

Last time we saw how the Apostle Paul gave us examples of who to follow and mimic in our Christian walk (Phil 3:17). Starkly contrasting these, we are now faced with a description of those we must not follow or imitate.

In Philippians 3:18-19 Paul wrote, ***“for many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.”***

As any good student of the bible will notice, a great deal of the New Testament deals with correcting false, errant teaching and warning of snakes who have slithered into the churches. If Scripture repeats itself, take heed, and on this topic Scripture repeats itself again and again and again!

So how can we tell if we are following one of the ***enemies of the cross*** we are warned about? For starters, we can look to the words of our Lord in Matthew 7:16 and 20, as twice Jesus says, ***“you will know them by their fruits.”***

Unfortunately, our churches, bible studies, and ministries are high-value targets for our adversary (cf: 2 Cor 11:13-15, 2 Tim 3:13). Eloquent, convincing, and charming speakers, leaders, and even pastors are drawing thousands – even millions – to a fiery, eternal grave by preaching a false gospel that is man-centered and tickles the ears of those who do not want to hear the truth. These false gospels may include adding or subtracting from the whole of Scripture, preaching a partial gospel as to not offend but instead fill pews and coffers, affirming and encouraging sinful lifestyles, teaching that those who live in unrepentant sin can still call themselves Christians, and peddling the gospel for personal gain or financial profit.

Herein, weak but often well-intentioned would-be believers fall into a deadly ruse. They are seduced by teachings that God is their servant and should submit to their will instead of the other way around. They embrace a false gospel that says God should give them anything they want or that He should welcome them into heaven at the mere raising of a hand, as though our great Savior is no more than a heavenly butler. In the end, this tramples the sacrifice and awesome name and authority of Christ our Lord. Paul says their ***end is destruction***.

Sadly, Scripture teaches this attitude is embraced by the great multitude. Jesus said in Matthew 7:14, ***“for the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.”*** In 7:21 that ***“not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter.”*** And later in Matthew 22:14 he plainly states that ***“many are called, but few are chosen.”***

Brothers and sisters, this is no joke. Never presume that Jesus and the apostles did not mean what is said in Scripture!

Would you take this very moment to consider your heart? Is Jesus Christ your *Lord*? Does He possess you completely? Are you actively seeking and pursuing His will and surrendering yours? Are you willing to do whatever it takes, no matter how difficult or costly, to follow and obey Christ? Are you sitting under a pastor or teacher who faithfully imitates what we read in Scripture, and specifically here in Philippians 3, as an example of what a true Christian does and the fruit they bear?

If you've answered no or unsure to any of these questions, please humbly pray with a broken and penitent heart that the Lord would change you from the inside out. Only He can do it through the work of the precious Holy Spirit. It can be done, and He promises salvation to all who take up their cross and follow Him in belief and faith (cf: Luke 9:23-26, Romans 5:8-9).