

ENEMIES OF THE GOSPEL

(Part Nine – The Fellowship of the Gospel)

TEXT: **Philippians 3:17-19**

INTRODUCTION: What does it take to make you cry? The answer reveals a lot about your character. Paul admitted that he was weeping even as he wrote these words of warning about those who by their false teaching and false living were “*enemies of the cross of Christ.*” Paul was zealous for the gospel, but he was not heartless. Like the Lord he served, he took no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezek. 33:11).

When we contemplate the doom of the ungodly and their influence upon the uninformed, we too should weep even as we warn. While we are repulsed by the behavior of false professors, let us be sure to have godly role models ourselves whose lives motivate us to be more Christ-like. It is not enough to “curse the darkness.” We must walk in the light.

OUTLINE: In these three verses, Paul makes three important observations about false teachers and false professors, and poignantly entreats believers to respond to them correctly.

- I. These Enemies Defined** (“*enemies of the cross*”)
 - A.** They deny the atonement (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 3:18).
 - B.** They undermine the gospel
 1. By adding works to grace (3:2)
 2. By denying that works provide evidence of salvation (Tit. 1:16; 2:11,12)

- II. The Enemies Described** (v. 19)
 - A.** They are self-indulgent (“*whose God is their belly*”).
 1. Unrestrained appetites (Rom. 16:18)
 2. Perverting the grace of God (Jude 4)
 - B.** They are shamefully proud (“*whose glory is their shame*”).
 1. Esteeming vices as virtues
 2. Receiving the fruits of their own doings (Hos. 4:7)
 - C.** They are worldly (“*who mind earthly things*”).

- III. The Enemies’ Destiny** (“*whose end is destruction*”)

- IV. The Effect Desired on us** (vv. 17, 18)
 - A.** We should warn others.

B. We should weep.

1. Over their forsaking of Christ and His Church
2. Over their fate
3. Over their force on others

C. We should walk with those who are true.

1. Because they are following Christ (1 Cor. 11:1)
2. Because we need overcomers for role models

CONCLUSION: We must be vigilant and discerning toward the presence of false teachers and false professors in the church of Jesus Christ. This does not mean that we must become overly suspicious and paranoid. *“By their fruits ye shall know them,”* Jesus said (Matt. 7:20). Let us distrust ourselves more than others, lest we should prove to be reprobate (1 Cor. 9:27). If we keep our eyes on Jesus and our hearts in the Word of God, it will not be difficult to determine when others deviate from the narrow way and become *“enemies of the cross of Christ.”* May God give us both courage and compassion.