

Guard Yourself

Phil 3:1-3

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Phil 3:1 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things again is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you. 2 Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision; 3 for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh,

We protect ourselves through rejoicing in the Lord (v.1).

As we walk through life, we will be confronted with various trials, rejoicing keeps our focus on the Lord rather than ourselves.

Mt 13:20-21 "The one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; 21 yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away.

Jas 1:2-4 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. 4 And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Rejoicing in the Lord keep our mind upon Him, rejoicing that Christ has:

Saved, reconciled, adopted, justified, and delivered you; that through His death burial and resurrection He has secured righteousness and justification for you. That He has given you the privilege of having a relationship with Him, etc..

Rejoicing in the Lord keeps you in the presence of Christ.

Ps 16:11 You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.

Ps 84:4 How blessed are those who dwell in Your house! They are ever praising You.

Jude 24 Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy,

We protect ourselves through the Word of God (v. 1).

Repetition [of foundational biblical, gospel truth] is a safeguard for standing in the truth.

Ac 20:32 "And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

Heb 13:9 Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, through which those who were so occupied were not benefited.

1Thes 2:13 For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.

1 Pt 2:2 like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,

2Tim 3:16-17 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

We protect ourselves by watching out for false teachers [teaching] (v. 2).

Paul is referring to the Judaizers. Comparison of Paul to these false teachers:

| Paul | Judaizers |
|--|---|
| Salvation is by grace through faith alone. | Salvation is earned by self-works through keeping all the law. |
| Salvation is a free gift that can't be earned through good works. | Salvation belonged to the Jews only. |
| Salvation is offered to all men of all nations, none are excluded. | For man to experience salvation, he must be circumcised and become a Jew. |

Paul calls these false workers:

1. Dogs - was the lowest title possible to convey contempt and ridicule. Dog does not refer to the house pets of today, but to the wild dogs, roaming the streets, sometimes in packs, hunting in the city streets and garbage dump. They were scavengers and snarlers who could be very vicious and dangerous.

The dog stands for everything that is shamelessly unclean. There could be nothing lower than a dog in the Bible. (Ps 22:16, 20; Deut 23:18; Rev 22:15)

David calls himself a dog to King Saul (1Sam 24:14; 2Ki 8:13)

The Jews called the Gentile dogs. There is a Rabbinical saying, "The nations of the world are like dogs." Paul is saying to the Jewish teachers - "In your proud self-righteousness, you call other men dogs; but it is you who are dogs, because you shamelessly pervert the gospel of Jesus Christ."

2. Evil workers - they teach righteousness comes from obedience to all of the law and the keeping of its traditions. They opposed the Lord Jesus Christ and His salvation by grace alone; denying that salvation is through the atonement the blood of Jesus Christ

Rom 10:3-5 For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes ...

Warnings of false teachers:

Mt 7:15 "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. (1Tim 1:7; 6:3-5; 2Tim 4:3-4; 2Pt 2:1, 19-22)

3. The false circumcision - true circumcision was to be of the heart

Dt 10:16 "So circumcise your heart, and stiffen your neck no longer." (Jer 4:4)

Dt 30:6 "Moreover the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul,

Rom 2:28-29 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. 29 But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.

We protect ourselves by knowing who we are in Christ (v. 3).

1. We are the true circumcision,
Col 2:11 and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ;
2. We worship in the Spirit of God
Jn 4:23-24 “But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. 24 “God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” (Jn 4:19-26)
3. Our only boasting is in Jesus Christ – in what Christ has accomplished for us.
Gal 6:14-15 But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. 15 For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.

Rom 3:27-28 Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. 28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.
4. We place put no confidence in the flesh (our abilities)
Rom 7:4-6 Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God. 5 For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death. 6 But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

Rom 8:3-4 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, 4 so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Note: Our identity and confession as believers in Christ

- I have encouragement, consolation of love, affection and compassion (Phil 2:1)
- I have fellowship with the Spirit (Phil 2:1)
- God is working in me to want to do His will (Phil 2:13)
- God is working in me, giving me the ability to do His will (Phil 2:13)
- I am a child of God (Phil 2:15)
- I shine as a light in this crooked and perverse world (Phil 2:15)
- I am the true circumcision (Phil 3:3)
- I worship in the Spirit of God (Phil 3:3)
- My boast (confidence) is in Christ Jesus and not my own self-efforts (Phil 3:3)

References Used:

The Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible
Letters to the Philippians, by William Barclay