

**PRESSING TOWARD THE GOAL**  
**Philippians 3:1-16**  
**4/13/03**

The Purpose:

That people not be confuse with a false gospel.

That people follow Paul's example and press on toward the goal of the upward call of God.

The Good News:

We have the hope of the resurrection and of the upward call of God.

I have recently become concerned that some of our former members who have moved to another city are now attending a church that is distorting the gospel.

Salvation is progressive- it does not take place at a point of time.

You are saved by receiving Christ and then living a certain way.

That is a false gospel. The same type of false gospel that the apostle Paul was continually confronting.

Whenever the apostle Paul left a city a group of false teachers (Judaizers) would come into town with a false gospel- a gospel of salvation by faith plus works.

Same God, same Bible, and same stance on social issues.

Recognized Jesus as God's son

They were social conservatives who were opposed to the prostitution, homosexuality, abortion, and infanticide which were prevalent in the Roman culture.

No one closer to the views of the apostolic church in the first century culture.

Only one problem- they corrupted the gospel message.

**1. Beware Of False Teachers Who Teach That Salvation Depends Upon Religious Rituals. 3:1-2**

Dogs, evil workers, and the false circumcision are descriptions of false teachers who were telling the Philippians that they had to be circumcised and keep the OT law in order to be saved.

- **Dogs** is used to describe the false teachers in Isa 56:10-11; Rev 22:15
  - ◆ It is comparing the false teachers to unclean animals.
- **Evil workers**
  - ◆ They were thought to be righteous, religious people but were really evil because they lead people to hell.
    - ◇ **2 Corinthians 11:13-15** For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. 14 No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness . . .
  - ◆ Paul points out that their supposed good works were really evil.
    - ◇ They were proclaiming a false gospel which emphasized salvation by works and ritual.
- **False circumcision**
  - ◆ They emphasized that bodily circumcision was essential to salvation.
  - ◆ God emphasizes that it is the inward “circumcision” of the heart that counts.
    - ◇ **Romans 2:28-29** For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. 29 But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.

***There are false teachers today who teach that salvation requires religious rituals such as baptism or confirmation.***

- ***Paul warns us to beware of those who add religious rituals to the gospel.***

◆ *In an age of tolerance and religious pluralism we must remember that not all gospels are true and not all salvation messages lead to heaven.*

◇ *There is one gospel that is true and all others are false.*

**2. True Teachers Put No Confidence In The Things We Do In Our Flesh. 3:3**

**a. They emphasize that true worship is in the Spirit. v. 3a**

- Holy Spirit or human spirit?

◆ **John 3:23-24**

◆ **Romans 1:9** For God, whom I serve in my spirit in the *preaching of the* gospel of His Son, is my witness *as to* how unceasingly I make mention of you,

◆ **Jude 1:20** But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit,

**b. They (true teachers) glory in Christ Jesus, not in who they are or what they have done. v. 3b**

**c. They put no confidence in their own works or abilities. v. 3c**

- Galatians 5:16-17

- John 15:4-5 "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither *can* you unless you abide in Me. 5 "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

- Zechariah 4:6

**3. Paul's Confidence Was Not In Who He Was Or What He Had Done. 3:4-6**

**a. Not in religious ritual vv. 4-5a**

- Paul wasn't counting on the fact that he had been circumcised in accordance with the OT law
  - ◆ *Likewise don't think that you are saved because you have been baptized, confirmed, or joined a church.*

**b. Not in his family background v. 5b**

- Paul didn't count on his special family history for his salvation.
  - ◆ *Likewise, it doesn't matter if you grew up in a Christian home or that your father was a pastor.*

**c. Not in the religious group to which he belonged v. 5c**

- Paul wasn't counting on the fact that he belonged to the most conservative, Bible-believing group of his day.
  - ◆ *It doesn't matter to which denomination or church group you belong.*
  - ◇ *Many believe that they go to the one true church and that will be what saves them.*

**d. Not in his zeal or sincerity v. 6a**

- Paul had sincerely believed that he was doing God's will by persecuting the church.
- He was sincere and zealous.
  - ◆ *Zeal and personal sincerity won't get you to heaven.*
  - ◇ *You, like Paul, can be sincerely wrong and headed for hell.*
  - ◇ *Romans 9:30-10:4*
  - ◆ *Zeal and personal sincerity won't get you to heaven.*

**e. Not in his own righteousness or goodness v. 6b**

- Titus 3:5
- Romans 11:6

4. He Willingly Rejected All These False Hopes In Order To Gain Salvation By Faith In Christ. 3:7-11

vv. 7-8 He counted them as wasted time and garbage

- They have no value when it comes to salvation.

v. 9 When it comes to salvation, all that matters in knowing Christ.

