

The Cross-Friendly Life

The Road to Heaven Part 8
Philippians 3:17-19 9-4-2016

Summary: The only command from verse 17 to the end of the chapter is in verse 17 – follow godly examples. We need examples to enable us to get the hang of the Christian life. (And this will help our unity in the church.) The rest is reasons. Reason #1 (vv.18-19) is that failure to get the hang of the Christian life has led many to a lifestyle that ends in destruction. They are governed by their appetites, prize shameful things instead of good things, and are focused on this world. Your lifestyle can corrupt your beliefs.

Introduction.....	1
Close to Home.....	1
One Command	2
The Need for Example	2
Be On the Lookout.....	2
Humility	3
Exemplary, not Perfect	3
Unity.....	3
Exposure.....	4
Corporate Copying	4
The Danger	4
Many	5
Lifestyle, not Doctrine.....	5
Their End	6
With Tears	7
Their God.....	7
Their Glory.....	7
Their Mind	8
Doctrining Out Your Living.....	8
Conclusion	9
Application Questions (James 1:25)	9

Philippians 3:17 Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you. 18 For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. 19 Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things. 20 But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

Introduction

Close to Home

In this passage Paul talks about people who are enemies of the cross of Christ and their end is destruction. You hear that and think, “Wow, those people must really be bad.” What kind of horrible sins are these people guilty of? Did they exterminate six million Jews? Are they rapists or murderers? Then you read more and you see that the horrible sin these people are guilty of is that **their god is their stomach** and **their mind is on earthly things**. You see that and think, “Wow, that hits a little closer to home than I expected.” Their god is their stomach? Isn’t it true that every person in this room is guilty of sometimes elevating our physical appetites and impulses to the level where we obey those appetites more

than we obey God? We are fighting against that, and with varying levels of success, but isn't it true that we all tend to do that to some degree? And the other part – **their mind is on earthly things**. Who here isn't guilty of having earthly mindset in times when we should be having an eternal mindset? The indictments in this passage hit so close to home that when we read that every one of these people ends in destruction, and they are living as enemies of the cross of Christ, that gets our attention. Paul is warning about a horrible fate that is connected to a lifestyle that really isn't all that unimaginable that we could fall into it.

But thankfully God has given us this passage of Scripture to protect us from falling into it. And so this passage is of great interest to anyone who wants to be a friend of the cross of Christ rather than an enemy of the cross of Christ.

One Command

The good news is there is only one command in this whole passage, so at least it's not complicated. The command is in verse 17 and the whole rest of the chapter just gives reasons to obey the command.

Philippians 3:17 Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you.

That is the command, which has two parts – follow Paul's example, and follow the example of people who are following Paul's example. Then he tells us why, which is indicated by the word **for**. **17 [follow my example] ...18 For...** and then he goes on to explain why it's so important to follow godly examples.¹ I'm telling you this right up front because this is one of those passages where it is really easy to get lost in the details and lose sight of the main point. The main point is this: *Follow godly examples in the way you live.*

The Need for Example

That is not optional. This is a command. It doesn't say, "Follow godly examples if you're a people person, but if you're more of a loner and you like to be by yourself, don't worry about it." Every one of us must do this because the Christian life is not something you can get the hang of just by listening to instruction. We all know what it's like to read about something and not really get it, but then someone shows you, and then you finally get it. Someone says, "Do this, this, and this."

"Huh?"

Then they show you – "Ohhh, I see" and you get it. The Christian life is one of those things. There are so many things Scripture calls us to do in the Christian life that, if we never see some other person doing it, we will never be able to get the hang of it.

Be On the Lookout

Now, I want to urge you to take note of the words, **take note**.

17 ... take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you.

The Greek word there is the same word translated **watch out** in verse 2 where he said **watch out for those dogs**. We need to be on the lookout for false teachers who will lead us astray, and we also need to be on the lookout for godly examples that we can follow. And the fact that you have to watch out for them shows that you are not necessarily going to be able to spot these people unless you put some effort into it. You have to be watching for them. Be on the lookout for anyone who is living according to the pattern laid down by the apostles in Scripture so you can follow their example.

