



World Christian Fellowship

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Philippians 36

Who are the enemies of Cross?

Philippians 3:18-19, *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: ¹⁹ whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things.*

Contemporary Christian is seeking the humanistic needs. It focuses on under what process by which all my needs can be met.

- If I have got a problem in my life to iron out that problem, I need something.
- If I have some unfulfillment in my life, I must fill that pocket with fulfilment.
- If I have dissatisfaction in my life, I must get satisfaction in that area.
- If I am not able to accomplish everything that is in me, all my desires aren't being met, somehow, I will never be fulfilled until all of those perceived needs are met.

That has encroached upon the church in a major way so that much of preaching, teaching, writing today has to do with problems, needs, satisfaction, and fulfilment of one's own personal desires.

The Christian church traditionally kept on crushing the desires of the flesh, on crucifying the needs of the self in pursuit of Christ's likeness.

We now hear that Jesus will meet your every need, as though He were divine psychiatrist or divine detergent or gene in a bottle and as though God were simply to serve us!

Rather than we serve and fulfil the plans and purposes of God instead we are looking for a servant in the name of lord to serve their physical needs.

This concept has led us to

- A man-centred theology,
- A man-centred salvation, and
- A man-centred sanctification

The goal of Christian living has become for many Christians getting their self needs met, being fulfilled, being happy, having a good self-image, a high standard of self-worth, etc.,

Resolving all their conflict, eliminating all their problems are their focus.

That is diametrically opposed to what the Bible teaches.

The satisfaction of human need is neither the goal of salvation nor is it the goal of sanctification.

It's not the goal of either.

The goal of salvation is that you might be conformed to the image of God's Son!

That is the goal of sanctification!!

The goal of my life is not to make sure I am satisfied but to make sure God is satisfied.

Now we have got most of our pulpit have filled with man-centred theology it produced man-centred sanctification instead of a Christ-centred sanctification.

Man becomes central rather than Christ.

This is a major change.

Faith looks out instead of in and the whole of life falls into line.

We have studied that the prize and the goal is to be like Jesus Christ.

Christian sanctification is the pursuit of something outside me, not something inside myself.

It is the pursuit of Christ's likeness.

It is not a matter of assessing me, it is a matter of knowing Him deeply.

- ✓ The more I know Christ,
- ✓ The more I am focused on Christ,
- ✓ The more I am in communion with Christ,
- ✓ The more the Spirit makes me like Christ.

The more I focus on myself, the more distracted I am from the proper path.

That was the single focus of Paul's life.

V 8, *"I count everything else to be loss, I have one great quest, to know Christ Jesus my Lord."*

V 13, *"One thing I do, and that one thing is forgetting the other things, I press on toward the goal."*

So, Paul had a life focus of knowing Jesus Christ so well, so deeply, so richly that he was becoming like Christ, that is the goal of every Christian's life.

The Christian life we are pressing toward a goal.

- That goal is not the satisfaction of my own needs.
- That goal is not the satisfaction of my own desire for greater significance.

The goal of my life is to be like Christ.
Everything else spins off that.

All my service, all my relationships, all my worship, everything spins off being like Christ.

- If I am like Christ, I will worship God in the way He worshiped God.
- If I am like Christ, I will serve God in the way He served God.
- If I am like Christ, I will relate to people in the love in which He related to people.

You can never meet a successful person, an effective person, an impactful person in any realm of enterprise in the world who was not committed to reaching goals.

The people who impact the world are pursuers.

- They are winners.
- They are competitors.
- They make incredible sacrifices for the wrong reasons to reach the wrong goals.

But the people who impact society are not the kind of people whose lives are consumed with making sure their own needs are met to say nothing from a spiritual viewpoint.

It is the same with Spiritual winners.

Read biographies of famous Christians to see that there are no hidden secrets about an impactful life. It is the direct result of a maximum effort to reach a spiritual goal and in the process ignoring their own personal situation.

It is amazing what great preachers, great theologians and great missionaries have suffered in the process of reaching a spiritual goal.

They all have one thing in common: They had little concern for their own human condition, but their only focus was that they follow and pursue Christ.

There is no other secret!

Effective lives belong to people who pursue goals that are outside themselves and they pursue them almost blindly. The same is true spiritually.

Paul says that I am not interested in anything else.

V 14, *"I consider everything else a loss, all I want is one thing, I want the prize,"*

That's what made him great. It was that ability to be so totally focused on a goal. And that's what we're talking about, that's what we're talking about. We all are called to pursue the goal. And again, the goal is to be conformed to the image of God's

Son, as we noted two weeks ago. We are pursuing that, let say it simply, as our total Christian duty.

