

Forsake Fleshly Confidence

Philippians 3:1-3

1 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. For me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but for you it is safe. 2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation! 3 For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,

Good Christian people are in danger. In danger of going to hell.

Now I know that some of you are saying wait a minute. I thought that once you become a Christian you are always a Christian.

Christian is a term that we use to characterize people and is an evaluation that we make not God.

So we look at people and how they live and we determine in our mind if they are Christians or not.

But the best way to understand it is that a child of God will always be a child of God.

But people who are trying to live their lives in order to measure up for heaven are not going to make it.

As a matter of fact, in this letter Paul has warned the Philippians over and over again about these people and now he does it again. So let us look at this passage and draw some modern day parallels to this passage.

- I. Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.
 - A. At least 10 times in this letter Paul tells these believers to rejoice.
 1. Why it that.
 2. They lived in difficult times.
 3. They were in for the normal trials of life as well as persecution.
 4. There were those in the church that were doing the very best to turn people away from the truth.
 5. The whole of Roman society was not secular but pagan in worship.
 6. There were a whole host of reasons for them to not rejoice.
 - B. But our hope is not in this world.
 1. That does not mean that we are so heavenly minded that we are of no earthly good.
 2. But it does mean that we are not trying to build a kingdom here that will be done away.
 - a. I often wonder about these people who spend hours upon hours to

- D. That is one of my jobs.
 - 1. To tell you the same things over and over again.
 - 2. We are leaky vessels and we forget the things of God.
 - 3. So we need the counsel of a good church and godly people to fortify us against the world with all its corrupt influences.
- III. Beware of dogs
 - A. What a statement.
 - 1. You do have to remember that Paul is not saying this in the sense we have today that a dog is mans best friend.
 - 2. In Paul's day Jews especially did not have dogs.
 - 3. Dogs were walking garbage disposals and Jews did not have them for pets.
 - 4. In Paul's day to call someone a dog was a serious slam, as it is still today.
 - B. He is trying to warn them about this same group in the church, IN THE CHURCH, who are leading the congregation astray.
- IV. Beware of evil workers
 - A. These people are not just misguided but are workers of evil
 - B. These were religious leaders.
 - 1. One of the greatest shocks to the study of church history is that it was the clergy that led the congregations away from the truth.
 - 2. Just because a fellow goes into the ministry does not mean that he is good.
 - 3. 2 Cor 11:13-15 13 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. NKJV
- V. Beware of the mutilation!
 - A. This has to do with circumcision.
 - 1. There were those who still taught that righteousness could not be found outside a strict adherence to the Old Testament Jewish codes, particularly circumcision.
 - 2. Here Paul calls it mutilation for really that is all that it was, since for Christians it can have no spiritual significance.
 - B. This fact is what makes infant baptism so wrong.

1. Those who teach that baptism replaced circumcision as a covenant sign fall off their own props when they read what Paul said of circumcision.
 2. Gal 5:4-6 4 You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.5 For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love. NKJV
 3. Gal 6:15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation. NKJV
- C. John 1:11-13 (NKJV) 11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

VI. For we are the circumcision,

A. Who worship God in the Spirit

1. We do good works but it is not by our good works that we approach God.
2. Jesus is our only access to the Father
3. John 14:6 (NKJV) 6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

B. Rejoice in Christ Jesus,

C. And have no confidence in the flesh,

1. You will never do enough.
2. You will never be good enough.
3. You will never be clean enough.
4. You will never be perfect of yourself.
5. You can not because you are a sinner in need of a Savior.
6. He is your only Hope.

D. So when you rejoice only in Jesus then you have it.

1. Could my tears forever flow
 Could my zeal no languor know
 These for sin could not atone
 You must save and You alone
 In my hand no price I bring,
 Simply to the cross I cling.