¹ He actually gives two reasons. The first is in vv.18-19, and v.20 begins a second reason. In the Greek, the first word of v.20 is **for** (*gar*) – the same word as in the beginning of v.18.

Humility

Are you humble enough to do that? One mark of pride is when there is no one in the whole church you feel like you could imitate. You look around and see nothing but flaws. In a moment's notice you could wax eloquent on the weaknesses and failures of pretty much anyone, but if you try to think of how you could improve by imitating someone in the church, you draw a blank. That is just colossal pride. How much pride does it take to think you are ahead of everyone in the church in every category?

Exemplary, not Perfect

"It's not that I think I'm ahead of them in every category, but each one of them has one category where they are really weak. And I can't follow the example of someone who is doing poorly in one area."

That's foolish. If you can't find anyone whose example you think you could benefit from following, it might help to understand the difference between *exemplary character* and *moral perfection*. Sometimes people think, "I can't really follow his example, because he has that weakness."

"I can't learn from her example, because she has that character flaw."

And you can't find anyone worth following because everyone you find is imperfect in some way. But remember, not even Paul was perfect. He just spent half the chapter talking about how he hasn't arrived. He is not what he should be yet. He still has a long way to go. And yet he has no hesitation calling us to follow his example. Exemplary doesn't mean perfect.

If you see someone who isn't doing very well in his marriage, but he does a great job with handling Scripture, learn from his example in handling Scripture. If he's a terrible teacher, but raised godly kids, learn from his example of parenting. If he is kind of lazy, but he's a good listener, learn from his example of listening.

That's what humility does. Humility has an eagle eye for spotting areas where someone is doing better than me, so I can learn from that person. Pride does the opposite. Pride has an eagle eye for spotting people's faults. When there is pride in your heart, you focus on people's weaknesses, and not only that, but very often you end up resenting them for their strengths. You see someone who does really well in an area where you don't do so well, and the temptation is to try to justify yourself by minimizing their strength in that area. You might think, "Yeah, but he does terrible in this other area, and so he must not be authentic. His godliness is probably a sham across the board." Or you might see his strength in an area where you are weak and think, "That guy thinks he's so spiritual. He's so 'holier than thou' looking down his nose at everybody." And the truth is the guy isn't like that at all. My pride just wants to imagine that he's like that, so that I can justify my weakness in that area. When I'm trying to justify myself, I'm going to amplify other people's weaknesses and minimize their strengths, which is the exact opposite of what I need to do if I want to make any spiritual progress. If I want to make progress, I have to be on the lookout for those strengths, and have enough humility to say, "You're strong in that area; I'm not. I need to follow your example and learn from you."

Unity

Think of what it would do for our unity at Agape if instead of picking each other apart we were all striving to imitate one another's strengths. If we were all on the lookout for anyone doing well in some area, and whenever we saw it, we would strive to imitate it, think of the impact that would have. Aside from the fact that we would all make spiritual progress by following godly examples, think of what it would do for our unity. We would become so interdependent, so enmeshed in each other's lives, and we would be honoring one another as we focused on strengths rather than weaknesses, and that would increase our love for one another; people would feel more appreciated and honored, as well as more motivated (when someone is trying to follow your example in some area, that makes you all the more motivated to do well in that area) – it's hard to even fathom all the ways this would bless the church.

Exposure

So how does this work? How do you learn by example in Christian living? I can see how it would work in other things. You could learn how to weld by following someone's example, or learn how to replace a head gasket, or how to make a cherry pie, but if I need help learning how to be gentle with my wife, or how to respond to pressure at work – how can I learn those things by following someone's example? I can't just live in their home and watch their marriage, or go to work with them every day. Christian living isn't about technique, it's all about the heart. So how do I learn how to make my heart go in one direction or another by watching someone?

The answer is *exposure*. The only way I can ever learn from what's going on in your heart is if you expose your heart to me. If you are such a private person that nobody really knows what's going on inside you, how can anybody follow your spiritual example? If you're not part of a prayer group, not serving on a ministry team, never rubbing elbows with other folks in church – you just come and observe and then get up and leave, how is anybody going to know you well enough to follow your example? If you have joy in the face of suffering, but nobody is close enough to you to see your response, how can we follow your example? If you have the gift of giving, but nobody ever knows how much you give, how can anyone learn from your example?

