians 3:1-11

SUMMARIES

- **ABI:** Paul wants them to understand that there is no greater treasure than Christ, and that anything else compared to him is garbage.
- **TBI:** God transforms our hearts and minds, so that believers increasing love and desire Jesus more than their former hope and confidence.
- **FC:** Often what we “prize” is what will rot, disappoint, or be taken away; we naturally treasure anything but Christ.
- **RS:** I want them to see *Christ as their all-sufficient treasure* in which they delight.
- **Response:** I want them to *identify* what they are tempted to prize more than Christ, *turn* from these idols and *embrace* Christ in a deeper way.

QUESTIONS

LAUNCH

- Imagine for one week if someone who knew little or nothing about Christianity was to follow us around and watch the ways we express our Christian faith. If, after a week, we were to ask this person, “What do you think the Christian life is all about?” what might he (she) say? If his sentence began, “The Christian life is about _____” how might he/she fill in the blank?

Tonight we are going to look at a passage in which the Apostle Paul reminds us what the Christian life is all about.

EXPLORE

Read 3:1-3

- How would you describe Paul’s tone in these verses (especially in light of v.2)? What concerns led Paul to use such strong language?
- In v. 2 Paul refers to certain Jews as “dogs.” It appears that these individuals wanted to put Christians back under the Law of Moses. What made these “dogs” so dangerous (look also at vv 3-4)?
- The other group to which Paul refers is the “true circumcision” (vv. 4-6)? How does he describe them?

Read 3:4-6

- What does Paul mean when he speaks of “putting confidence in the flesh”? How does “putting confidence in the flesh” relate to the “dogs” to whom Paul refers earlier? How can this problem be seen in Paul’s own life prior to Christ?
- Why is “placing confidence in the flesh” so problematic?

Read 3:7-11

- Why did Paul regard his previous religious accomplishments as “dung”? [*Make sure they see the strong language Paul uses.*]
- What did Paul discover in Christ that was infinitely more valuable than anything he previously possessed? [*This represents one of the keys to understanding this passage. You might want to spend some extra time on this question.*]
- In v.3 Paul claims that one of the distinguishing marks of a Christian “glorying in Christ Jesus.” In light of vv.7-11, what does it look like to “glory in Christ”?
- How would you summarize Paul’s understanding of the “gospel” in light of vv. 7-11?

ABI question

- What did Paul want to make sure these believers understood about the Christian life by telling his story?

ABI: Paul wants them to see that Christ is infinitely more valuable than any treasure they could possess. Compared to what we have in Him, everything else in the whole world is “dung.”

APPLY

- Think back to the opening question. If someone were to follow you around for a week, what might they conclude the Christian life was about from watching you? How does this passage challenge you to reorient your life? How are you tempted to center your life on something other than Christ? (FCF)
- Paul discovered that all the things he deeply treasured were rubbish compared to knowing Christ. How is Jesus better than what you’re tempted to treasure? (RS)
- What is it that is uniquely beautiful about Christ and his redemptive work for you which, if you fully embraced it, would lead you to treasure Christ in the way Paul describes? (LA)
- What’s your next natural settings to point one another to our supreme Joy? (LA)