



INTRODUCTION

There are over 6,000 different protestant denominations and offshoots of established denominations in the US alone. That's quite a number. Different denominations would imply there are different trains of thought concerning the gospel or good news of Jesus Christ. That's not always the case. Race, color, music, and social status have also kept Christians from worshiping together. There was a recent difference of opinion within the Calvary Chapel system concerning the way the scriptures were to be presented. So far this difference has caused a verbal riff between two CC camps and may cause a chasm that neither group desires. This is sad but true. It would appear the church, as a whole, hasn't followed Phil. 3:15 – 21. The differences mentioned above pale in comparison to the differences Paul is discussing in this portion of scripture. The Holy Spirit is warning us through the writings of Paul that being of one mind concerning the things of God impacts the spiritual growth of the local church and the strength of the message the "sent ones" carry to the rest of the lost and dying world.

Philippians 3:15-21 (NKJV)

¹⁵ Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. ¹⁶ Nevertheless, to *the degree* that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind. ¹⁷ Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. ¹⁸ For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ: ¹⁹ whose end *is* destruction, whose god *is* their belly, and *whose* glory *is* in their shame--who set their mind on earthly things. ²⁰ For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

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If we are truly pressing toward the higher calling in Christ Jesus and have attained a certain level of maturity we ought to be in agreement with two major doctrines. First we must agree that there is nothing but the blood of Christ that has the power to save. No addition of rabbinical law, or the laws of Moses in addition to the blood, saves. Paul may have also eluded to the practice that since we are covered by the blood, we have no need to worry about our actions, good or bad. A fancy word for this is antinomianism which broken down means: **anti-** meaning **against** and **nomos** meaning **law**. These folk believe once saved there is no longer a need for a moral code of any kind.

Paul is telling the Philippian church to follow the example of other strong believers like him as an example on how to live if you have no other spiritual guidelines. If you do not yet have the conviction of the Holy Spirit in you, look to the pattern Paul and others have made. This applies to immature



Christians today. If they don't have it within them to know what is morally right and wrong, they should look to others as an example. This is why it is so important for mature Christians to walk uprightly at all times. Our walk must never cause our brothers and sisters in Christ to stumble.

Then Paul warns us about those who believe that there must be something else in addition to the blood of Christ to be saved. Paul calls them enemies of the cross just as he calls those who believe that they are no longer bound by any moral law. The belief that there is no longer a need to live by God's moral code because of grace, is in error.

Romans 6:15-18 (NKJV) says this:

- ¹⁵ What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!
¹⁶ Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin *leading* to death, or of obedience *leading* to righteousness?
¹⁷ But God be thanked that *though* you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.
¹⁸ And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

Paul mentions three characteristics but first describes their eternal destination of the enemies of Christ for whom Paul (as we should) weep.

¹⁹ whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame--who set their mind on earthly things.

Their destination is sure. "Their end is destruction". Paul is saying the "dogs" who are saying that there is more to be done by the believer besides accepting the cleansing power of the blood of Christ for salvation are not saved and will be eternally separated from God. The following characteristics are the reasons for their destination. Their ticket is punched!

whose god is their belly

For the Judaizers, the need to follow the unclean and clean foods in the law becomes in itself a god. To those that believe anything goes when it comes to food or the amounts is a form a gluttony of which antinomianites are guilty. (Rom 6:18; 1st Cor. 6:13, Jude 11)

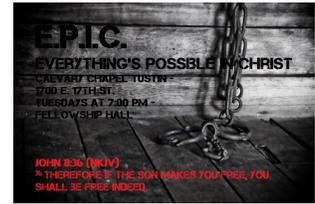
whose glory is in their shame

These people may have found glory for themselves instead of God by showing how righteous they were by honoring the laws of Moses, but it was actually to their shame.

who set their mind on earthly things.

Some have said, "They are so heavenly minded, they are of no earthly good!" This jealous and hypocritical statement is made by those who have no thoughts of heaven. In Col. 3:2 it says:

Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.



We know and understand what the outcome is for the Judaizers and those of the antinomian group, but what does the true believer have to look forward to?

20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

Amen!