

Striving Together: Paul's Epistle to the Philippians

Lesson 9: Philippians 3:17-4:1

Conflicting Walks of Life (3:17-19)

- Follow those who exemplify Christ (v. 17)
 - “join in following my example” = *summimētēs*: imitate together
 - 1 Cor. 1:11; 1 Thess. 1:6 – Jesus is the ultimate guide to life
 - Godly Christians are our pattern (“type”)
 - “walk” = how one conducts their life (“Enoch walked with God”)

We have Jesus as the perfect example. Why did God give us human examples?

- Recognize those who are against Christ (vv. 18-19)
 - Those who are enemies of Christ are many (v. 18) – Matthew 7:13
 - Paul has told the Philippians about these people often (like 3:1)
 - The only instance of Paul shedding tears – *but why?*
 - “enemies” → hostile, hateful toward God’s perfect plan of salvation
- Hallmarks of a life without Christ (v. 19)
 - Their end is destruction (perdition, damnation)
 - “end” is the same word group as “perfected” – very different outcome
 - Their god is their belly
 - A similar warning to the Christians in Rome – Rom. 16:17-18
 - Some see this as either a reference to dietary restrictions or basic human (sinful) appetites, as in gluttony, drunkenness
 - Same word used in John 7:38, where it means heart or innermost being – their god is whatever they deem as important
 - Their glory is in their shame (similar idea for “glory” as in 1 Cor. 5:6)
 - What they hold as their redeeming qualities actually hurt them
 - They set their minds on earthly things
 - Not the mind which Paul has been encouraging us to have
- Who are these people?
 - Some say Judaizers; others believe they are dualists who see no reason to live moral lives (later known as antinomianism)
 - Regardless, their lives are in every way a contradiction to the Christlike walk

In what ways does our current culture reflect “their god is their belly”?

Based on your reading of Scripture and your observation of people, why are there so many enemies of the cross of Christ?

Our Promised Future (3:20-21)

- This place is not our home (v. 20)
 - “citizenship” = harkens back to 1:27
 - Citizenship was important to the Philippians, as a Roman colony
 - Again, an already but not yet situation (1 Peter 2:11-12)
 - Jesus is the Savior, not Caesar (“Savior of the World”)
 - Those who belong to the Lord are waiting with anticipation for His return
- Transformed and conformed to Christ (v. 21)
 - Several words correlate here to the “kenosis passage” in 2:5-11
 - “transform” = form of “appearance” in 2:8
 - “lowly” = humbled (2:8)
 - “conformed” = “form” in 2:6-7
 - We will have new glorified bodies, provided by the Lord Jesus Christ
 - This is through his “working” (energy) and “ability” (dynamite) to subdue (bring under His authority) everything – Psalm 110:1 (quoted often in NT)
 - Other references to glorified bodies: 1 Cor. 15:50-55, Col. 3:4, 1 John 3:2

What should eagerly waiting for Jesus’ return look like?

Knowing This, Don’t Waver (4:1)

- This verse speaks poignantly to Paul’s great devotion to this church
 - “beloved” – not once but twice
 - “longed for” – time and distance have not lessened his love for them
 - “joy and crown” – these have more to do with them as his spiritual offspring
 - Paul used similar language in 1 Thess. 2:19
 - Crown of rejoicing is for those who lead others to Christ
 - Also, a crown of glory for spiritual leaders (1 Peter 5:2-4)
- Because of our shared, assured future, STAND FAST (1:27)

Next week: Philippians 4:2-9