

Winter Park Christian Church: Pastor Samuel Ruiz
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Are We Followers or Enemies of the Cross of Christ?

November 18th & 19th, 2017

Philippians 3:17-20

Paul was an imitator of Jesus Christ. He encouraged the church in Philippi to imitate him, as well as those who were walking according to the example that Jesus had given and was present not only in Paul, but in many other believers at the time. As we look in this passage, we also find a very clear warning not to walk as enemies of the cross of Christ, and this warning comes with a very clear illustration of what it looks to be an enemy of the cross of Christ.

“For many...walk as enemies of the cross of Christ.”

- Mark 8:31-34
 - ❖ Jesus chose to take up the cross, and through it he suffered the most painful death that existed to provide forgiveness of our sins and to give us eternal life. Yet as He did it, He calls us to do the same...
“And calling the crowds to Him with His disciples, He said to them, ‘If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.’” Mark 8:34
 - ❖ Jesus also described what it looks like to follow Him as we take our cross.
 - Mark 8:34-36
 - ❖ There were those who theoretically received the teaching of the cross, yet in their practical life it did not mean anything.
 - ❖ As we embrace the cross of Christ we not only receive His gift of salvation, but accept the teaching to deny ourselves and seek the will of the Lord in our lives to obey it.
- “...Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things.”***
- ❖ This passage in Philippians is even more specific as Paul explains that the meaning of walking not as enemies, but as followers of the cross of Christ is to walk denying ourselves to the desires of our flesh, seeking the glory of shameful things, and loving the things of this world.

We are called to avoid personal ambition.

- Philippians 2:5-8
- Mark 10:45 “For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.”*
- ❖ Selfishness is expressed by the ambition of personal gain while tearing down or taking from someone else.
 - ❖ Selfishness is demanding that God provides for us in our timing and fulfill our desires. We make ourselves God and God is the provider, putting Him to the test.
 - Psalm 78:18-19
 - ❖ Selfishness caused the rich young ruler to turn his back on Jesus.

Matthew 19:21-22 “Jesus said to him, ‘If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor; and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.’ When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.”

❖ Selfishness is also one of the works of the flesh.

Galatians 5:19-20 “The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, ...” NIV¹

❖ Instead of living for ourselves, we are to live for God and others.

- 2 Corinthians 5:15
- Galatians 5:13

❖ Combating the sin of selfish ambition requires genuine humility. Being humble involves having a true perspective about ourselves in relation to God.

- Romans 12:3

❖ When we are selfish, we tend to glory in the things that are shameful.

We are called to avoid pride in that which is vanity.

❖ This depicts pride in something that is false, ineffective and vain.

❖ This is a pride that glories in the deception to praise things that are wrong, shameful and clearly oppose the will of the Lord.

❖ Deception is a common tendency in our fallen world, especially in the time in which we live.

- Jeremiah 17:9
- 2 Timothy 3:13

❖ The church of Laodicea was immersed in deception regarding their spiritual condition.

- Revelation 3:15-19
 - We are to pray that God gives us eyes to see our pride and sinful condition, so that we can desire to be washed by His blood and be restored.

❖ The Word of God is meant to transform our lives in such a way that we live not to please our own desires or that which is shameful, but we live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in the present age.

- Titus 2:11-14
- James 1:22-25

We are called to avoid earthly things.

❖ The Bible warns us often not to love the world or the things of the world.

- 1 John 2:15-16
 - When we are told not to love this world, the bible is referring to the world's corrupt value system.

❖ God's commandment is to set our minds on the things of heaven.

- Colossians 3:1-4
- 2 Timothy 2:4

❖ We are not of this world! When we are deceived and mesmerized by it, our focus on the Lord or His purposes is lost.

- 2 Timothy 4:10

❖ In Christ, we have become citizens of a heavenly kingdom.

- Philippians 3:20
- ❖ Our desires must be changed to be focused on heaven and storing up eternal treasure.
 - Matthew 6:19-21,33

*“But our citizenship is in heaven,
and from it we await a savior,
the Lord Jesus Christ,”
Philippians 3:20*

Endnotes:

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