



PHILIPPIANS

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For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ*: Philippians 3:18

As noted in the previous verse, the words of Paul seem especially directed to those who lived out their supposed Christian experience in licentiousness and in the pursuit of worldly things. This is in contrast to the Judaizers in the sense that they discounted the work of Christ and exalted the Law of Moses. They looked to a reward, but they looked to it as an earned badge of merit, not as a gift received because of the work of Another.

The people Paul speaks of here simply treat the world as the great reward, and they revel in what it offers. And yet, they claim that they are followers of Christ. This is why he now notes their "walk." In the previous verse, he asked that those who walked in accord with his walk, meaning in a life lived to Christ, were to be emulated as a pattern. Now he says, "For many walk," as a contrast to that. He then notes, "...of whom I have told you often." This is not something that suddenly appeared while he was away from them. Instead, it is something that he had been warning about all along.

For this reason, it is an incipient infection. It is one that constantly needs to be warned against, and so he says, "...and now tell you even weeping." It was such a damaging heresy that it literally brought him to tears. How could someone hear the message of Christ, claim that that they had received it and been converted, and yet continue to live in the world as if "for the world." And in fact, they had taken the grace of Christ, and turned it into a badge of greater sin than they previously engaged in. It is a concept that he addresses in Romans 6 which begins with –

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? ² Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?” Romans 6:1, 2

He warns that being in Christ means living in holiness, not in even greater sin. For those that would presume to teach this, or to follow such teachers, he says “*that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ.” Such people are not just unknowing and uncaring about Christianity, they are actively enemies of it. Christ counts them as such. They are destined for a very bad end unless they repent, come to their senses, and call on Christ in truth.

Thus, we have a distinction between the Judaizers of the earlier verses of chapter 3 and those of the Antinomian heresy here. The Judaizers were heretical because they rejected the full atonement and justification which is found in Christ alone, and they set out to establish their own righteousness. These people, on the other hand, now work against the other side of the cross. They claim that they are so fully justified in Christ that they have absolute freedom to work out, and engage in, any type of moral impurity they wish.

What is astonishing is that both of these groups have almost exponentially grown in size in the recent church. The modern Hebrew Roots movement has exploded in recent years, claiming that the Law of Moses must be adhered to in part or in full. At the same time, the once strong and faithful churches and denominations of even the recent past, have openly endorsed homosexuality, lesbianism, and every other type of moral perversion that they can think up. Pulpits have become the proclaimers of pervert parties. And yet, all of this could be avoided if one simply picked up the Bible and read the warnings of Paul.

Life application: There is peace to be found in Christ, but let us never use this grace to assume that we can then live in an unholy manner. We are to emulate our Lord who would never condone such worldly perversion.

...whose end is destruction, whose god is *their* belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things. Philippians 3:19

Concerning “the enemies of the cross of Christ” of the previous verse, Paul now says that their “end is destruction.” This is set in contrast to the “resurrection from the dead” in verse 11, and of the right of entry into the New Jerusalem for the believer which will be noted in verse 20. Instead of an anticipation of life, these enemies of the cross will be cast into the burning pit of the Lake of Fire. Their reward is one of perdition, as the Greek reads, not salvation.

In order to explain why this is so, he next gives three descriptions of them which reflects their very character and nature. First he says, “whose god is *their* belly.” This is a further explanation of his words of Romans 16 –

“For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.” Romans 16:18

This same idea concerning the appetites of the belly is given in 2 Peter 2 and in Jude. These people live for the temporary, feasting themselves now on that which can never fully satisfy while forsaking the true heavenly meal which will satisfy for eternity. Paul will give a contrast of this description to that of the believer in verse 21.

He next says of them that their “glory *is* in their shame.” In Ephesians 5, Paul notes that there are things which are shameful even to speak of even in secret. However, these perverse people actually glory in such things. Perfectly representing this are modern homosexual pastors and preachers. They revel in their perversion, and they openly avow that they engage in such abominable practices. They glory in defying the Lord who would save them if they would simply turn and be saved. But instead of this, Paul gives the final description of them by saying that they “set their mind on earthly things.”

This state is in contrast to the thoughts of verses 13 and 21. We are to set our mind on that which is heavenly and eternal, not on that which is worldly and temporary. This contrast between the two is well described by Paul in Romans 8 –

“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those *who live* according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.” Romans 8:5

Life application: If this life is where our hopes lie, then our hopes will die with us in this life. But if the promise of God which is found in the resurrection of Jesus Christ is where our hopes lie, then there is a great and eternal reward which awaits us. May we think reasonably and rationally concerning our eternal destiny. This life is but a temporary breath. Is it worth sacrificing eternity for such a passing moment?

