

"Enemies of the Cross"

Text: Philippians 3:15-19

Introduction:

-When a Christian thinks about who would be categorized as an enemy of the cross of Christ, he probably thinks about one of the religious cults.

I.E. - Mormons, Jehovah Witnesses, Christian Scientists, Seventh Day Adventists, Roman Catholics, Church of Christ, etc.

-Christians would never believe that other Christians could be enemies of the cross. However, I believe this is who the Apostle Paul is describing here in our passage.

-Notice what Paul says in v. 16. In v. 16, Paul sets down the rule on how believers are to walk on this earth. Paul says, "let us walk by the **same rule**."

-In other words there are not different rules for believer to walk by.

-If that was the case, it would make it very difficult for a local church to be in unity and harmony of one spirit.

-It would bring confusion and God is not the author of confusion.

-Paul continues in v. 16 and gives the believer **one simple rule** to guide his walk with the Lord.

-Paul says, "let us **mind the same thing**" (To mind the same thing Christians have to be of the same mind).

-All through the New Testament the believer is exhorted to be of the **same mind**.

-Paul said in 1 Corinthians 1:10, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the **same** thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the **same** mind and in the **same** judgment."

-2 Corinthians 13:11 - "be ye of **one mind**"

-Ephesians 4:3 - "keep the **unity** of the Spirit in the bond of peace"

-Paul tells the Philippians that their testimony should be regardless if he is present or absent - "ye stand fast in **one spirit**, with **one mind striving together** for the faith of the gospel." (Philippians 1:27)

-This is what the believer's testimony always should be - **striving together** with other believers for the faith of the gospel.

-Not **striving against** one another for the destruction of the faith of the gospel.

-The Apostle Peter told believers - "Finally, be ye **all of one mind**" (1 Peter 3:8)

-So, we see the rule of "**mind the same thing**", is very important because of the emphasis the word of God places on it.

-Christians are capable of and have the power to "mind the same thing" because the word of God tells us that as believers "we have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2:16).

-Paul tells us in Philippians 2:5 - "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

- Paul is talking about the spiritual mind and not carnal or fleshly mind.
- In Philippians 3:17, Paul is telling the brethren to follow him - "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample."
- But we know that when Paul said this that he meant "follow me as I follow Christ"
- Paul goes to say "mark them which walk".
- In other words identify or point out.
- Paul continues, "so as ye have us for an ensample".
- What Paul is saying, "use us as an example or standard to go by (Remember at the time the canon of scriptures had not been completed).
- To mark other professing believers' walk.
- Why would the Philippian believers want to do this?
- Paul tells us in Philippians 3:18 - "(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: "
- Paul says there are those that I have spoken to you about before, **often**, not just occasionally.
- So, these folks that Paul and the Philippian believers were very familiar with.
- Possibly, before these other folks appeared to be right with God, serving the Lord, etc.
- But in reality were playing a game.
- Just a bunch of carnal believers into the things of the flesh.
- This is indicated by Paul saying in v. 18 - "...and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ;".
- Obviously, Paul is heart broken, because he gives the news to Philippians "weeping".
- Paul is in prison, when he writes this epistle.
- So, probably he experienced first hand how these folks who by all outward appearance seemed to be serving the Lord were not.
- They were still saved but at the best just carnal or fleshly Christians.
- Possibly, some of these folks were responsible for Paul's imprisonment.
- Paul spoke of certain ones who had become enemies of the cross.
- 2 Timothy 4:10 - "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world".
- 2 Timothy 4:14 - "Alexander, the coppersmith did me much evil:..."

-This morning we want to look at the qualifications of Christians who are "enemies of the cross of Christ."

