

October 13, 2013 by Steve Brandon



Praying For You

Philippians 1:9-11

- 1. Praying for love (verse 9)**
- 2. Praying for purity (verse 10)**
- 3. Praying for righteousness (verse 11)**

Sprinkled throughout the Bible are various prayers, spoken by various people. In Genesis, you can read the prayers that Abraham and Hagar and Jacob prayed. In Exodus, you can read the prayers that Moses and the people of Israel prayed. In Joshua, you can read the prayers that Joshua prayed. In 1 Samuel, you can read the prayers that Hannah and Samuel and David prayed. In 1 Kings, you can read the prayers that Solomon and Elijah prayed. In 2 Kings, you can read the prayers that Elisha and Hezekiah prayed. This is to name but a few examples of people praying in the Bible.

The Psalms are filled with prayers to God. The gospels record the prayers of Jesus. The book of Acts records the prayers of the apostles and the early church. The book of Revelation records the prayers of the martyrs, who long for their blood to be justified.

Well, today, as we turn to God's word, we will look at one of the prayers of the apostle Paul. Our text this morning covers verses 9-11 of Philippians 1. As you are turning there, I want you to think a bit about all of these prayers in the Bible. I want for you to think about their application to our lives.

There are times, particularly in the Old Testament, when these prayers are unique. That is, they were prayed under very distinctive circumstances, which don't really apply to our situation today.

For instance, think about Joshua, as he was leading the people in the conquest of the land. Israel is in battle with the Amorites. They were winning the battle, but the daylight was scarce. So, Joshua prayed, "O sun, stand still at Gibeon, And O moon in the valley of Aijalon" (Joshua 10:12).

And the sun stood still, so that Israel could gain the victory. What a prayer! In fact, we read in Joshua 10:14, "There was no day like that before it or after it, when the LORD listened to the voice of a man; for the LORD fought for Israel."

This is a prayer that was totally unique. In other words, we should not pray this prayer, expecting the LORD to answer such a prayer -- to have the sun stand still. Some college students, who were up late at night finishing their papers that are due the next day, ought not to turn to Joshua 10 and pray the prayer that Joshua prayed that they could gain a few extra hours to finish their homework.

No, this was a totally unique, a one-of-a-kind prayer that Joshua prayed. And we can marvel at what God did, but we ought not to suppose that we should pray such a prayer.

As you come to the New Testament, there are prayers that Jesus prayed that would be unique to Him as well. Consider His high priestly prayer (in John 17), prayed the night before He was to be crucified. At one point He prayed, "Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was" (John 17:5). Jesus, the Son of God, prayed this prayer for His own exaltation. There is no way that we ought to pray this prayer for ourselves.

First of all, we weren't there with the LORD before the world began. Second, we ought not to see the glory of God for ourselves. But Jesus, being the second person of the Godhead, had every right to seek His own glory!

So, when you read the prayers of those in the Bible, you need to be careful about praying them for yourself.

However, there are many times when you can put yourself in feet of those in the Bible. And when you can, by all means, pray their prayers. In fact, I would encourage you to scour the Bible for those facing similar situations to your own, and pray their prayers.

If you are struggling with barrenness, and the LORD is just not giving you a child, read and think deeply about the prayer of Hannah, who prayed for a son. And the LORD answered. Pray her prayer. I believe that such a prayer is totally appropriate.

If you are going through a time of spiritual depression, and it seems as if you are far from God and your soul is in despair, read Psalm 42 and Psalm 43 and meditate upon them. Pray Asaph's prayers back to God. It is entirely fitting to take the prayers of the Psalms and use them as your own.

If you are in a battle with your sin, and you have covered it up and have not laid it open before God, read David's prayers of repentance: Psalm 51 and Psalm 32. Pray David's prayers back to God. Plead for God's grace to cleanse you: "Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (Psalm 51:7) Plead the LORD to lift the burden from your shoulders. It is entirely proper to

pray along with David.

If you are facing persecution for Jesus, and the people you work with are turning against you because of your faith, read the prayers of the early Christians who were persecuted for their faith. Pray their prayers, "Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Your bond-servants may speak Your word with all confidence" (Acts 4:29). It is totally right to do so.

Well, this morning, we come to a prayer that is applicable to our lives. Because, Paul lived after the cross, just like we do. Also, Paul is praying for the church. He's not praying for military victories for the nation of Israel. He's praying for the church of Jesus Christ, of which we are a part.