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, Philippians 3:20

This is a verse very rich in its content and meaning. First, there is an emphasis in the original of the first clause on “our” and on “is.” Secondly, the word “citizenship” is found only here in the New Testament. It is the word *politeuma*, and it is a noun indicating a state or a commonwealth. Rather than “citizenship,” the word appears to be speaking of an actual city which awaits us. Thus, it is probably referring to the New Jerusalem.

The emphasis in this first verse, and the reference to the state which awaits, is literally translated then as “Of us, indeed, the state of heaven exists...” The word “exists, according to

Vincent's Word Studies, "signifies 'actually exists;' and the reference to the appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ is obviously suggested by the thought that with it will also come the manifestation of the 'Jerusalem which is above...'"

It is a delightful set of words, given to us to revel in as we await the glory which is ahead, and which already exists. We can now anticipate it in the fullest sense because of the work of Christ which assures us of our entry into that wonderful city. This then is in contrast to the previous verse which spoke of those whose minds are set on "earthly things." Let them have their party now. In the end, it will all be swept away and forgotten, but our walk will be an eternal one in a land of delight and abundance.

Next he says, "from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." The words are intended to fill us with an actual longing and a great anticipation for that which lies ahead. What does this world hold that is a jillionth as wonderful as the glory which is promised to us? Instead, we should continuously fix our eyes on Jesus, and the savor in our mouths should be that of anticipation in what He has prepared for us.

Of note in the Greek is that there is no article in front of the word "Savior." Again, Vincent's Word Studies looks into the thoughts of Paul which are being relayed. He says "its emphatic position in the sentence indicates that it is to be taken predicatively with Jesus Christ, and not as the direct object of the verb. Hence render: we await as Savior the Lord..." Therefore, we have a dual thought to be pieced together. Our city awaits us as a city which is prepared for us, but access to that city is dependent upon the return of Jesus as Savior. He is our Savior, and yet we await Him as Savior with all that the title implies and with all that will accompany His final salvation.

Life application: Reading verses like this one should remind us not to get too entangled in the things of the world. Instead, we should direct our thoughts, hopes, and devotions to the Lord who has promised us so much more than what we now experience.

Heavenly Father, You have promised us great things in Christ Jesus. Our citizenship is assured, our city awaits, and our Savior is coming. Help us to not get so fixated on this world that we lose sight of the great and glorious things which lie ahead. In anticipating those things, our hearts and praises will be more appropriately directed to You. May this be our daily custom and devotion, to Your glory and praise. Amen.

...who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

Philippians 3:21

Speaking of “the Lord Jesus Christ” of the previous verse, it is He “who will transform our lowly body.” The term in Greek is “the body of our humiliation.” We have a form which at this time is weak, corruptible, and corrupt. However, this body of humiliation will be transformed into another form. Paul notes that it is the Son who will accomplish this transformation into the marvelous image which He now bears. This is referred to elsewhere, such as in 1 Corinthians 15:38 where the term “God” is used –

“But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body.”

Therefore, this is another (of the countless such in Scripture) references to the deity of Christ Jesus. If God gives the body as he pleases, and yet it is the Lord Jesus Christ who will transform our lowly body, then He is God. This transformation is so “that it may be conformed to His glorious body.” The term in Greek is “the body of His glory.” It then is set in contrast to “the body of our humiliation” which we now bear. The form itself will be changed, and we shall be like Him. John tells us this also –

“Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” 1 John 3:2

The marvelous transformation will be from a state of humility to one of glory which is “according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.” What is now frail, easily harmed or destroyed, and which is corrupt and in a state of humiliation, will be according to the same power by which Christ will subject all things, bringing them into the order and harmony which they were originally intended to be in.

Vincent’s word studies notes that, “It is more than merely subdue. It is to bring all things within His divine economy; to marshal them all under Himself in the new heaven and the new earth in which shall dwell righteousness. Hence the perfected heavenly state as depicted by John is thrown into the figure of a city, an organized commonwealth. The verb is thus in harmony with Philippians 3:20. The work of God in Christ is therefore not only to transform, but to subject, and that not only the body, but all things.”

Life application: Chapter 3 of Philippians closes out with these marvelous words of assurance, and even of great expectation of the glory which lies ahead. Joy for the believer is not merely the absence of pains and sorrow. Rather, it is the ever-present hope which we possess because of the work of Christ, and of the glory which lies ahead. Our current body may be broken, filled with pains, or incapable of standing up to the surrounding pressures we face, but what lies ahead will be whole, filled with glory, and capable of lasting throughout eternal ages. Let us not weary in anticipating the great glory which lies ahead. It is our blessed hope.