

Beware
Philippians 3:1-3
Series: Joy and Gratitude in Christ

1. Introduction

- a. Today we are, by the grace of God, going to examine true vs. false Christianity and conversion.
- b. We are going to do this while also taking special heed to the Apostle's warning to be aware and on guard against the false that leads us away from true fellowship with Christ.
- c. We know the following about profession vs. true conversion:
 - i. Not everyone who says Lord is actually a Christian (Matthew 7:21-23)
 - ii. Not all that respond to the Gospel are truly saved (Parable of the sower Matthew 13:18-23)
 - iii. There are some that look to be genuine and are not (Simon Acts 8)
 - iv. The Apostles warn us to self-examine:
 - 1. **2 Corinthians 13:5** Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?-unless indeed you fail to meet the test!
 - 2. **Titus 1:16** They profess to know God, but they deny him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work.
- d. Unfortunately, despite the repeated warnings in Scripture many are deceived about their true spiritual condition.
- e. False proofs of salvation:
 - i. Resting our hope of salvation on a past event (some prayer). A fruitless profession is meaningless.
 - ii. A Superficially moral life – morality for morality sake – The rich young ruler
 - 1. **Isaiah 64:6** We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.
 - iii. The mere knowledge of the facts of the gospel is evidence of salvation – the demons know and tremble (James 2:19)
 - iv. Religious activity – the Pharisees

- v. Service in the name of Christ
 - f. Let us look at true conversion
- 2. Verse 1A – True believers Rejoice in the Lord
 - a. Here Paul connects rejoicing to a relationship, commanding believers to rejoice in the Lord.
 - b. The sphere in which our joy exists is in our relationship with the Lord.
 - c. “Biblical joy produces deep confidence in the future that is based on trust in god’s purpose and power. It results in the absence of any ultimate fear, since the relationship on which is ti based is eternal and unshakeable.”
- 3. Verses 1B-2 – True believers exercise discernment
 - a. True believers exercise good discernment in applying the filter of truth found in scripture to what is heard and seen from others
 - b. No trouble to me – the job of a minister is to constantly remind the flock of God to stay on the straight and narrow path and not to wander off.
 - c. Safety – this constant exhortation, if heeded, produces safety and keeps the flock of God pure and undefiled.
 - d. We need to be aware of the false teachers. Paul uses the following three terms to describe the false from the true:
 - i. Dog – mongrel dogs that ate trash and plagued the ancient cities. They sometimes attacked people and ate carcasses. Just like these dogs, the false teachers were:
 - 1. Unclean, vicious and dangerous. They were to be avoided.
 - 2. These words are not harsh and unloving but in actuality they are the epitome of love. To warn someone against destructive heresies shows love.
 - ii. Evil workers – external rituals and ceremonies without God himself. Many participate in ceremonies and church attendance but as far as they are not repentant and seeking God, these supposed good works are instead evil works that God takes no pleasure in.
 - iii. Those who mutilate the flesh – Judaizers that preached that the work of Christ on the cross was insufficient apart from keeping the Law and the covenant of circumcision. Be aware of anyone adding to the cross. This is a false doctrine.

1. Circumcision was commanded by God and was supposed to represent the tearing away of the evil from the heart first. Without the heart, it is only a mutilation.
4. Verse 3A – True believers worship in the Spirit
 - a. Genuine worship that overflows to God. It is supernatural. The Holy Spirit generates worship
 - b. John 4 – The Samaritan Woman – The time is coming when true worship will be done in Spirit and in truth.
 - c. Genuine worship is a life's work and not just something that happens on Sunday.
 - d. Worship is based upon peace with God and others and not based upon circumstances.
5. Verse 3B – True believers glory in Christ Jesus
 - a. Our boasting is in Christ and what he has accomplished. We leave no room for the flesh to exult. We know that our very breath belongs to God.
 - i. The Reformers – Grace alone, Faith alone, Through Christ alone
6. Verse 3C – True worshipers put no confidence in the flesh
 - a. The flesh represents man's fallen, unredeemed humanness; it pictures human ability apart from God. Unlike the many who boast according to the flesh, true Christian put no confidence in it.
 - i. We understand total depravity
 - ii. False repentance concerns itself with conduct; true repentance with man's inner condition. False repentance deals with the symptoms; true repentance with the disease. Only true repentance, which puts no confidence in the flesh, leads to salvation.
7. Benediction –
 - a. **Romans 7:18** For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.