And this morning, before we even read our passage, I give you two applications. First, do you pray this way for others in the church? Second, is the prayer being answered in your life?

Let's read our text. And as I do, I ask you, Do you pray this way for others in the church? Are your prayers for others in the church sounding anything like Paul's prayer, ...

Philippians 1:9-11

And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Paul's prayer here in Philippians is very typical of all of his prayers. A study of the his prayers will yield great fruit in your life, as you compare your prayers with the prayers of Paul. And in general, one of the things that you will find is that your prayers are far more physical than Paul's prayers. What I mean by that is this -- when Paul prays for those in the churches, his prayers are for Christian growth, for Christian maturity, for greater understanding, for greater love, for purity and righteousness, for spiritual wisdom and understanding, for spiritual strength.

Noticeably absent from Paul's prayers are anything like what we pray for -- safety in travel, employment opportunities, physical health. Not that these things are wrong or bad. They are the concerns of our hearts. They are the burdens that we bear. We ought to lift them up before the Lord.

But, the burdens of Paul's heart are given for us to mimic. We should be concerned for the things that Paul is concerned about. And we should pray over them.

Paul's prayer here in Philippians sounds much like his prayers in other epistles. Consider a few of his prayers.

Colossians 1:9-12, ...

... we ... pray for you and ... ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.

1 Thessalonians 3:11-13

Now may our God and Father Himself and Jesus our Lord direct our way to you; and may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all people, just as we also do for you; so that He may establish your hearts without blame in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.

Ephesians 1:15-19

[I pray] ... that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.

Do you see Paul's heart? Do you pray this way for others in the church?

As we work through our text this morning, I want for you to be constantly asking yourself, "Is this how I pray?" "Is this how I pray for others?"

The second application is this: is the prayer being answered in your life?

What Paul prays for the Philippians might easily be prayed for us today. In fact this week, as I have thought about many of you, I have simply prayed this prayer for you. It's entirely appropriate. It fits exactly.

Philippians 1:9-11

And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

With these words, I see Paul praying for three things. And these things will form our outline this morning. Paul is ...

- 1. Praying for love (verse 9)**
- 2. Praying for purity (verse 10)**
- 3. Praying for righteousness (verse 11)**

So, as we work through the text, I want you to ask yourself three questions. Am I increasing in love? Am I increasing in purity? Is God's righteousness working in my life?

There's no need for us to really dive into application of each of these points at this moment, because as we work our way through the text, we will elaborate on them, and I will seek to press them to your hearts as we go along.

Before we jump into our first point this morning, I want for us to begin reading in verse 3, ...

Philippians 1:3-8

I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all, in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now. For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me. For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.

In verse 3, Paul begins by telling those in Philippi how thankful to God he is for them. In verse 4, Paul tells of how he is always praying for them with joy. In verses 5-8, Paul explains why it is that he is so thankful and prayerful and joyful. But, now, in verse 9, we see Paul actually telling the Philippians what he is praying for them.

In other words, verses 3-8 tell us the reason why Paul was praying. Verses 9-11 tells us the content of Paul's prayers for the Philippians. Verse 9, ...

Philippians 1:9-11

And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

So, let's look at our first point. Paul is ...

1. Praying for love (verse 9)

I trust that you can see this well enough in verse 9, ...

Philippians 1:9

And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more ...

Paul is praying for the Philippians to ever increase in their love.

Now, it's not at all that those in Philippi lacked love. They had a love for Paul in that they sent a financial gift to him to help him in his distress. They had a love for Epaphroditus. It says in chapter 2, verse 26, that they had heard that he was sick. And Paul was sending him back, so that they might see him again and rejoice that he was well (2:28). Indeed, the Philippians were a loving church.

Paul didn't need to tell them that, "Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." (1 Cor 13:4-7).

The Corinthians needed to hear these things, because they were a church lacking in love. And they needed the correction that 1 Corinthians delivered. They needed to know what love looks like.

But, not the Philippians. They had love and were practicing their love. And Paul was simply praying that their love would "abound still more and more." In many ways, they were like the church in Thessalonica. Paul wrote to that church, ...

1 Thessalonians 4:9-10

Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; for indeed you do practice it toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, to excel still more,

In fact, it's almost the same prayer request. It's a request to God that their love would abound and overflow and thrive and flourish, far beyond what they have yet experienced in their own lives.

