

Enemies of the Cross of Christ

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: Philippians 3:18-19

In our text, Paul reminded these brethren of something he had already warned them about. Some were “enemies of the cross of Christ.” Obviously, this was destructive for these individuals. Yet their influence was also dangerous for the faithful brethren in Philippi. The same warning is necessary for us today. If we are not careful, we can become “enemies of the cross,” and the transition is not as abrupt as we might expect.

Follow the Right Example

- The example of Paul (Philippians 3:17) – he was following Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1); follow him only as he follows Christ; ultimately, Christ is the perfect example (1 Peter 2:21-22)
- The example of those who walk according to the pattern (Philippians 3:17) – God’s word provides us with this pattern (2 Timothy 1:13); imitate the faith of those who speak and practice the word of God (Hebrews 13:7)
- Keep living by the same standard (Philippians 3:16) – this is our responsibility; it is not enough to just admire those who are faithful, we must be faithful ourselves (Hebrews 13:7; 12:1-2); it is not enough to merely recognize a pattern, we must put it into practice (James 1:22)

Those Who Are Enemies of the Cross

- Their god is their appetite (belly, KJV) – the innermost part of men, figurative of the heart; they follow after their own desires; if left to their own devices, this will inevitably lead to sin (Jeremiah 17:9; James 1:14-15); this is the opposite of our responsibility to deny self (Luke 9:23; cf. Galatians 5:24)
- Their glory is in their shame – we should be ashamed of sin (Romans 6:20-21), yet many celebrate their sin (Isaiah 5:20); we are called to put away sin (Romans 6:11; cf. 1 John 2:1)
- They set their minds on earthly things – the things of this life, which are not necessarily sinful things; the worries, riches, and pleasures of life choke out the word (Luke 8:14); we are to set our minds on things above (Colossians 3:1-2; cf. Philippians 3:20) *[more on this in a moment]*

What We Need to Do

- Guard against following their example – we may think we could never be guilty of the same thing, but we must take heed so we do not fall (1 Corinthians 10:12; Proverbs 16:18); notice that it does not take much to become “enemies of the cross”; it does not

require denying Christ; just do what you want, celebrate sin, and focus on this life; a regular “churchgoer” can do this

- Recognize the tragedy of their condition (Philippians 3:18) – “even weeping”; this is a cause for mourning; Jesus wept over Jerusalem (Matthew 23:37), the same people who would kill Him; do not be arrogant toward these individuals (Romans 11:17-22); realize that you could fall as well
- Remember that our home is in heaven (Philippians 3:20) – this is what we are to look forward to; it is only possible because Jesus died on the cross to be our Savior (cf. Romans 6:3-5, 23); so press on toward the goal (Philippians 3:14)

Conclusion

- We are saved through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross – no hope outside of this
- Therefore, we must not allow ourselves to become “enemies of the cross” – yet it can be easier than we realize
- We prevent this by holding fast to the pattern and keep pressing on to the goal of heaven