

**True Joy - The Wisdom of Philippians**  
**Rejoice in the Lord - Friends of the Cross (Phil 3:17-21)**  
**6-20-10**  
**Scripture Reading - Phil 3:17-21**

According to Jesus, there are two types of people in the world, those who are with Him and those who are against Him. There is no in between.

- **Matthew 12:30 (ESV)**  
<sup>30</sup> Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.
- **Matthew 10:34-36 (ESV)**  
<sup>34</sup> "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. <sup>35</sup> For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. <sup>36</sup> And a person's enemies will be those of his own household.
- **John 15:18-19 (ESV)**  
<sup>18</sup> "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. <sup>19</sup> If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

The camp we are in is determined by whether or not we *trust and have chosen to follow* Jesus.

- **Matthew 4:18-19 (ESV)**  
<sup>18</sup> While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. <sup>19</sup> And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."
  - o Jesus confronted Peter and Andrew and called them to follow Him. At that moment they had to make a choice, and that choice was determined by whether or not they *trusted* Him.
- Choosing to follow Jesus takes trust because it means being willing leave everything else behind.

o **Luke 14:25-33 (ESV)**

<sup>25</sup> Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them, <sup>26</sup> "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. <sup>27</sup> Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. <sup>28</sup> For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? <sup>29</sup> Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, <sup>30</sup> saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' <sup>31</sup> Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? <sup>32</sup> And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. <sup>33</sup> So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

- We know that Peter and Andrew trusted Jesus because Matthew 4:20 says this...

o **Matthew 4:20 (ESV)**

<sup>20</sup> Immediately they left their nets and followed him.

We also know that the camp we are in is ultimately determined *not by what we say, but by what we do*, and that it is possible to be deceived into thinking we Jesus' side and not be.

- **Matthew 7:21-23 (ESV)**

<sup>21</sup> "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. <sup>22</sup> On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' <sup>23</sup> And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'

Finally, we know that determining which camp we are in is vitally important because it determines our eternal destiny.

- See Matthew 7:21-23 above.

In his letter to the Philippians Paul talks much about these two camps.

- In the camp of being for Jesus, Paul puts himself, Timothy, and Epaphroditus and the rest of the Philippians.
- In the camp of being against Jesus, Paul puts at least two groups of people so far. The “opponents” of 1:28 and the “evil doers” of 3:2.
  - **Philippians 1:27-28 (ESV)**  
<sup>27</sup> Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, <sup>28</sup> and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God.
  - **Philippians 3:1-3 (ESV)**  
<sup>1</sup> Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you. <sup>2</sup> Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. <sup>3</sup> For we are the real circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh—
- In our text for today, Paul adds a third group, which he calls “enemies of the cross” in 3:18.
  - **Philippians 3:17-19 (ESV)**  
<sup>17</sup> Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. <sup>18</sup> For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. <sup>19</sup> Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things.
- Though the first two groups are pretty easily identifiable, the third group is more difficult.
  - Possibilities include...
    - The evil doing Judaizers of 3:2
    - Licenscious, professing Christians who pass through Philippi

- Professing Philippians Christians who have fallen away
- Though we may never know the true identity of this third group, Paul tells us much about them and warns the Philippians to steer clear.

What does Paul tell us?

- 1) There were many of them.
  - a. **Philippians 3:18 (ESV)**  
<sup>18</sup>For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ.
  - b. Jesus said the same
    - i. **Matthew 7:13-14 (NIV)**  
<sup>13</sup>"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. <sup>14</sup>But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.
- 2) Paul spoke about them often.
  - a. **Philippians 3:18 (ESV)**  
<sup>18</sup>For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ.
  - b. Paul obviously felt it was important to remind the Philippians often of those in the opposing camp because he says the same thing in 3:1.
    - i. **Philippians 3:1-2 (ESV)**  
<sup>1</sup>Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you. <sup>2</sup>Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh.
- 3) Paul was saddened by them.
  - a. **Philippians 3:18 (ESV)**  
<sup>18</sup>For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you *even with tears*, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ.
  - b. Could be a lot of reasons for this...