Now, we need to be careful with this because Jesus told us never to do our acts of righteousness before men to be honored by them (Mt.6:1ff). So we don't ever want to expose our righteousness for the purpose of showing off. But in that same sermon Jesus commanded that we do perform our acts of righteousness before men to be seen by them for the sake of glorifying God (Mt.5:16). We need to be very, very careful with our motives, but we must also have enough exposure of our hearts to one another so that we can obey this command.

Corporate Copying

So Paul calls us to imitate godly people, but he uses a very interesting word for *imitate*. This is the only place in all of Greek literature that this word appears, so Paul probably coined it himself. He takes the normal word for *imitator* and adds the word *joint* to it, so it's **become joint-imitators of me**. The NIV translates it ***join with others in following my example***. Paul often exhorted the churches to imitate him, but this is the only time he says it this way. He really wants to emphasize the corporate aspect with the Philippian church, because they struggled with disunity in the church. There was some pride and some selfishness and frustration because of all the suffering, and it was hurting their unity. There were people like Euodia and Syntyche in chapter 4 who were both godly but they just couldn't get along with each other. So Paul wants them to think, not just about imitating Paul as individuals, but for Euodia to think, "I need to imitate Paul alongside my sister Syntyche." If you are at odds with someone in this church, God is calling you to link arms with that person as you join together in following godly examples.

It's easier to follow someone's example if someone to you is also striving to follow that example. Because as they try to do it, and stumble and struggle and ask questions, you can learn from that whole process in your efforts to imitate the person. So we are in this together.

The Danger

So, we strive to imitate godly examples. That's super-important, and one reason why it's so important is because of what can happen to you if you don't.

18 For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. 19 their destiny is destruction.

The reason it is so important to follow godly examples so you can get the hang of the Christian life is because the people who didn't get the hang of it – their end is destruction.²

Many

Who are these people? They seem to be people who are inside the church – people who name the name of Christ. It doesn't sound like he's talking about the whole unbelieving world. The tears, and the fact that he uses the word *many* have most scholars convinced that these are people who were especially heartbreaking to Paul because they do name the name of Christ, but they aren't living accordingly.

So who are they? One theory is that they are the same people from verse 2 – the **dogs** that he has been warning them about in this whole chapter. The Judaizers – the legalists. They argue that Paul started the chapter out by identifying those people, and he never changed the subject or indicated that he is suddenly talking about a different group, so it must still be the legalists.

Someone might say, "How could that be? Legalists are really strict, but these people seem really loose. Their god is their stomach and they are engaged in shameful activities." But I don't know if that's a very good argument because the truth is legalists can be some of the most immoral people you will ever meet. Just look at the Pharisees. They were squeaky clean on the outside, but on the inside Jesus said they were full of greed and self-indulgence and wickedness (Mt.23:25, Lk.11:39). It's very common for legalists to be dominated by sins of the flesh because legalism doesn't work. You can't defeat sin through legalism. So even though they are the loudest voices preaching against immorality, very often they are completely enslaved by it. Like the false teachers in 2 Peter 2.

2 Peter 2:19 They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity.

They say, "Here's how you can get victory over sin – just follow all these rules," but behind the scenes they don't have any victory over sin. So these people could be legalists.

Another theory is that they are the people from 1:27, who were persecuting the Philippians. Because in that verse that says those people will be destroyed, and that's the same word for destruction here in this verse. And yet another theory is that they are a new group that Paul hasn't mentioned yet.

I'll tell you my theory. My theory is that if Paul had wanted to identify them as a particular group, he would have. But instead, he just said **many**. That's a very unspecific, indefinite word. I don't think Paul is trying to point to a specific category or grouping of people. He is just saying, "There is a whole lot of people in the church who failed to follow our example of lifestyle, and as a result they ended up like this." They ended up living as enemies of the cross of Christ.

Lifestyle, not Doctrine

What does that mean? Does that mean they were going around preaching against the cross? Or they like the Muslims, who teach that Jesus never even died on the cross? I don't think so. Notice, the issue doesn't seem to be their doctrine. He goes on to describe several things about them, but one thing he doesn't mention in the description is their beliefs. He doesn't say it's people who have repudiated Christ, or people who don't believe in the atonement, or who deny the cross. He doesn't say that their beliefs conflict with the teaching about the cross.

