

Enemies Of The Cross

No. 63

Introduction.

I. The text of our lesson is found in Philippians 3:17-19.

PHI 3:17 Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us. 18 For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, 19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.

II. In this passage Paul speaks of some who were enemies of the cross of Christ. The cross had many enemies in Paul's day.

A. There were some who claimed to be Christian teachers who lived **simply for the desires of the flesh**. They were carnal and taught others the carnal way of life. These teachers led men to reject Christ and blaspheme His name. They reasoned, "If this is Christianity we do not want any part of it."

B. There were others in Paul's day who tried to **bind the precepts of the law of Moses on men**.

1. They attributed justification to the ordinances of the law rather than to the vicarious death of Christ.
2. Paul strongly opposed these teachers because they made the death of Christ vain. The law was before Christ and if one could be saved by it there was no need for Christ to die. (Gal. 2:21).
3. Paul affirmed salvation was apart from the law and those who attempted to be saved by it were lost. (Gal. 5:4).

C. There were still others in Paul's day who **preached for material gain**.

1. They made merchandise of the people. Like Balaam of old who loved the wages of wrong-doing.
2. They would say or do anything for money.

III. Not only did the cross of Christ have enemies in Paul's day, but it still has them today.

I. **Denominationalism** - One of the greatest enemies of the cross today in denominationalism.

A. Near the end of Christ's ministry He uttered this prayer. (Jn. 17:20, 21).

1. Jesus prayed that His followers would be perfectly united as He and the Father.
2. The reason He gave for this unity is that the world might believe He had been sent from the Father.

B. Denominationalism **ignores this prayer of Christ**.

1. It divides men and causes them to doubt that Christ was sent from the Father. When men hear nearly 500 different versions of Christ and His teachings they begin to doubt Christ was the Son of God and finally reject Him.

2. Once **Jan Mauck**, a missionary in Africa, once told of a lady who was converted from paganism. She came to him one day and said she was going back into pagan religion because of the lack of unity among those claiming to follow Christ.

C. This occurs every day throughout the world

1. **Denominationalism is a great enemy of the cross** because its **fruit is an unbelieving world**.
2. It is my earnest prayer that the religious world will rid itself of the curse of denominationalism before it is too late.
 - a. **Let us to away with human preferences and traditions.**
 - b. **Let us use what is revealed in the New Testament** as our authority. Let us be united following the Bible alone as our guide in religion. (1 Pet. 4:11).
3. We must keep in mind Paul said. (Eph. 4:4-6).

II. **Modernism** - A second enemy of the cross is modernism.

A. The modernist denies the very first verse in the Bible and many thereafter.

1. He denounces all of the supernatural elements in the Bible. He rejects the virgin birth of Christ and His Deity. He states that Christ was not any more than an exceptional teacher with some good ideas.
2. He also denies the **doctrine of blood atonement**. He says this is repulsive, repugnant to modern man.
 - a. Through the years some of these people have even attempted to have all the blood songs removed from the hymn books.
 - b. Those who do this must be regarded as foes of the cross. They are rejecting God's power to save man. (Jn. 1:29; Matt. 26:28; Rev. 1:5; Heb. 9:22).
 - c. In this last verse the Hebrew writer exclaims that no soul can be saved except through the precious blood of Christ.

B. An unknown author has written:

Christ does not save men by His life,
 Through that was holy, sinless, pure,
 Nor even by His tender love,
 Though that forever shall endure;
 He does not save them by His words,
 Though they shall never pass away;
 Nor by His vast creative power
 That holds the elements in sway;
 He does not save them by His works,
 Though He was ever doing good-
 The awful need was greater still,
 It took His death, His cross, His blood!

Edward Mote penned these lines;

My hope is built on nothing less
 Than Jesus blood and righteousness
 I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
 But wholly lean on Jesus' name.
 On Christ, the Solid Rock, I stand;
 All other ground is sinking sand.

III. **Moralism** - A third enemy of the cross is moralism.

A. This may sound strange, but it is true.

1. The moralist is one of the greatest enemies of the cross of Christ. He thinks he does not need the blood of Christ. He thinks he does not need to surrender his life to Christ. He thinks he doesn't have to be a part of the church for which Christ died. He thinks he can be saved on the basis of his own goodness.
2. He makes the death of Christ vain, since a man could have lived a good moral life before Jesus came into the world and died.

