

## **Notes from Sermon given by Ian Stackhouse – 17 June 2007**

### **Philippians 3 v 1-14**

The letter is addressed to all saints, all in Jesus Christ. Sainthood is something done to you by God. Making a saint looks for the quality of joy; dourness is not a Christian virtue. Joy is the hallmark of New Testament Christianity; rejoicing is an activity not a feeling, it is an expression of what Jesus Christ has done.

Rejoicing will protect us from the Church's greatest enemy – religion. Jesus is not religion, he is life.

- Jesus – worshipping in spirit
- Religion – idols, images, dark cathedrals full of idols

V3 - Circumcision of the heart is a life transformed by the Holy Spirit

The challenge for the passage is “are we trusting in Jesus alone for salvation, or are we trusting other things such as wealth, the old school tie, background.... “

V5 – Paul uses the term “circumcised on the eighth day” to emphasise his Jewish credentials. He was a Jew from birth, a Hebrew of Hebrews. Paul's encounter with Jesus on the Damascus road brings a whole life change to Paul when Jesus breaks in. Everything for Paul falls into insignificance, everything is less compared with knowing (not knowing about) Jesus.

Knowing Christ is what the Church is all about. We can avoid going back to our old ways (before we encountered Christ) by keeping rejoicing in the Lord and in the power of the Holy Spirit. The fellowship of sharing in his sufferings means life won't be straightforward; we will continue to fight issues and difficulties.

Following Jesus results in the reassessment of our lives. Paul has declared himself bankrupt and now has to share Jesus' sufferings. The power of resurrection doesn't cancel out the sufferings but enables us to carry them.

In conclusion we need more power, grace and the love of God to keep us from being lured into the world.