



'Back to Basics for Believers Series'

Sermons in the Epistle to the Philippians

Message 13 – A Plea to Protect Philippians 3: 1 - 3

The beginning of chapter three sees a great turning point in Paul's Epistle to the Philippians. He had been urging them to let the mind of Christ be in them, that they might live as lights in the world. Yet, from the beginning of chapter three, Paul vehemently commands them to press on. As we are able to see, Paul's first emphasis in prompting them to press on is to guard themselves, how are they to do this? How are we to do this? We can see:

1. By Rejoicing in the Lord - A person who is ever seeking to rejoice in the Lord, and come into His presence will maintain a sensitivity to danger, and will be reluctant to go astray. Why should a person wander when they can rest and rejoice in the goodness of the Lord. For the believer there are always two major dangers, one is circumstances, and the other is false teaching. If his mind is upon the Lord, and is resting in His experience of the Lord, and understanding of what the Lord has done for Him, then he will have much to guard his mind. He can rejoice over the fact that Christ has: adopted him; justified him; reconciled him to God; saved him; loved him; delivered him; guides him; secured salvation for him; died for him; released him; given him hope; will raise him; will bring him through!

2. By Heeding what is Written - Then Paul tells them to heed what is written, that being the words of the letter, the Scriptures. It is very clear that Paul is repeating things that he has written before, not only in the earlier part of the letter. It is so important that they heed this that he is repeating it. Sometimes it is good for us to hear truths that we already know, and have the brought back to our memory. It is a dangerous thing to always desire something new, some new interpretation, and some new spin. Only as dwell in the Scriptures can we be given a deeper understanding of what the Lord would have us do, what people he would have us to be, and the wiles of the enemy.

3. By Watching out for False Teachers - The days of the early church were dangerous. Paul was always engaging with false teachers who were attacking him, and attacking the Gospel. He attacks false teachers here in three ways, although from the text, it is clear that he is referring to the Judaizers. The major point is this, that these Judaizers for all their proclamation of righteousness, were actually opposed to Christ. They were opposed to His salvation that is given and through grace alone. They favoured some mix of divine favour and human merit. Paul vehemently attacks them here. They had established their own way to God and it was an abomination in His sight, because ultimately it did not rest in the saving work of Christ and the fact that salvation is by grace alone.

4. By Knowing that You are the True Circumcision - Then finally Paul tells them to guard themselves by knowing that they are the true circumcision. It is interesting that he gives believers this title. The truth is this, that God has done away with circumcision as a sign of righteousness since Christ has come. Righteousness is of the heart, in the Spirit, and not in the following of external rituals and regulations. The truly righteous man is the man whom God has dealt with inwardly – the man who has been renewed by God's grace, and who has been born again of the Spirit, a new creation in Christ.



Penzance Baptist Church

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Pastor Jonathan Stobbs