Do you pray this way for others in the church? Do you pray this for yourself? Is the prayer being answered in your life? Are you experiencing an ever-abounding love in your life?

Now, it is good to notice here that Paul doesn't give an object of love in his prayer. In other words, he doesn't pray that their love for God "would abound more and more." Nor does he pray that their love for others in the church "would abound more and more." Nor does he pray that their love for Paul or Timothy (or others outside their church) "would abound more and more."

Instead, Paul is ambiguous. He doesn't tell those in Philippi what sort of love he's praying for. I think it's intentional. In other words, I think that Paul's heart is that the Philippians would increase in love in general. He longs that those in Philippi would be characterized by love, even as God their Father, is Himself, characterized by love (1 John 4:3). And when you abound in love, you will abound in your love for God and you will abound in your love for others -- which is the greatest commandment. Jesus said that the greatest commandment is to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. And to love our neighbor as ourselves (Matthew 22:37-39).

And so, Paul is simply praying for God to work His greatest commandment into their lives. But, notice something else here. Though Paul mentions no object of love (whether God or others), Paul does define this love. Look again at verse 9, ...

Philippians 1:9

And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment,

In other words, Paul is praying for a certain sort of love here. He isn't praying for a sentimental love. He isn't praying for an emotional love. He isn't praying for an ignorant love. He isn't praying for a blind love. He isn't praying for an insensitive love.

Rather, he's praying for a knowledgeable love. He's praying for a discerning love.

I think the best way to understand this is to describe love that isn't knowledgeable or discerning. A good place for illustration might be with child-rearing. Proverbs 13:24 says this, "He who withholds his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him diligently."

Solomon here is talking about the use of corporeal punishment -- "applying the board of education to the seat of knowledge." He's talking about spanking your child. Now, in our day and age, such a thing is frowned upon. In fact, if you discipline your children unwisely, you can get into trouble with the governmental authorities. All it takes is a few bruises that a school administrator notices, and you may have a run-in with DCFS.

Nowhere would the Bible advocate abusing your children by causing them bodily harm. Nowhere would the Bible advocate any sort of disciplinary action that would cause bruises to your child's body. But, the Bible does advocate the use of the rod.

I believe that what we are talking about here is a slap to the skin that causes pain, but no permanent harm. The reason for this is that you can't reason with a four year-old. They need to be taught right from wrong. And if they don't get the verbal teaching, then you get their attention some other way. Rather than yelling at them, it is far better to lead them by the hand alone into the bathroom, calmly tell them how they sinned, let the rod give them one good sting, and when they cry, hug them and kiss them and affirm your love for them. Tell them that you forgive them, tell them that Jesus came to take away our sin, and then pray with them.

Now, there are many in our society today that would claim that they have such a great love for their child that they could never spank their child. Instead, they seek to rely upon time-outs and yelling at their children, when their disobedience gets on their nerves.

I'm sure that many parents mean well. But, they have a "love without knowledge." They are trying to love their child. But practically, they aren't. Again, Proverbs 13:24 says, "He who withholds his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him diligently."

But, Paul here is praying that we might love with knowledge. And a knowledge-filled love will often be a tough love.

How about an example of loving without discernment? I received an email this week from the executive director of Love INC here in Rockford. Love INC stands for Love In the name of Christ. The idea of Love INC is to mobilize churches to help people, especially those who are facing very difficult times in their lives.

Anyway, here's the email that she sent out. It reads, ...

Two churches recently told me that a woman has sent notes and made phone calls looking for food and a long list of other items. Her first name is Tina and she uses various last names and will sound desperate. She also has some family members who will call.

Love INC would assist, but we have been asking since 2005 that she sign a current release of information so that we can liaison with other agencies and ministries to prevent duplication of services. She has consistently refused to do so. I have spoken to her personally a number of times and she states if she has to have a caseworker, then she doesn't want help from Love INC.

If you would like to help her with food, we advise you ask to see the place where she is living. On two separate occasions when a church or agency asked to do this and were allowed on her premises, they could plainly see that there was an

abundance of food in the apartment. In addition, we have heard stories of long lists of desired items demanded from church volunteers and in one horrible case, an unfounded, but extremely disruptive, accusation of sexual harassment. Part of her behavior includes insistence that she wants to attend church and that she is looking for a church home. Once church help stops, she stops attending."