- It is not by keeping the works of the law.

◆ Romans 3:28

vv. 10-11 Paul counts all these things as loss in order that He may know those things that accompany true salvation.

- To know Christ

◆ John 17:3

- To experience the power of His resurrection in life

◆ **Romans 8:11** But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

◆ **Ephesians 1:19-20** and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. *These are* in accordance with the working of the strength of His might 20 which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead

- To join into the fellowship of His suffering

◆ cf 1:29

◆ Colossians 1:24 Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions.

- To be conformed to His death
- Ultimately to attain to the resurrection from the dead after he dies

The following is an excerpt from an actual letter written by a young communist to his fiancée, breaking off their engagement. The girl's pastor sent the letter to Billy Graham, who published it a number of years ago. The communist student wrote:

- We communists have a high casualty rate. We are the ones who get shot and hung and ridiculed and fired from our jobs and in every other way made as uncomfortable as possible. A certain percentage of us get killed or imprisoned. We live in virtual poverty. We turn back to the party every penny we make above what is absolutely necessary to keep us alive. We communists do not have the time or the money for many movies, or concerts, or T-bone steaks, or decent homes, or new cars. We have been described as fanatics. We are fanatics. Our lives are dominated by one great overshadowing factor: the struggle for world communism. We communists have a philosophy of life which no amount of money can buy. We have a cause to fight for, a definite purpose in life. We subordinate our petty personal selves into a great movement of humanity; and if our personal lives seem hard or our egos appear to suffer through subordination to the party, then we are adequately compensated by the thought that each of us in his small way is contributing to something new and true and better for mankind.
- There is one thing which I am in dead earnest about, and that is the communist cause. It is my life, my business, my religion, my hobby, my sweetheart, my wife, my mistress, and my bread and meat. I work at it in the daytime and dream of it at night. Its hold on me grows, not lessens, as time goes on; therefore, I cannot carry on a friendship, a love affair, or even a conversation without relating it to this force which both drives and guides my life. I evaluate people, looks, ideas, and actions according to how they affect the

communist cause, and by their attitude toward it. I've already been in jail because of my ideals, and if necessary, I'm ready to go before a firing squad.

**5. Paul's Goal Was To Press On For The Prize Of The Upward Call Of God. 3:12-14**

Paul had not yet become perfect.

- That won't happen until he is called into heaven.

Paul had not accomplished all that Christ had saved him to do.

- Ephesians 2:10

But Paul was pressing on for the goal.

- The ultimate prize being the upward call of God.
  - ◆ Found only in Christ Jesus.
- The Bible mentions several crowns that we receive
  - ◆ 1 Thessalonians 2:19 crown of exaltation
  - ◆ 2 Tim 4:8 crown of righteousness for those who love His appearing
  - ◆ James 1:12; Rev 2:20 crown of life for those who love Him.
  - ◆ 1 Peter 5:4 crown of glory for faithful elders

As he reaches for that future prize he forgets what lies behind.

- He is not resting on the laurels of his past accomplishments
- He is not discouraged by his past failures.
- He is not consumed with guilt and shame over his past sins
- He is not caught up in remembering the good old days.
  - ◆ **Will Rogers:** Don't let yesterday use up too much of today.

- ◆ **A Hallmark Card:** Sometimes we have to let go of the past in order to enjoy the present, and be able to dream of the future.

**6. We Too Should Have The Same Attitude As Paul. 3:15-16**

**a. To beware of false teachers and false gospels.**

- Those who add to the gospel
- The Big Idea: Genuine salvation requires that we recognize that all of our good works and religious activity are worthless as a means of getting us to heaven.

- ◆ We are saved by faith alone in Christ alone.

- ◇ Baptism, confirmation, church membership, confession, tithing, church work and activities and even trying to keep the 10 commandments or golden rule won't wash away our sins or get us to heaven.

**b. To be saved by faith alone in Christ alone. 1 Peter 2:24**

- 1 Peter 2:24 and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.

**c. To live our lives pressing for the prize of the upward call of God**

- To accomplish what Christ set out for us to do.
  - ◆ A large number of people over 95 were asked one question The question was: If you could live your life over again, what would you do differently?
    - ◇ 1. I would reflect more
    - ◇ 2. I would risk more.
    - ◇ 3. I would do more things that would live on after I'm dead.



- **2 Chronicles 15:7** "But you, be strong and do not lose courage, for there is reward for your work."
- **Galatians 6:9** Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.
- **Hebrews 6:10** For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints.

The Purpose:

That people not be confused with a false gospel.

That people follow Paul's example and press on toward the goal of the upward call of God.

The Good News:

We have the hope of the resurrection and the upward call of God.

What we do in this life does count.

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