-Paul gives us their qualifications in Philippians 3:19 - "Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)"

I. WHOSE END IS DESTRUCTION

- We know according to the scripture that the Christian in the current age of grace or church age (in which the Apostle Paul also was in) cannot lose their salvation.
- So, the destruction spoken about here does not have to do with salvation.
- But as Christians there are other things which can be destroyed by a carnal, worldly walk.
- For example: Our fellowship with the Lord and brethren as a result of sin.
- If we want to see a Biblical example of this, all we have to do is look at that bunch at Corinth.
- See I Corinthians 11:28-30 - "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."
- Notice v. 30 - "**many sleep**". The Lord took saints home early because they made a mockery of the Lord's Supper.
- These believers did not examine themselves like the Word of God says to.
- It is of the utmost importance to confess your sins and get right with God before partaking of the Lord's Supper.
- Because if you are not right with God and partake of the communion table and do it consistently then the Lord just might take you home early.
- Notice what Paul says to the church at Corinth in I Corinthians 5:1-13.
- V. 5 - "unto Satan for the **destruction of the flesh**"
- "destruction of the flesh" = physical death.
- The Lord may take this individual home if that person continue in his sin.
- Paul was rebuking the church at Corinth for not taking a stand against the man who was committing fornication with his father's wife.
- V.2 - Says they were puffed up about it.
- Paul says if the individual does not stop, then to separate from them and having nothing to do with them.
- Paul says in V. 5 - their body is no longer under subjection to the Spirit.
- They are totally walking in the flesh.
- Their body is now the possession of Satan.
- However, their spirit is still saved.
- Paul goes on with his rebuke and tells them that not only will the individuals involved in this sin reap destruction but the whole church as well if they allow this to go on in the church.
- So, Christians churches who are involved in sins of this nature are headed for destruction.
- In fact, the Lord may take them home early.
- In other words, they are "**enemies of the cross.**"
- So, number I., a qualification of the enemies of the cross is "Whose end is destruction."

II. WHOSE GOD IS THEIR BELLY

- These folks are into satisfying the flesh.
- See Romans 16:17-18 - "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. "
- Notice Paul says, "mark them".
- In other words, point out or call out.
- Enemies of the cross, "cause **divisions** and **offences** contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and **avoid them**."
- "avoid them" - having nothing to do with them, separate from them.
- Why? Because they are causing divisions and offences.
- This is the same as sowing discord among the brethren, which according to Proverbs 6:16, the Lord hates and considers it an abomination.
- That is why Paul so strongly puts it - "avoid them".
- Again, this ties into Philippians 3:16, where Paul says "let us walk by the same rule" which would be in Romans 16:17, "the doctrine which ye have learned"
- These folks who are enemies of the cross are not walking by the same rule but by their own set of rules.
- Paul continues in Philippians 3:16 and says "let us mind the same thing"
- Again, these folks "to avoid" in Romans 16:17 cause divisions and offences.
- Therefore, they do not mind the same thing but their own thing which is contrary to the "the doctrine which ye have learned" or the Word of God.
- "Contrary" - being so different as to be at opposite extremes"
- Opposite -inclined to resist authority and control.
- These folks do the opposite to what the word of God says.
- We live in age which is very rebellious.
- People are being taught at an early age the spirit of rebelliousness.
- To resist, question and overthrow authority.
- We witness this first hand by the attack on the Word of God which should be man's only final authority.
- We see this spirit of contrary being displayed in our local New Testament churches.
- In Hebrews 13:17, the Bible says - "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves."
- This is talking about the relationship between the pastor and his people.
- What is happening in many of our New Testament Bible-Believing Churches today, is that the man of God, the pastor's authority which is ordained by God is being questioned and attacked both openly and in secret by members of the church.
- This is manifested when the pastor makes a decision about something and it is questioned.
- Or when the pastor is trying to guide, direct, and help one of his members to grow.