Simply what is Christian life?

The whole Christian life can be boiled down, pursuing Christ's likeness.

That's all.

What are the necessary elements in doing this?

What will help us in pursuing the prize?

We must follow examples.

V 17, Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.

Christ is the perfect model. Christ is the pattern of perfection. But Paul and others are the patterns of the pursuit of that perfection.

I see in Christ what I want to be, but I cannot see in Christ how to get there.

Why?

Because Christ didn't follow some path to perfection, He was always perfect.

So, if I look at Christ, I see what I am to be, and if I look at Paul and other believers, I can see how to move that direction.

You can see those who are able to deal with temptation and sin in the pursuit of the prize.

So, Paul says you need an example, you need someone to follow, so follow me and those who walk according to the pattern that you have seen in us.

We need a human pattern to follow. This is the essence of the matter of church leadership.

What is church leadership?

It is not just speaking the Word and preaching the Word, it is being the model that people can follow in the pursuit of Christ's likeness.

That is the high calling!

That is why leadership in the church is so highly regarded in the Scripture.

That is why a person's life must be above reproach and blameless because that person is the pattern of pursuing Christ's likeness the people are asked to follow.

That is why when a person fails to be the pattern you have got a preacher who isn't a pattern and all you have are words but nothing is demonstrated.

Find those godly pastors and leaders who are above reproach, whose lives are blameless, who are walking the way a believer should walk, who are being obedient.

They are not perfect, but the direction of their life is right.

V 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 is saying that you watch out that you don't follow them. In the pursuit of Christ's likeness, there are some to be followed, and there are many to be avoided.

V 17, He says follow me, and those who follow the pattern that I have set.

V 18, Paul says, "Many are the enemies of Christ." Not a few, many, they are everywhere.

Here is the biggest challenge in the church.

Especially in a high-profile media society like ours, do you realize the exposure that bad examples get today?

Do you realize the exposure that enemies of the cross of Christ find for themselves today through social media, television, books?

You must be very careful and very discerning not to follow someone who is masquerading as a friend and is really an enemy of the cross.

V 18-19 introduces us to the enemies of the cross of Christ.

These people, the enemies of Cross, are not stated as enemies. They don't say, "We are against the cross, we are against Christ, we deny His work on the cross, we deny salvation by grace through faith, etc."

They don't do that.

Anybody who does that cannot be a threat!

We can spot them immediately, someone who denies Christ, and His work on the cross.

These are people who say they are the

- friends of Christ,
- the cross of Christ,
- advocate Christ,
- identify with Christ,
- spiritual leadership,

but they are the enemies of the cross of Christ.

They are very subtle. It takes discernment to recognize them.

This theme runs throughout the New Testament that you almost feel like you are in a revolving door on this subject.

Matthew 7:5, *“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.*

Matthew 23 He described them again. He was concerned about the false teachers, the false leaders, and the antichrists.

Matthew 24:11, & 24

¹¹ Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.

²⁴ For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

Acts 13:6, *Now when they had gone through the island to Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew whose name was Bar-Jesus,*

Acts 20:29-30, *For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.³⁰ Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.*

2 Corinthians 11:13-15, *For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ.¹⁴ And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.¹⁵ Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also*

transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.

2 Timothy 4:3-4, *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;⁴ and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.*

1 Timothy 1:19-20, *having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck,²⁰ of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.*

2 Peter 2:1, *But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.*

Jude is concerned about it.

John is concerned about it in his three epistles.

It is all through the Scripture.

We must beware of the enemies who masquerade as friends. Paul tells the Philippians that they are enemies of the cross of Christ because they're very subtle.

The church lacks discernment!

V 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:*

"For many walk"

Walk being the idea of daily conduct, manner of life, course of living, this is their pattern.

Probably refers to times when he was with the Philippians and he was repeatedly telling them about people who would come along outwardly identifying with Christ but who would be enemies of the true gospel.

Paul was ever and always in a warning mode.

Acts 20:31, *Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.*

What an amazing statement?

For three years night and day I warned everyone with tears about false teachers, false leaders, false doctrine.

Acts 20:32, *"So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.*

You are protected by the Word of God.

If you don't know the Word, you are not protected.

In Romans he talked about having sorrow and continuous heaviness of heart over the lostness of Israel.

In **Acts 20**, he said I warned you night and day with tears.

But this is the only time he says as I write I cry, I weep.

His heart is broken.