Philippians 3:18 For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ.

What he says is that they *live as enemies of the cross*. The issue isn't their doctrine, but their lifestyle.

² Most commentators see the connection between verses 17 and 18 this way: verse 17 says to follow godly examples, and verse 18 describes the people whose examples we must not follow. But I don't see that in the text and it doesn't seem to me to do justice to the word "for," which typically introduces an explanation or reason.

So what does that look like? What does it mean to live as an enemy of the cross? It means what you are doing in your life is at odds with the purposes of the cross. Remember what Paul said back in 1:27?

Philippians 1:27 conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.

The right way to live is a way that matches up to the gospel. It is worthy of the gospel. It is consistent with the purposes of the gospel. But when we fail to do that, we end up living in a way that is at odds with the gospel. Jesus died on the cross for a reason – to accomplish something. And these people are living in a way that is accomplishing the opposite of that.

Jesus died to make us eager to do what is good, to purify us, and to cause us to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present age (Titus 2:11-14). He died to make it so that you could boldly approach the throne of grace in prayer (Heb.4:16). He died so that we would die to sin (1 Pe.2:24) and no longer live for ourselves (2 Cor.5:15). He died to give us freedom from bondage to sin (Ro.6:6-7, 18). He died to rescue us from the empty way of life handed down by our forefathers (1 Pe.1:18). He died to open our eyes (2 Cor.4:4-6) and to give us assurance of his sympathy (Heb.14-15), and to enable us to persevere (Heb.12:1-3) and to free us from the fear of death (Heb.2:14-15). He died to create unity in the church (Eph.2:14-16).

That's a partial list. And if he died to accomplish those things, and I am living a lifestyle that is accomplishing the opposite of those things, then my lifestyle is the enemy of the cross of Christ. If he died to make me eager to do what is right, and I am living in a way that makes me more eager to do evil, I am acting as an enemy of what he died to accomplish. If he died to open my eyes to truth and I'm living in a way that clouds my understanding of truth, I'm acting as an enemy of the cross. If he died to create unity in the church, but I'm disrupting that unity, I am at odds with the cross.

On the other hand, if your lifestyle is in harmony with those purposes, then you are living as a friend of the cross of Christ. That's why I titled the sermon "The Cross-Friendly Life." It is so important to understand that the thing that makes you a friend of the cross or an enemy of the cross is not your doctrine – it's your lifestyle.

This is a great thing to remember at the moment of temptation. When you are tempted to sin you can ask yourself, "Do I really want to set myself up as an enemy of the cross?" Is this little desire that I have to commit this sin worth putting myself at odds with the purposes of the work of Christ in this world? Wouldn't I be better off to be a friend of the cross than an enemy of the cross? If you peek ahead to the end in the book of Revelation you find it doesn't go well for the enemies of the cross of Christ.

So these people live as enemies of the cross, that is the general description, and then Paul spells out what that looks like in four categories: their end, their god, their glory, and their mind.

Their End

He begins with their end. **Their destiny (lit. their end) is destruction.** You might expect that at the end of the list, but Paul wants us to know right up front, these people are not going to heaven.³ They are going to be destroyed because of the way they are living. A sinful lifestyle is destructive in this life just because of the built in consequences of sin, but beyond that it leads to ultimate destruction of the soul in hell by God.

Matthew 10:28 ...be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

These people do not fear God, and so their soul and body will be destroyed by God in hell. That doesn't mean they will cease to exist – it's not that kind of destruction. Their punishment will be an eternal torment. They will be destroyed in the sense that their lives will become a massive train wreck. The path that they are walking on ends in absolute disaster.

³ The placement of this at the beginning of the list makes sense when you realize that Paul is giving a reason why it is so important to follow godly examples. Follow our example because many don't and their end is destruction.

With Tears

And Paul says that with tears in his eyes.

