

Women's Day Address

To all the women here today:

I am here to encourage you to put all your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. As believing women of God, let us not have confidence in the flesh. Rather, let us be solely confident in our Lord Jesus Christ.

I bring you encouragement this day from the book of Philippians:

Phi 3

3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

4 Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:

5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;

6 Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win Christ,

9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith

Paul speaks in this passage about believers--those who truly trust and sincerely worship God. We are the spiritually circumcised through the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. He took our place at Calvary's cross, bearing our sins and putting to death the old man. Most importantly, we trust in the way of salvation in which God has graciously provided for us to be delivered from the bondage of sin and death. This salvation is found only in the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom we worship God by walking in the Spirit, and not in the flesh--by putting on the mind of Christ, and not making provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.

In our own human efforts we are not to be trusted. We will surely bring disappointment to ourselves. We cannot attain to the righteousness of God by the works of the flesh. Truly, our best efforts are filthy rags in His sight. Rather, we must be transformed by the renewing of our minds to prove what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. We are to rejoice and be thankful about our standing in the Lord Jesus Christ--we stand righteous in Christ, before a holy God--solely by the grace which he has richly bestowed upon us in His Son.

Paul testifies that in Christ we have confidence--boldness and access to God through faith in our Lord. So we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. By faith, through the power of the Holy Spirit, we have confidence in Jesus Christ. It is through the power of God, operating in His word that we know Him the way we do; that is, as the Spirit molds us according to the will of God, His character and thoughts are reflected in our lives as Christ is formed in us. The Bible calls this godliness. He is our sanctification--our spiritual life.

Paul teaches that no man should think highly of himself, because we are to have no confidence in the flesh. Neither are we to have confidence in human education or degrees, religion, other people, or our own goodness. All of these things are vanity. Confidence in the flesh, in our own strength, can have no lasting value. We must realize that when we are weak, He is strong. We must count all our collective human merit as loss, that we may gain Christ. Our only confidence in this life should be in the worthiness of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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We must know and understand our Lord and Savior, and be willing to suffer for Him. Without suffering, there is no experiencing the love that Christ has for you. We must count our losses as gain. Truly, we are bone of His bone, and flesh of His flesh. We must realize that all our completeness resides in Him.

The Lord is the peace and unspeakable joy that guards our hearts. He is love. He is love, when you can't find it in your own home. He is our hope for tomorrow. He is our confident hope, reassuring us that tribulation is not going to last forever. There is an end to the distress and sorrows of this life.

Truly, the pride of this world is a lie from Satan. God will not be pleased with our self-righteousness. God will only receive the righteousness we have through the Lord Jesus Christ. I have experienced the pride and self-esteem of this world. I can testify about personal gain that occupies the heart and the mind and shuts out all spiritual character. These things leave no room for God and seal off the way of peace. I realized that I could not have it both ways. We cannot have it both ways. We must learn from our experiences and move forward in the Lord. God has given us the power of choice. Because of God's grace, He has imposed the necessity of making choices. It is only by keeping in step with the Spirit that we believers will make the right choices.

We cannot continually hide behind shadows and be content to dwell in our destructive comfort zones. We must not be ignorant of God's righteousness, frustrating the Spirit of God by attempting to establish our own righteousness. Instead, let us put our trust only in Christ's righteousness. It is this righteousness alone that brings us the blessed assurance we so richly have in Christ Jesus.

Genia L. Fagan--April 2009