

Philippians 3:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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:

Analysis

Though I might also have confidence in the flesh (Καίπερ ἐγὼ ἔχων πεποίθησιν καὶ ἐν σαρκὶ, Kaiper egō echōn pepoithēsin kai en sarki)—Kaiper ("although, even though") introduces concession. If anyone could boast in flesh-credentials, Paul could. Pepoithēsin en sarki ("confidence in flesh") means relying on human achievement. Paul will list impressive résumé (vv. 5-6) only to declare it worthless (v. 7-8). His autobiography serves apologetics: if Paul—zealous Pharisee, blameless law-keeper—counts his credentials as loss, how much more should Gentiles reject Judaizers' legalism?

If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more (εἴ τις δοκεῖ ἄλλος πεποιθέναι ἐν σαρκὶ, ἐγὼ μᾶλλον, ei tis dokei allos pepoithenai en sarki, egō mallon)—Mallon ("more, rather") claims superiority in credentials. Paul's pre-conversion pedigree exceeded Judaizers'. This establishes authority to critique their system—he knew it intimately and rejected it.

Historical Context

Paul's Jewish credentials were impeccable: Pharisee, trained under Gamaliel (Acts 22:3), advancing beyond peers (Gal 1:14), zealous persecutor of church (Acts 8:3; 9:1-2). His conversion from zealous Judaism to Christ-centered faith gave him unique credibility. Judaizers likely lacked his pedigree. His testimony—that law-righteousness couldn't save—devastated their argument.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. What 'confidence in the flesh' might you be tempted to trust instead of Christ alone?
2. How does Paul's testimony (rejecting impressive credentials) challenge your value system?
3. Why does Paul need to establish his Jewish credentials before critiquing Judaism?

Interlinear Text

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|-----------------|------------------|-------------|--|-------------|-----------|------------------|----------|-------|
| καίπερ | ἐγὼ | ἔχων | πεποίθησιν | καὶ | ἐν | σαρκί | εἴ | τις |
| Though | I | have | confidence | also | in | the flesh | G1487 | G5100 |
| G2539 | G1473 | G2192 | G4006 | G2532 | G1722 | G4561 | | |
| δοκεῖ | ἄλλος | | πεποιθέναι | | ἐν | σαρκί | ἐγὼ | |
| thinketh | other man | | that he hath whereof he might trust | | in | the flesh | I | |
| G1380 | G243 | | G3982 | | G1722 | G4561 | G1473 | |
| μᾶλλον· | | | | | | | | |
| more | | | | | | | | |
| G3123 | | | | | | | | |