



CAPITOL COMMISSION

TO: *LEGISLATORS / SPOUSES/STAFF*
FROM: *DAN FILE*
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WYOMING

Phil. 3:18-19 DO NOT BE DECEIVED

P.O. Box 1088, Lake City, CO, 81235-1088 / www.capitolcom.org / dan.file@capitolcom.org / Cell 303.345.8830 / Off 970.944.1088

When we become a Christian, we are a new creation with a new heart. We have a new standing with God and are accepted by God because we have the righteousness of Christ covering us. We have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit Who is the power of God at work in us and yet...we have not arrived. We still have an unredeemed flesh to struggle with and we can still be tempted and sin. It's a battle and a race to the finish. Salvation is the start of that race with a lifelong pursuit of God to become like Christ. We must "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 3:17) We must follow the examples of the faithful before us to pursue the prize of the upward call of God with all diligence till we stand before the Lord one day. But we must be careful to avoid the many ungodly examples and so Paul warns believers again to not be deceived.

I. THE MATURE BELIEVER...DO NOT BE DECEIVED! PHILIPPIANS 3:18-19

"Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. 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: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things." Philippians 3:17-19

Paul has often warned the Philippians of the "enemies of the cross of Christ" and their walk is not to be imitated. Paul's continual warnings in all his letters suggest that the "enemies of the cross" are not so easily identified and appear more as angels of light and messengers of Jesus Christ. Paul issues another strong warning here not to follow their example.

A. DO NOT BE DECEIVED BY ENEMIES OF THE CROSS PHILIPPIANS 3:18A

"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

1. "FOR MANY WALK"- PHILIPPIANS 3:18A

"many," Greek word "**polus**," means largely abundant, common.

These "enemies of the cross" are not only common, but also largely abundant. There are many who are enemies of Christ. They are common people we know and come in contact with. We are not to pursue the "many" but discern godly examples to follow. These could be members of churches and even serve as elders or deacons in leadership positions, thereby placing

themselves as models to be imitated. Their "walk" refers to their daily conduct and it is not to be followed.

2. "OF WHOM I HAVE TOLD YOU OFTEN"- PHILIPPIANS 3:18B

Paul obviously is repeating his warning to not be deceived by the deceptive false teachers who appear as true believers but are actually "enemies of the cross". Back in Philippians 1:28 Paul refers to them as adversaries. Paul warned the church in Ephesus to be on guard against "savage wolves" in Acts 20:28-31. Paul and the other New Testament writers constantly warned believers to not be deceived by the false. And here once again, Paul reminds the Philippians to not be deceived or surprised by those who say they are Christians but aren't.

3. "I TELL YOU EVEN WEEPING"- PHILIPPIANS 3:18C

Paul cared deeply for the lost, even those who were "enemies of the cross". Though these were false teachers leading many astray with their false teachings, Paul was grieved by their fate. And I believe Paul was just as deeply troubled by the destructive impact their deception would have on the church and the reproach brought to the name of Christ. This verse reveals Paul's heart and appropriate response to the "enemies of the cross".

4. "THEY ARE ENEMIES OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST"- PHILIPPIANS 3:18D

As we have already seen, Paul's refers to false teachers, savage wolves, and adversaries as "enemies of the cross". In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus warned his disciples to "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits." (Matthew 7:15-16) Later, Jesus exhorts his disciples "Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many." (Matthew 24:4-5) John issues a strong warning in 1 John 4:1-3, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God; every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world."

The warnings extend throughout Scripture to be on guard and do not be deceived by the "enemies of the cross." It is apparent that believers can easily be deceived and that causes Paul great concern for their welfare and ours. The

book of 2 Peter focuses on warnings about the false teachers and then concludes with a most imperative exhortation for all of us to pay heed to: *“You, therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”* (2 Peter 3:17-18)

How are we to be kept from falling and being deceived?? There is only one way; by growing in grace and deep in the knowledge of our Lord. We must study Scripture to learn truth, growing deeper in our walk with the Lord will result in greater discernment. We must **pursue** Jesus Christ and **press toward** the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Jesus Christ as Paul has just taught in the verses prior. It is crucial that we know what we believe and live it. Only then can we keep from being deceived. The church is in danger today because many have a shallow faith and don't know what Scripture teaches. Only a faith that is rooted deep in the truths of Jesus Christ will discern the false.

B. DO NOT BE DECEIVED...ENEMIES OF THE CROSS DESCRIBED— PHILIPPIANS 3:19

“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

1. “WHOSE END IS DESTRUCTION”- PHILIPPIANS 3:19A

“**end**,” Greek word “**telos**,” and means the conclusion, or final.

“**destruction**,” Greek word “**apoleia**,” and means damnable, to perish in hell, separated from God.

Paul uses a very strong word to describe the final conclusion of the life of the false teacher and all have the same end. Because they have rejected salvation found through the cross of Jesus Christ, their ultimate destiny will be eternal punishment in hell. (Matthew 25:46 and 2 Thessalonians 1:9) Remember, these are the ones who look spiritual on the outside and say the right things but add human works to the cross of Christ thinking they can merit their own salvation in some way. Don't be deceived.

2. “WHOSE GOD IS THEIR APPETITE”- PHILIPPIANS 3:19B

“**belly**,” Greek word “**koilia**,” is the word we get colitis from and means our insides, our heart, our stomach.

Paul says that the enemies of the cross pursue themselves instead of Jesus

Christ. Even though they might acknowledge God or go to church, they really are only looking out for themselves and their own interests. Paul does not want us to be fooled by those who say they believe in Jesus but are living for their own desires. True believers pursue Jesus Christ and He is pre-eminent to all else, including themselves. But the enemies of the cross serve and pursue their own sensual, fleshly, bodily desires.

3. “WHOSE GLORY IS THEIR SHAME”- PHILIPPIANS 3:19C

“**glory**,” Greek word “**doxo**,” and means a persons honor or that which catches the eye, attracts attention.

“**shame**,” Greek word “**aischune**,” and means that which leads to being shunned or that which is dishonor.

Paul is clearly teaching that what these people do to attract attention, or catch one's eye actually brings them dishonor instead of honor. What they do to boast or gain attention is actually what will be their shunning in the eye of God and brings dishonor to them.

4. “WHO SET THEIR MIND ON EARTHLY THINGS”- PHILIPPIANS 3:19D

“**set their mind**,” Greek word “**phroeno**,” and means to think the same things.

The enemies of the cross think the same things as the world does. They set their mind on the world and not God and His Word. They say they love God but will not submit to Him or His Word. They serve God on their own terms and are not followers of Christ but followers of themselves. James 4:4 says, *“Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God?”* What about you? Give serious consideration to these questions in light of your own life:

- *What do you seek after? What is the habit of your life?*
- *What do you submit your life to?*
- *Who do you follow and pursue? Christ or yourself?*
- *How will you keep from being deceived?*