



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The Letter of St. Paul to the Philippians

Chapter 3

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Introduction

- In this chapter, St. Paul is warning the Philippians against false apostles who are Judaizers
- He explained that the true Christian should not trust the fleshly accomplishments which were only symbols but rather presses toward true righteousness
- We need to attain the resurrection of the dead because we are sojourners here and our citizenship is on heaven

Warning Against False Apostles (3:1-11)



- Being in prison, St. Paul is encouraging the Philippians to have their joy in the Lord and not in the circumstances around them
- Writing to them is not boring or tedious to him because they need to hear it

Warning Against False Apostles (3:1-11)



- The term “dogs” is used to describe those who gentiles but here St. Paul is using the same term to describe the Judaizing teachers who are snarling and snapping like dogs
- Mutilation: He is referring to circumcision

Warning Against False Apostles (3:1-11)



- The true Jewish is the one who worship in spirit, rejoice in the Lord, and does not have confidence in the flesh
- St. Paul has all the requirements to rejoice and have confidence in the flesh (the works of the law)

Warning Against False Apostles (3:1-11)



- He was:
 - ❖ circumcised on the eighth day
 - ❖ of the Stock of Israel
 - ❖ of the tribe of Benjamin (from whom the 1st King)
 - ❖ a Hebrew of the Hebrews
 - ❖ concerning the law, a Pharisee
 - ❖ concerning zeal, persecuting the church
 - ❖ concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless

Warning Against False Apostles (3:1-11)



- The gain of knowing Christ is not comparable with the loss of all these things
- The loss of all these things but actually the loss of everything and all things are considered rubbish, if compared with the excellence of the knowledge of Christ
- To know Christ is to be found in Him. You will find the meaning of your life, the joy, the peace...etc and finally the eternal life

Warning Against False Apostles (3:1-11)



- Are we willing to lose for Christ?
- The goal of St. Paul:
 - ❖ Not to have his own righteousness
 - ❖ To have the righteousness of Christ (by faith)
- Believing in Christ makes us participate in His resurrection in the last day (V. 11)

Warning Against False Apostles (3:1-11)



- Participating in His resurrection requires:
 - ❖ Fellowship in His sufferings
 - ❖ Being conformed to His death (Baptism)
- The righteousness of the law means you need to keep the law in order to be righteous (impossible)
- The righteousness of Christ means you are already righteous by the grace of God and the works are required to keep it

Pressing Toward True Righteousness (3:12-16)



- The goal of the true Christian is to keep the righteousness of Christ, to complete his salvation, to attain the resurrection to eternal life (the prize of the upward call of God) v. 14
- Nobody can claim that he attained this goal (perfection) even St. Paul

Pressing Toward True Righteousness (3:12-16)



- So, there is a need to press on:
 - ❖ To lay hold of the salvation for which the Lord also had laid hold of him (during his conversion) and all of us
 - ❖ Pressing on means to forget what are behind and reach forward to what are ahead
 - ❖ Reaching forth-with hand and foot, like a runner in a race, and the body bent forward

Pressing Toward True Righteousness (3:12-16)



- ❖ The Christian is always humbled by the contrast between what he is and what he desires to be
- ❖ The eye reaches before and draws on the hand, the hand reaches before and draws on the foot
- There are two types of people:
 - ❖ The first is those who are spiritually mature and seek the righteousness of Christ

Pressing Toward True Righteousness (3:12-16)



- ❑ The second is those who think that they attained perfection or those who are yet ignorant and doubt of the abolishing of the Law
- ❑ If they striving sincerely to know God's will, God will reveal it to them as what happened with him
- ❑ Nevertheless, those who have not reached this status, let them make the right use of all the light, ability and knowledge they have obtained

Our Citizenship Is In Heaven (3:17-21)



- We need to judge the false apostles by their fruits:
 - ❖ Their god is their belly
 - ❖ Their glory is in their shame
 - ❖ Set their minds on earthly things.
- They are the enemies of cross of Christ
- Their end is destruction

Our Citizenship Is In Heaven (3:17-21)



- As a true shepherd, St. Paul frequently warned the Philippians against them
- As a true father he weeps for them
- The believers should NOT follow false apostles but the true ones and those who walk like them v.17
- The true apostles have their minds set heavenly things

Our Citizenship Is In Heaven (3:17-21)



- Because:
 - ❖ Our citizenship is in heaven
 - ❖ Our Savior whom we eagerly wait for, will come from heaven
- When He comes He will transform our lowly body to be conformed to His glorious body
- This change shall be effected in harmony with that mighty power which shall subdue all things to his way



Conclusion

- What did St. Paul mean by “dogs,” “mutilation” and “pressing on”?
- What are the three characteristics of the true Jewish (believer)?
- What do we gain when we know Christ?
- What is the difference between the righteousness of the law and that of Christ?
- How do we participate in His resurrection?
- What is the sign of spiritual maturity?
- What are some characteristics of the false apostles?