18 For as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ.

It broke his heart. This is a lesson for all the hellfire and brimstone preachers who love to go out on the streets and shout at people and tell them they are going to hell, and they do it in a way that makes you think they are glad that those people are going to hell. Or those people who get on Facebook and debate with unbelievers, and they have anger and harshness and mockery and show no sign whatsoever of compassion for the fact that those unbelievers are headed for hell. Jesus wasn't like that. At the time when he gave the harshest rebuke he ever gave (in Matthew 23), he wept – cried out loud – and talked about his longing for them to be saved. Paul was like that. I don't think Paul told his secretary, "Put in a line right here about me crying. That will be really powerful." This was real. You can imagine Paul dictating this portion, and getting to this warning and saying, "Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you, for as I have often..." and then his voice cracked, and there was a long silence.

"...I'm saying this with tears in my eyes, brothers. Many live as enemies of the cross of Christ and their end will be eternal disaster."

Their God

That's their end – secondly, their god.

19 Their end is destruction, their god is their stomach

Their appetites are the ruling authority in their life. That's what calls the shots. They might have all kinds of supposed beliefs and ideals, but when their appetites rise up, everything else takes a back seat. They might be really committed to doing this or that, but if they get hungry enough, all bets are off. If some sexual urge rises up, all bets are off. If they get to craving a drink, or they are tired, or they are craving fun or excitement – whatever impulse they get from their fleshly appetites will override any commitment they have to obeying Christ in that moment.

That happens to all of us, but if you're a friend of the cross, what will you do when that happens? You will go to the cross and repent. You'll confess that sin and turn back to Christ. But not these people. Their god is their stomach and that's their lifestyle, and they aren't going to change.

These people have a god they have to feed. Imagine that. Imagine serving a god that makes all his demands on your life, not to bring about any particular good for you or for others, but just to feed its own needs. Imagine serving a god that does no good for you or anyone else, and is absolutely powerless. Zero help in time of need. No refuge in time of trouble. This god can do nothing about your sin problem, nothing about your guilt, it can't help you, it can't change you, it can't guide you – it doesn't even love you. It makes constant demands and the only thing you get in return is ... fat. Drunk ... broke ... lazy – those are the only "blessings" this god can give you, and yet it demands instant obedience to its every craving.

It is the easiest religion there is because there is only one doctrine. Only one commandment – it's the slogan for Sprite: *Obey your thirst*. That is all you have to do to be a member in good standing in this god's religion – instantly, without hesitation, without questioning, obey your thirst. When that god has an impulse, you snap to it and feed that appetite no matter what the cost. And if you do that, you get to have a train wreck of a life here and now, followed by eternal disaster.

Their Glory

19 ... and their glory is in their shame.

Your glory is that which is beautiful about your life. In 1 Corinthians 11 it says the glory of a woman is her hair. It is a big part of what makes her beautiful. That's what glory means. The glory of your life is the radiance of the best and most beautiful and most glorious things about you. And these people – the things they think are glorious are shameful. The things they are proud of are ugly. The things their hearts prize the most are worthless things in God's sight.

Isaiah 5:22 Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine and champions at mixing drinks

They might pretend to care about righteousness and holiness as they sit in church, but if you could look into their heart and see what things they are most proud of – they are shameful things. A guy is proud of the fact that he can get any girl into bed, or a girl is proud of her ability to seduce a guy. He is proud of the fact that he can beat most guys up. She's proud of all her materialism and wealth. He's proud of his ability to take advantage of people and come out ahead in any business deal or sale. Maybe he wastes five hours a day playing video games, but he's proud of his high score. She's proud of her ability to make the girls at school look like fools. The best things about them are garbage.

Their Mind

19 ...Their mind is on earthly things.

That one is the bottom line. That's why they are the way they are. Their thoughts all through the day stay on earthly things. They are hopelessly nearsighted. They can only see what's right in front of their face, and if they try to look up to heaven everything is a blur. Football games are crystal clear in their understanding; living for eternal reward is foggy. Their understanding of the last movie they watched is in sharp focus; their understanding of the last chapter they read in the Bible is a total blur. They are engrossed in this world. Everything they are living for is part of this world. Everything they are living for will be gone in a million years. Most of it will be gone in 50.

