

LESSON 8: PHILIPPIANS 3:17-4:23

Pressing On!

1. In verse 17, Paul calls for us to follow his example, and to keep our eyes on those who walk according to that example. In your Christian life have you been associated with mature believers who have set an example of which you have taken note? Could it be that you are one of those in the fellowship whose Christ-centered life sets the pattern which serves as the example of the “mature Christian?”
2. Who are the “enemies of the cross of Christ” to whom Paul refers in verse 18? What is their destiny? Who (or what) is their god (v. 19)? What does this mean, and how does it have any bearing on our lives today?
3. In order to live a successful life for Christ, then, we need to take account of the lessons and blessings of the past, as well as of the demands and prospects of the future. What demands and prospects of the future are yours as a mature Christian (vv. 3:20-4:1)? Specifically, what does the eager expectation of his return have to do with how you as a Christian should live? What does it mean that our “citizenship is in heaven”? What is the “power” of which Paul speaks? In what way are the Philippians his “joy and crown”? And how are they (and we) to “stand firm in the Lord”?

Stand Firm!

1. What matters more to Paul than the reason for Euodia and Syntyche’s disagreement (vv. 2-3)? What has their disagreement brought about in the fellowship believers? Can you effectively stand firm when there is division in the church? Again, how important is unity (see 1:27-28)?
2. How do you know whose “names are in the book of life” (v. 3)? What is the book of life?
3. Paul commands us to “rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!” (v. 4) How do you understand this command to joy in the Lord?
4. “Let your reasonableness be known to everyone,” Paul writes in verse 5. What do you understand this to mean. What is your reasonableness that (presumably, hopefully!) is known by all?

5. In verse 5, Paul instructs us to “not be anxious about anything.” What is the nature of anxiety? What does Paul offer as the Christian’s antidote to it? What does the fact that “the Lord is at hand” have to do with bringing real comfort to ourselves and others (v. 5-7)? What is the promise offered to us in this regard?

6. What is the nature and character of the peace to which Paul refers in verse 7? Do you need to be able to explain every part of your Christian experience to yourself or to all comers who may ask about the hope that is in you? If you wish to enjoy the peace of God, what must you do?

7. Paul directs us to conform our thought to all that is good and true and excellent (v. 8). What is his teaching on this point? How does the content of our thought shape the contours of our life? And how do we practice these things? What is God’s promise to us if we do? What is it that they had “learned and received and heard and seen” in Paul (v. 9)?

8. “I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content,” Paul writes in verse 11. What is the secret of Christian contentment. Can we say for ourselves what Paul declares of himself, “I can do all things through him who strengthens me” (v. 13)? In what sense is this true?

9. Paul describes the Philippians’ gifts as “a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.” How can generosity be seen as inseparable from Christian relationships? While Paul did not covet gifts, what did he covet (v. 17)?