B. The truth of the matter is that morality alone will not save a man.

1. It may keep one out of jail, but not out of hell.
2. It takes implicit obedience to Christ to do this. (Jn. 14:6; Acts 4:12; 10:2; 11:14; 10:48).

IV. **Hobby-Riders And False Teachers** - A fourth enemy of the cross are hobby-riders and false teachers.

A. A hobby-rider may or may not speak the truth, but he is a person who takes a subject and rides it to death. He teaches and preaches most of the time on one subject and neglects many of the great and important truths of God's word.

1. **One time I attended a series of meetings** conducted by a man who opposed orphans homes and cooperative efforts of the church. This man was so obsessed with this subject that he spoke on these things every night and neglected to speak on many other themes. He had very little to say about the love of God, the death of Christ or the blessings and responsibilities of the Christian life.
2. Such a practice disgusts many good and sincere people and causes them to close their hearts to the gospel of Christ.

B. **False teachers** are also enemies of Christ.

1. They contaminate the soul-saving gospel and lead men to destruction.
2. This is why the scriptures warn us to be on guard against them. (Jn. 8:32; Matt. 7:15; 1 Jn. 4:1).

V. **Hypocrisy In The Church** - Another great enemy of the cross is hypocrisy in the church.

A. Our Lord has commanded us to be "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world" that men might glorify the Father in heaven. If our lives are not good and pure, men blaspheme God and His Son instead of praising Him.

B. **One time a young Buddhist**, who had made a very careful study of Christianity, and particularly of Christ, said to a Christian regarding his study: "Your Christ is wonderful, oh, so wonderful; but you Christians, you are not like Him."

1. This Buddhist pointed out the greatest need of present day Christianity.
2. There is an urgent need of more Christlikeness in those who bear His name. Too many Christians are not living exemplary lives. Too many of us are not following in the footsteps of Jesus.

I'd rather see a sermon
 Than hear one any day;
 I'd rather one should walk with me
 Than merely show the way.
 The eye's a better pupil
 And more willing than the ear;
 Fine counsel is confusing
 But example's always clear.
 And the best of all the preachers
 Are the ones who live their creed,
 For to see good put in action
 Is what everybody needs.

I soon can learn to do it,
 If you let me see it done.
 I can watch your hands in action,
 But your tongue too fast may run.
 And the sermon you deliver
 May be very wise and true,
 But I'd rather get my lesson
 By observing what you do,
 For I might misunderstand you
 And the high advice you give;
 But there's no misunderstanding
 How you act and how you live.

VI. **Schisms** - Another enemy of the cross is schisms in the church.

- A. Schisms weaken the church. A fighting church is not a working church. You will never find a church that is fighting doing any work for the Lord.
- B. Schisms do nothing but lose souls for Christ.
 - 1. When a fight occurs in the body of Christ nearly always members are lost to the world.
 - 2. The fights also keep outsiders from becoming a part of the body of Christ. They do not want to be a part of a group that cannot even get along among themselves.
 - 3. Each of us should promote peace. (Matt. 5:9; 12:18; Rom. 14:19).

VII. **Those Who Stand On Middle Ground** - Another enemy of Christ is those who stand on middle ground.

- A. They do not speak evil of Christ, but they do not stand up for Christ. They have very few convictions. They are ashamed of Christ and His words.
- B. Jesus said. (Matt. 12:30).
 - 1. Jesus asserts here that there cannot be any middle ground. We have to be “for” or “against” Him.
 - 2. If we are not for Him, we are His enemy. To be the enemy of Christ means eternal condemnation.

Conclusion.

- I. Instead of being enemies of Christ, let us be His friends. In order to be a friend of Christ, we must obey His commandments. (Jn. 15:14).
 - A. One of the commandments of Christ is to **believe on Him as the Son of God**. (Jn. 8:24).
 - B. Another commandment of Christ is to **repent of one's sins**. (Lk. 13:3).
 - C. Another commandment of Christ is to **confess His name**. (Matt. 10:32, 33).
 - D. Still another commandment of Christ is to **be baptized**. (Mk. 16:16).
- II. If you will obey these commandments you will become a friend of Christ. As a friend of Christ, you will receive the remission of your sins and a home in heaven. Will you submit your life to Christ? Come as we stand and sing the hymn of invitation.