- His attempts are questioned and rebuked. "You are picking on me."
- Or if one member shares with another member something the pastor has shared with them with a "questioning attitude or a contrary attitude".
- The Bible says "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves".
- Two key words "**obey**" - be in agreement, to follow the command or guidance, not disagree or go against.
- "**Submt**" - yield to his authority, not rebel or question.
- If you are not doing what Hebrews 13:7, says to do, then you are causing "divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned."
- In other words, you are "an enemy of the cross."
- What motivates people to cause divisions and offences.
- Let's look at Romans 16:18 - "For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."
- These folks are not serving our Lord Jesus Christ but they are self-serving.
- They are serving their own belly.
- They want the glory.
- They want to fulfill the desires of the flesh.
- They are walking in the flesh and not the Spirit.
- According to Galatians 5:19, they are manifesting the works of the flesh.
- Notice in Romans 16:18, how these folks accomplish their goal.
- "By good words" and "fair speeches".
- These are the folks whose lips say one thing and their mind is thinking something else.
- These are the folks who seem so "lovey-dovey" (super spiritual super critical).
- They seem almost overly concern about your problem.
- They say that they want to help you and be your best buddy, etc.
- The Bible says if you fall for these "good words" and "fair speeches" then you are "simple".
- Romans 16:18, says - "...by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."
- "Simple" means the person possess very little wisdom and spiritual discernment.
- You see this often happens when newly saved folks come into a church and one of the so-called mature Christian goes over and starts playing their games.
- Getting the babe in Christ to follow him and come to him instead of the pastor.
- These folks are self-serving, not God serving because their God is their belly.

-So, we have seen so far how a Christian can qualify as an enemy of the cross of Christ.

- I. **If their end is destruction**
- II. **If their god is their belly**

-III. IF THEIR GLORY IS IN THEIR SHAME

- Philippians 3:18 - "...whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things"
- These folks get their glory from their shame.
- In other words, what brings shame or disgrace to a Christian?
- Sin!!!
- We saw earlier in I Corinthians 5, that the church at Corinth was puffed up.
- They thought it was great to have "fornication among them" (1 Cor. 5:1).
- They did not mourn about this open sin in their church.
- In fact, Paul told them straight out about their attitude in 1 Corinthians 5:6, Paul said, "Your glorying is not good".
- Unfortunately, in many so called Bible Believing Churches, they are glorying in their shame.
- They think it is great that they openly tolerate sin.
- For example:
- Folks living together.
- Married folks committing adultery.
- Having sex perverts serving and members of their church.
- Their favorite verses are "a friend loveth at all times" or "speak the truth in love"
- Their favorite chapter in the Bible is I Corinthians 13.
- The Bible says these folks are "enemies of the cross" because "whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things."
- Notice again that word "mind".
- Remember, Paul said in Phil. 3 verse 16, "let us walk by the same rule, let us mind, the same thing."
- We know that when Paul said "let us mind, the same thing".
- The "same thing" was not referring to earthly things but heavenly or spiritual things.
- The rule found in the Word of God is the mind of Christ - not the mind of the World and higher education.
- Christian are you glorying in your shame?
- Are you involved in some sin and you are not ashamed of it.
- You have not made it your priority to get right with God.
- Then the Bible says that you are an "**enemy of the cross**"!!!
- Christian do you glory in the fact that you like to gossip?
- Christian do you glory in the fact that you question and challenge the pastor's authority?
- Christian do you glory in the fact that you do not tithe, do not read your Bible, are not in church when the doors are open?
- Christian do you mind earthly things?
- i.e. Money, TV, the lottery, the job, VCR. the computer, sex, drugs, pornography, & music.
- Then you are an "**enemy of the cross**" because you glory in your shame or sin.
- You are minding earthly things and not heavenly things or spiritual things.

- Christian are your affection set on the things above or on the things of this earth.
- Christian, I do not want to scare you but I have to preach the whole counsel of God!!!
- We saw when we started out, that Phil 3:19, said if you are an "**enemy of the cross of Christ**" then your end is destruction!!!
- The Lord will deal with you so long but if you do not cease and resist, then he may take you home early "**whose end is destruction**"
- Won't you get right with God and restore the fellowship and joy of your salvation.
- Come today and claim the promise of 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins he is, faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."