Now, uninformed and undiscerning love can merely feed Tina's habit, and provide no real help at all. She gets what she wants from one church, until they stop giving. Then she gets what she wants from another church, until they stop giving. And so on the story goes. But, she never gets the real help she needs. Because, she is never loved with discernment. She rejects the discerning love.

Love that has knowledge and discernment can be a real help. Now, take this out of the realm of child-discipline and helping those who are in great need. As you get to know the situation, and as you discern the situation, you can show real love. But, it takes time. It takes investment. It takes effort.

God calls us to invest the time and to really understand what's going on in the lives of others. And then, we are to love.

Well, let's move on to my second point. Paul is ...

2. Praying for purity (verse 10)

That's how I have summed up verse 10. I believe that it's a prayer for purity.

Philippians 1:10
so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ;

This is the goal of knowledgeable, discerning-love -- to see what is excellent, to see what's right, to see what's pure, and to affirm those things. Or, as Paul says it, "to approve the things that are excellent." The NIV puts it this way, "so that you may be able to discern what is best."

I think what Paul is getting at here is the wisdom to see life and to pursue the good and the pure and righteous and the best, both in yourself and in other people. In order to do this, of course, you need to dwell on the good and the best yourselves. In chapter 4, verse 8, we see Paul getting at the same thought, "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things" (Philippians 4:8).

Take the good things. Think about them. Meditate upon them.

Recently, I heard the testimony of a pastor's wife who recently died. The testimony about her was this. When people came to her with complaints or gossip or with evil intentions, she didn't return the thoughts. Instead, she let her mind dwell on the good. She just didn't have time for such things.

The testimony about her was Philippians 2:14, "Do all things without grumbling or complaining." She just didn't have time for those things. Her heart was set upon the true and the honorable and the right and the pure and the lovely. Such a testimony is what Paul is aiming for in verse 10, ...

Philippians 1:10
so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ;

Notice that Paul has the end in view. Paul is praying for love to create pure lives today, that those in Philippi would stand before Christ someday "sincere and blameless."

In meditating upon the book of Philippians the past few months, one of the most startling verses is found in chapter 2, verse 15. Look at 2:14, ...

Philippians 2:14
Do all things without grumbling or disputing; [or complaining]

Why?

Philippians 2:15-16
so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.

In other words, a non-complaining, a non-disputing, a non-grumbling life is so different than the lives of those in the world. The world grumbles. The world complains.

Grumbling and complaining sells. This is what makes Rush Limbaugh so much money. This is what draws so many to him. "Let's just say everything bad that we can about our government today." People will listen. People will be attracted to it. That's the world's way.

But, God's way is different.

Philippians 2:14-15

Do all things without grumbling or disputing; [or complaining] so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world,

God's people are different. Rather than always being negative about everything, God's people are "blameless and innocent." God's people are "lights in the world." And again, Paul's eye is upon the eternal, ...

Philippians 2:16

holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.

Paul is praying for purity such that people might be blameless on the day when they stand before Jesus. The themes of chapter 2, verses 14-16 are the same as chapter 1, verse 10.

Philippians 1:10

so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ;

We all will stand before Jesus someday.

Last night, I went to the NIU football game with my parents. In the midst of the crowd, I saw an old friend of mine. I don't know him well, but I know his wife and his wife's family a bit. A few weeks ago, I heard that his father-in-law isn't doing so well. He has been in the hospital recently. And so, I asked my friend about how he is doing. He said, "Better. But, his kidneys are failing. He will spend the rest of his life on dialysis. His mind is sharp. But, it's really sad to see his body deteriorating before our eyes." I said, "It sounds hard. But, you and I are both going to be there someday as well."

A little sober reality amidst the fun of football. Yet, it's the reality that we all must face. Hebrews 9:27 says, "It is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment." We will all stand before Jesus someday. Paul's heart for those in Philippi is that they would be sincere and blameless on that day. So, what does a "sincere and blameless" life look like?

D. A. Carson said it very well in his book, *A Call to Spiritual Reformation*. He gives a ton of good application. I can do no better than simply to read what he wrote. He writes this, ...

The pursuit of such excellence does not turn on transparent distinctions between right and wrong. It turns, rather on delicate choices that reflect one's entire value system, one's entire set of priorities, one's heart and mind. That is why Paul prays that the love of the Philippians might abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight: he wants their hearts and minds to become profoundly Christian, for otherwise they will not discern and approve what is best.

Perhaps some practical examples will help clarify Paul's prayer.