Even their religion is tied to this life.⁴ Humanly devised rules. Or people like Joel Osteen or TD Jakes or Joyce Meyer who are all wrapped up in getting rich. Your best life now. Health, wealth, prosperity now. Cars and houses and private jets and swimming pools and diamonds and fame. They get rich by teaching people that Jesus exists to give you all the treasures of this world. This world is their home, and they act like it. They are so earthly minded that they are no heavenly good.

Doctrining Out Your Living

That's what will happen to you if your lifestyle veers off track from the pattern the apostles laid down for us in their example. And so Paul says, "Brothers, follow my example and other godly examples! Learn by example how to get the hang of the Christian life because if you don't, this is where you will end up." Very few people leave the faith because of doctrine. You talk to someone who used to be in the church and was all excited about serving Christ, and now they have left the faith altogether, and you ask why, they might give you some intellectual reason to start with, "I just couldn't find anyone who could answer my questions about how Jonah could live three days in a fish." Or "I watched The Davinci Code and then went to a website and realized the whole Christian faith is a sham."

"I can't worship a God who allows this or that suffering..."

But then if you press them, and just ask, "What happened?" almost always you find out – it was one of two things: either they were hurt and now they are mad at God, or they just wanted some sin. They had impulses and desires for something in this world, the Bible told them no, and so they glommed on to whatever critic they could find on the Internet trying to disprove the Bible so they could justify bailing out and indulging their desire for something in this world that Scripture forbids. Someone very dear to me was one of the most committed Christians you'll ever meet growing up, but after high school he just

⁴ The parallel idea in Col.3:2 comes in a discussion of conforming to legalistic rules.

walked away. Now he's a Buddhist. I asked him why and he said it was simple – he couldn't live under the sexual restrictions in Christianity.

You see, most people don't live out their doctrine; they doctrine out their living. They pretend that they are living the way they are living because of what they believe to be true, but in reality they believe what they believe because of the way they are living. They want to live a certain way, and they invent a set of beliefs that endorses that way of living. I was recently talking to a highly educated atheist who was working on his PhD. Very precise, logical thinker in every area except religion and morals. I asked about his beliefs, and they were contradictory, convoluted, incoherent, and irrational. I pointed that out to him and he agreed, they were irrational – but he was ok with that. Why was he so disciplined in his logic and reasoning in every other area of life and such a mess in this area? Because – he had pieced together a set of religious beliefs that made no sense, but they did the one thing he wanted – they allowed him to live the lifestyle that he wanted to live.

Your lifestyle will, over time, chip away at your beliefs until it conforms your religious outlook to fit its desires. Beliefs follow lifestyle. And so Paul pleads with us, “Be on the lookout for anyone whose example will help you get the hang of some aspect of the Christian life. Do it, because if you don't – this is what will happen to you.” You will become embroiled in this world, captivated by temporal things, locked down and enslaved by things that are part of the system that is on its way to destruction, and you will be swept along with it. That's what Paul was saying to Timothy when he said:

1 Timothy 4:16 Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.

Bad doctrine can mess up your life, and bad living can mess up your doctrine. Either way ends in destruction. So watch both – watch your doctrine and watch your lifestyle closely, and if you do, you will save yourself from destruction.

Conclusion

Take a look around. You are surrounded by saints of the living God – many of whom have been walking with the Lord for decades. Some of these people around you have learned some very hard lessons. They learned the hard way some things that you could learn the easy way just by following their example. There are people around you (and you'd probably be shocked if you knew which ones), who are way ahead of you in some area. Something you have been wrestling with for the past few months they wrestled with for 10 years and God taught them some amazing things. We don't have time to re-invent the wheel in every area of Christian growth. Let's be on the lookout for cross-friendly lives, so we can follow those examples as we wait for the glorious return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's reason #1 to follow godly examples, but it is not the best reason. The best reason starts in verse 20, and that's where we'll pick it up next time.

Benediction: Jude 24-25 To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy- 25 to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.

Application Questions (James 1:25)

- 1) What are two or three areas in your life where you'd love to find a godly example who could show you how to progress beyond where you are now?
- 2) What are two or three strengths you have by God's grace from which others could benefit by following your example?

- 3) Name a few names at Agape of people whose character you'd like to emulate in some area (and name which area)
- 4) Has there ever been a time in your life where your lifestyle started to corrupt your beliefs? If so, what turned that around?