He grieved over the lostness of people.

He grieved over the encroachment of false teachers that disrupted the church and brought a reproach on the name of Christ and led people astray.

Paul is literally weeping as he recognizes that they will infiltrate Philippi and they will try to wreak havoc in the church.

He says I now tell you even weeping. A passionate and tender-hearted man. He loved genuinely and it pained him when they are lost.

Why is he weeping?

Because these enemies of the cross were lost, for he did have sorrow over lost people.

He could have been weeping because he could see the terrible impact that they would have on the weak in the church and it was those same kind of tears that we noted in Acts 20, tears for the church because it could be so easily led astray by false teachers.

So, whether it was the damnation of the enemies or whether it was the destructive impact of their effort, it caused him to weep. He loved the church. He loved the Philippians because he loved the Christ of the church and the Christ of the Philippians.

Paul could see these enemies trying to seduce them and it broke his heart. After all, the Philippian church was the first church in Europe, a sort of beachhead for another world to reach. And it was so important that they stay pure and not get messed up.

When you look at the church today it should bring tears in your eyes.

Who are these enemies of the cross of Christ that Paul is so grieved about?

Who are they?

Paul doesn't tell us.

We have two options.

They are either Jews or Gentiles.

1. Judaizers

If they were Jews, we could surmise that they were Jews who somehow identified with the church and yet were still enemies of the cross.

What kind of Jews would those be?

Those would be the Jews known as the Judaizers.

What was their agenda?

They didn't deny Christ and

They didn't deny the gospel,

They just said it was insufficient to save.

It didn't go far enough. You had to be circumcised, physical surgery, and you had to keep the Mosaic law.

So, they said Christ plus the law.

We accept Christ, we believe in His death, we believe in His resurrection, but that's not enough to save, you must add circumcision and keeping of the law, the ritual.

Paul has been talking about the Judaizers.

Philippians 3:2, *Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation!*

Called them dogs, evil workers, and false circumcision.

- They thought they are doing what is right but on the contrary they were doing evil.
- They thought they had a proper circumcision, all they had is a mutilation.

- They thought they are sheep, but the truth is they are dogs.

So, Paul blasted the Judaizers who come in and said what Christ did was not good enough to save you, but you also need to add work.

That is an enemy of the cross of Christ.

When Paul uses the word enemies of the cross of Christ, the concept of the cross of Christ means all the atoning work accomplished on the cross.

- It's not just the wood.
- It's not just the death.
- It's the cross work of Christ.

It signifies the whole of what Christ did there as the sacrifice for sin who alone could provide salvation for sinful men.

That is the heart of our faith.

1 Corinthians 2:2, *For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.*

We are saved by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ plus nothing.

We believe in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and by that faith God imputes forgiveness to us and righteousness.

But these Judaizers said that's not enough, you must add work to that!

Any of you who were raised in Roman Catholicism would experience that kind of thinking.

No one in Roman Catholicism would deny Christ,

- they wouldn't even deny the deity of Christ,
- they wouldn't deny the cross of Christ,
- they wouldn't deny that He died as a substitute for sin,
- they wouldn't deny the resurrection,

but they would say that's not enough, you must do certain works.

You must accomplish certain spiritual deeds.

You must earn your way in.

They would talk about grace and yet they are very definite works by which you earn favour with God.

So, the enemies of the cross don't necessarily deny the cross, they add to it.

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

Judaizers end is destruction because they are not really saved. The word end, **telos** means their ultimate destiny.

Why?

Because to believe everything about Christ and to believe that it's all true and believe you must do something to be saved is to be damned forever.

Anything beyond Christ is a damning belief. So, they are headed for destruction.

When it says, "Whose God is their appetite," means that they really worship their flesh, and its accomplishments.

They are very sensual in a religious sense. It could even be that that could include their appetite in the sense that they are into dietary laws and the Jews had a whole series of dietary laws which they prescribed as part of the observance of the law necessary for salvation.

V 19, whose glory is in their shame

They boast in the very works of which they should be ashamed.

Because the best of their works are nothing but filthy rags.

Here they are boasting in their accomplishments and they really ought to be ashamed of their accomplishments because apart from what God has wrought in us everything is filthy rags.

Paul says everything is manure, in verse 8.

V 19, *who set their mind on earthly things.*

The Judaizers are into ceremonies, festivals, feasts, sacrifices, new moons, and everything is about physical.

They believe they must achieve something in their flesh and thus they are the enemies of the cross.

Be very aware of that.

- We cannot coexist with those people.
- We cannot embrace them.