- i. They opposed Christ
  - ii. Their end is destruction
  - iii. They were on the right track and got off it
- c. Whatever the reason, Paul was grieved, and we should be too.

4) Their end was destruction.

- a. **Philippians 3:19 (ESV)**  
<sup>19</sup>*Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things.*
- b. Paul says the same of the “opponents” in 1:28
  - i. **Philippians 1:28 (ESV)**  
<sup>28</sup>and not frightened in anything by your opponents. *This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God.*
- c. “Destruction” is most certainly a reference to eternal separation from God in hell.
  - i. **2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 (ESV)**  
<sup>7</sup>and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels <sup>8</sup>in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. <sup>9</sup>They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might,

5) Their god is their belly.

- a. **Philippians 3:19 (ESV)**  
<sup>19</sup>*Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things.*
- b. They are controlled by their fleshly appetites.
  - i. **Ephesians 2:1-3 (NIV)**  
<sup>1</sup>As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, <sup>2</sup>in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are

disobedient. <sup>3</sup> All of us also lived among them at one time, *gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts.* Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

6) They glory in their shame.

a. **Philippians 3:19 (ESV)**

<sup>19</sup> Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and *they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things.*

b. **Romans 6:20-21 (ESV)**

<sup>20</sup> When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. <sup>21</sup> But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? The end of those things is death.

c. Sexual immorality would be a great example

d. For me it was my idolatry

7) Their minds are set on earthly things.

a. **Philippians 3:19 (ESV)**

<sup>19</sup> Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, *with minds set on earthly things.*

b. A person's thought are the best way to determine where their heart is.

i. **1 John 2:15-17 (ESV)**

<sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> For all that is in the world — the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions—is not from the Father but is from the world. <sup>17</sup> And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

c. Everyone's mind will wander to earthly things from time to time. The question is, "Where is your mind set?"

d. If your mind is set on earthly things, be deliberate about setting your mind on things above.

i. Car driving and lawn mowing

In contrast to the enemies of the cross whose minds are set on earthly things because they don't love Jesus, friends of the cross set their minds on things above *because they do*.

- **Philippians 3:20-21 (ESV)**

<sup>20</sup> But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup> who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

- o Note the future orientation. Paul was always thinking ahead.
- o We should long for Christ's return.
  - "There has not been one day in the last forty years that I did not look forward to Jesus' return." (from one of my commentaries)

Finally, in verse 17 Paul encourages the Philippians that the way to avoid being influenced by the enemies of the cross is to keep an eye on its friends.

- **Philippians 3:17 (ESV)**

<sup>17</sup> Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us.

- o Paul encouraged his disciples time and again to follow Him as he followed Christ.
  - We should all be followers of Paul!
- o But here, Paul also encourages the Philippians to keep their eyes on those who are walking according to his example.
  - I think this is significant because it emphasizes *the importance of proximity in discipleship*.
  - We need to follow Christ, we need to follow Paul and the other apostles, we need to follow other great Christians from church history who have gone before us, *but we also need to have someone to follow who we can actually talk to and live life with*.
    - Each one teach one

This is great advice for all of us, but especially for fathers.

- As the God appointed heads of our households, God has called us to be the primary example setters for our families. Our wives and children are looking to us, and we need to come through.
- This can be totally overwhelming. Especially because we are constantly failing.
- We're constantly tempted to make a god of our belly, to glory in our shame, and *to set our minds on earthly things*.
  - In fact, I think our God-given ability to set our minds on things is one of our greatest strengths and greatest weaknesses as men.
    - Having a one track mind can be a good thing if it's on the right track.
    - If it's not, we're in trouble.
      - Keeps men from coming to Christ
      - Keeps men from growing in Christ
- If we're to overcome the temptation to set our minds on earthly things and thereby be the leaders and example setters God has called us to be, *we need help!*
  - Constant prayer
  - Loving, respectful , encouragement
  - Each other