What do you do with your time? How many hours a week do you spend with your children? Have you spend any time in the past two months witnessing to someone about the gospel? How much time have you spent watching television or in other forms of personal relaxation? Are you committed, in your use of time, to what is best?

What have you read in the past six months? If you have found time for newspaper or news magazines, a couple of whodunits, a novel or two or perhaps a trade journal, have you also found time for reading a commentary or some other Christian literature that will help you better understand the Bible or improve your spiritual discipline or broaden your horizons? Are you committed, in your reading habits, to what is best?

How are your relationships within your family? Do you pause now and then and reflectively think through what you can do to strengthen ties with your spouse and with your children?

Do you make time for personal prayer? For prayer meetings? Have you taken steps to improve in this regard?

How do you decide what to do with your money? Do you give a set percentage, say 10 percent, of your income to the Lord's work, however begrudgingly, and then regard the rest of your income as your own? Or do you regard yourself as the Lord's steward, so that all the money you earn is ultimately his? Are you delighted when you find yourself able to put much more of your money into strategic ministry, simply because you love to invest in eternity?

Has your compassion deepened over the years, so that, far from becoming more cynical, you try to take concrete steps to serve those who have less than you do?

Is your reading and study of the Bible so improving your knowledge of God that your wholehearted worship of the Almighty

grows in spontaneity, devotion, and joy?

At what points in your life do you cheerfully decide, for no other reason than that you are a Christian, to step outside your "comfort zone," living and serving in painful or difficult self-denial?

Behind your answers to all of these questions are choices. The last thing I want to do is generate a load of guilt because of the choices constantly before us, choices we frequently fail to exploit for the glory of God. In fact, I hesitated over including these paragraphs for just that reason. Feelings of guilt will not by themselves help us to make the right choices; they may simply increase our stress and resentments.

But if our love abounds more and more, shaped all the while by knowledge and moral insight, then these are the kinds of choices we will be wanting to make--and we will be wanting to make them well. They are the kinds of choices that cannot be made on the basis of mere law. They spring from a heart transformed by God's grace. ^[1]

There is much wisdom in Carson's words. Paul is Praying for purity (verse 10). Paul so wants those in Philippi to make such right choices and to have a pure life, that stands blameless before Jesus, that he prays to that end.

How's your life? Is Paul's prayer being answered in your life? Let's transition to my final point this morning. Paul is ...

3. Praying for righteousness (verse 11)

Verse 11 is important, coming off of verse 10, which pictures us as standing before Jesus. Lest we think that we will stand before Jesus "sincere and blameless" on our own strength or by our own effort or by our own righteousness, Paul is quick to add, ...

Philippians 1:11

having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

This is your only hope in standing before the Lord someday -- that we would be filled with His righteousness and that we would be filled with fruit that he produces in our lives. Paul's heart is that God would so work in our lives, that righteousness fruit would be evident.

See, at the end of the day, it's not that we try so hard to be righteous that we stand before Jesus on our own merits. Rather, it's that God is so working in our lives, that our lives bring forth His fruit, which gives testimony that we are His. This is what Paul will say in chapter 2, "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12-13).

Notice how verse 11 describes the source of our righteousness: "the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ." Jesus said, "apart from Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). But through Jesus, we can see His righteousness working in our lives, bringing forth fruit.

In Galatians 5:22-23, we see a similar thought. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, [and] self-control." These are the things that the Holy Spirit works in the lives of those who trust in Jesus. These are the "sincere and blameless" things of which Paul speaks in verse 10.

And you say, how does that happen? It happens by faith as we believe in Him.

The best place to go to understand this is in chapter 3, where Paul puts for the gospel that gives us reason to rejoice. I remind you that Paul was an externally righteous man. In fact, in 3:6, Paul says, "as to the righteousness which is in the Law, [he was] found blameless."

But, Paul knew that all the external righteousness in the world wasn't sufficient to give him the righteousness that would save him. That's his point in verse 7, ...

Philippians 3:7-9

But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith,

The path to righteousness is through faith in Christ. It won't come to us on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness. We aren't going to stand before Christ because of our inherent goodness. No, we will ultimately stand before Christ blameless and innocent, when He gives us His righteousness. When we believe, God give us His righteousness. "God made Jesus, who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on October 13, 2013 by Steve Brandon.
For more information see www.rvbc.cc.

[1] D.A. Carson. "A Call To Spiritual Reformation", pp. 128-129.