The church had better get some discernment if it finds itself following people who believe that Christ is not sufficient, you have to add some human work, they are damning their own souls, to have to achieve something for salvation.

2. Gentiles

There were in the church groups of people who said, "Yes, we believe in Christ, we believe in the gospel of Christ, we believe that He died for our sins and all of that," but they had a dualistic philosophy.

They later became known as the Gnostics.
They had a dualistic philosophy.

They believed in that dualistic viewpoint that says spirit is good and matter is evil.

We are Christians in the spirit. Body is matter is evil, therefore what your body does doesn't matter at all.

It's inconsequential.

That's their basic philosophy.

So, they would say if matter is essentially evil, then the body is essentially evil. If the body is evil, it is going to be evil no matter what you do with it. Since it is going to be evil no matter what you do with it, glut it, satiate it, don't worry about it.

- Be a glutton,
- be a homosexual,
- be a fornicator,
- be an adulterer,
- be a drunkard,

It doesn't matter because it only effects the body not the spirit.

That dualism went right into Gnosticism, and in theology antinomianism.

I am a Christian, I received Jesus, He changed my spirit but it's inconsequential how I live, I live any way I want to live, this is the statement of Gnostics.

- The Jews said it's the gospel plus
- The Gentiles said it's the gospel minus.

When Jesus died, He took care of our sins in the spiritual dimension, but it doesn't matter how we live.

These people subtracted from the Gospel while the Judaizers added to.

They have infiltrated the church and they say it doesn't matter how you live, you are saved anyway. We just believe in Jesus at one point, we get fire insurance out of hell, we live any way we want, after all, it's only the body, who cares?

Many pastors that have taught that.

Why discipline the flesh?

The flesh is the flesh, a body is the body, it's going to be evil all the time anyway, let it go, don't worry about it.

That kind of thinking still exists.

When I sin, am I not still one with Christ and God's imputed His righteousness to me?

Yes.

But what do they say?

I can't displease God no matter what I do.

Is that true?

2 Corinthians 5:17, *"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature."*

There are people who are going to come like this and they're going to say, "Oh, we love Christ, we love the cross, we believe all of that. Now it doesn't necessarily affect our lives, we may be drunks, alcoholics, homosexuals, fornicators, adulterers, group sex participants. We may be into pornography, we may be in to stealing large sums of money, but when we get on TV and smile at you, we preach Christ.

You see them exposed!

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

This is the doom they face. Their eternal destiny is sealed in damnation. They will be in everlasting torment in hell.

Why?

They are not true Christians.

How do you know they are not true Christians?

Because they subtracted from the gospel.

They subtracted the transforming essence of it. They have a useless kind of faith that never brought a true transformation so that they were new creatures desiring what was right in the inner man.

Church watch out.

Watch out for the people who come along and are the legalists who add all the stuff.

Watch out for the people who come along and are the libertines who subtract the virtue.

V 19, "*Whose God is their appetite.*"

They are driven by their desires, their drives, they are sensual. They live off unrestrained sensual pleasure.

That is typical of false leaders who are libertines, who name the name of Jesus, say we are the friends of the cross, but in truth are the enemies of the cross headed for destruction and you can tell they are because they have some kind of a gospel that has no virtue in it, no holiness in it, no transformation in it, no love of godliness in it.

They are driven by their sensual desire.

V 19, whose glory is in their shame

The disgrace is that they boast about what they should be disgraced for. The very thing that should shame them, they boast in it.

It's incredible.

1 Corinthians 5:1-2, *It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—that a man has his father's wife!² And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you.*

This is a libertine.

This is the way I live, but you know what I am covered by the blood, I am saved, it doesn't matter what I do. I can do whatever I want.

They boast in the very thing that shames them.

If you ever meet a libertine person, they will celebrate and recite for you all the things that they are free to do.

V 19, who set their mind on earthly things.

In the case of the Judaizers, they're into the earthly ceremonies, rituals, and etc.

In the case of the libertines they love the world.

James 4:4, *Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.*

1 John 2:15, *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

You ought to be able to tell the enemies of the cross.

Don't listen to what they say, look closely.

Do they add to the gospel and say it's not enough; you need this to be saved?

Do they take away and say it's too much, it's too much, all you must do is believe? It doesn't matter how you live, it's only the flesh?

Beware.

The church will be more discerning.

The lack of discernment is causing people in the church to just run after all kinds of people who are enemies of the cross.

If you are going to pursue the goal, you have got to follow the right example, avoid the wrong example!