



'Back to Basics for Believers Series'

Sermons in the Epistle to the Philippians

Message 18 – 'Walking in the Shadow of the Cross'

Philippians 3: 17 - 19

Paul's letter to the Philippians in these last few verses has been a hard and challenging message, that they are to live in such a manner that it would have great impact on those around them. He has identified enemies of the cross within their midst, and how that the Philippians are to pursue Christ, for to be an enemy of the cross is destruction. He has challenged them to live for Christ in a way that sees sacrifice, real endeavour, real commitment, and real submission. As we can see in these verses he identifies:

1. The Examples - We must mark those who walk as examples, primarily because of that, they DO walk as examples. Paul is saying that there are examples to follow, those who diligently seek to live in a manner pleasing to their Lord. They are dynamic people who have a real sense of heavenly perspective, a closeness to the Lord, and a determination to live a life set apart. Paul is saying that this is the pattern that we need to follow. That we too need to forget the past, reach (strain) forth to the things that the Lord has for us ahead, and to press on, to press on towards the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. As with Paul, we will never achieve perfection in this life, but as believers we are to follow Christ and seek to be like Him. Paul's point is, that when we someone who displays these characteristics, with dynamic commitment and spiritual energy, that person is an example to us. The question is to both you and I, are we examples to those around us? Would Paul have included us in the 'others' to follow list? If not, why not? Every believer should be able to say in theory, 'follow me' – that is to say follow my seeking after Christ – my whole desire is to be like Christ and to know Him and the power of His resurrection and may share his sufferings becoming like him in his death!

2. The Enemies of the Cross - A vital thing to say is this, that every unbeliever, nominal, sympathetic, aggressive, antagonistic, apathetic, whatever, is an enemy of the cross. One cannot be on the fence with the Lord Jesus Christ, either you are for Him, trusting Him for your salvation, and committed to living in the light of who He is and what He has done, or you are against Him. Paul weeps for those he knows are opposed to Christ, who reject the gospel of Christ, and who invite on themselves the consequences of their sin. Their end is destruction (apoleia), this means that a person will be destroyed and devastated and condemned to a worthless existence. He will suffer waste and loss and ruin forever and ever. Their god is their belly (koilia), this speaks of how their appetite and their desire is for the physical pleasures of this world. Their glory is their shame, this simply means that those things that are an abomination in the eyes of a holy God are the very things that men boast in. They herald and laud their sin and what should be to their shame. They keep their mind on earthly things, this is just another way of saying that a person is worldly. He focuses his mind, energy and effort on the things of the world. I plead with you, if you are an enemy of the cross, I am pointing you to Christ and urge you to repent, to come to Christ, to receive forgiveness and the gift of faith that you may be found in Him, safe in His arms, and with the promise of eternal life.



Penzance Baptist Church

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Pastor Jonathan Stobbs