



Be Like Christ Not Like Them

By Johnny Caruso on July 22, 2022

TODAY'S READING: Philippians 3

Paul's example was Christ. He then lived out the Christ model as he ran the race. Having set forth his life ambition to be more Christlike, Paul did not hesitate to tell the Philippians to follow his example. Some already followed that example, so they, too, served as models for the Philippians. They had a choice. They could model their lives after those advocating falsehood and fail to win the prize or they could model their lives after Christ.

Paul believed Christ-followers should be able to tell truth from error (1 John 4:6). Paul was so concerned about the Philippians' spiritual welfare that he warned them often.

There are three descriptions of these false teachers:

1. Their god is their stomach.

They had in mind only their own physical desires unrestrained. From a Greek perspective such a focus is purely physical. Thus, in practice, their physical desires had become their god. From a Jewish perspective, the stomach represents food allowed or not allowed by Jewish food laws. Their god had become self-protection from ritual pollution, thus the preservation of their self-perceived perfection.

2. Their glory is in their shame.

Instead of giving glory to God these teachers heaped praise on themselves. Ironically, they prided themselves in the things that should have caused shame. The appetite and shameful glory characteristics point to the way they had lived before that time. Those who identify the opponents as libertines point out that Paul decried excessive food and sexual pleasures. Since this is a Jewish context, the statement must refer to dietary laws and circumcision of which they were so proud. They had become so preoccupied with kosher foods that they spent more time contemplating them than thinking about God. Clearly, these matters engendered pride in the teachers, and Paul criticized them severely.

3. Their mind is on earthly things.

It is certainly not wrong for God's people to care about their earthly affairs. But those Paul warned against here were depending on earthly things to gain favor with God. The apostle frequently warned the people not to be a part of those kinds of lifestyles.

PRAYER: Holy Spirit, help me know the difference between those who are real and those who are fake in the faith.

TOMORROW'S READING: Weekend is for catch-up and review.

MONDAY'S READING: Philippians 4

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