

- I. You would think that since faith in Jesus Christ is essentially simple, and that since salvation is a free gift given to anybody who will believe in Jesus, that walking with the Lord—being a Christian—would always be easy. But such is not the case. **Luke 22:31-32**
- A. Satan wants to sift out our faith
  - B. Faith is a form of specific and real knowledge of God, eternal realities, the person and work of Jesus Christ—all of it.
- II. **Philippians is the Joy and Confidence letter of the NT, yet even here Paul dedicates an entire chapter to a serious instruction.**
- A. **Rejoice in the Lord. 3:1-16**
    - 1. By trusting the New Covenant. We are the real circumcision. 1-4
      - a) Warning against being under any other covenant. 1:3
        - (1) Old Covenant or any religion/philosophy (Col.2:8-9)
    - 2. By staying spiritually bankrupt. 4-11
      - a) Always relying on grace no matter how your spiritual maturity increases.
      - b) Spiritually, never becoming too self-confident or self-supporting.
    - 3. By pressing on in our relationship with the Lord. 12-16
      - a) Forgetting what lies behind
      - b) Pressing on to what lies ahead, pursuing the goal
- III. **By choosing the right kinds of mentors. Philippians 3:17-4:1**
- A. **Follow our example. 17 (2 imperatives)**
    - 1. Join others in following my example (NIV);
    - 2. Take note of the pattern/example we set for you.
    - 3. *A command to take Paul and his companions as mentors in spiritual things.*
  - B. **Because there are a lot of bad examples out there. 18-19**
    - 1. **These are people who claim to be Christians, but aren't.**
      - a) They may be Judaizers. Gal. 2:4-5; Phil. 3:2
        - (1) These people would certainly be “enemies of the cross”
      - b) Or they may be itinerant preachers of license (antinomian).
        - (1) Itinerate “Christians” who advocate a completely undisciplined and sinful life.
    - 2. **They have 5 characteristics:**
      - a) At war with the cross. enemies of the cross
        - (1) Cross represents all the offense of Christianity. (Gal. 5:11, NIV)
        - (2) Many people like Jesus as a teacher, but they don't like the cross.
        - (3) Many people like the idea that God loves them, but reject the idea that they need to be forgiven by the sacrifice of the cross.
        - (4) Cross tells us 4 things we don't want to know:
          - (a) That we are radically out of sync with God's will—sinful.
          - (b) That we are in danger of God's wrath. (worse than crucifixion)
          - (c) That we are helpless to save ourselves (why else the cross)
          - (d) That, therefore, there is salvation in no other name (Acts 4:12; Jn.14:6) (pluralism is not true)
      - b) Committed to themselves. Their appetite is their god (NAS)
        - (1) Self is the driving force in all of life's pursuits.
        - (2) No sense of sacrifice (cross-shaped living)
        - (3) *Even “spirituality” makes me feel better about myself.*
      - c) Twisted in their values. glory is in their shame
        - (1) Proud of that which is actually shameful.

d) Enamored of this world. set their minds on earthly things.

- (1) Greek phrase means “earth-think”
- (2) Enamored = enflamed with love, charmed, captivated.
- (3) **1 Jn.2:15-17.** Lusting after it, worshipping it.

e) On their way to hell. end is destruction

- (1) In other words, not genuine Christians.

**3. Jesus warned against false Christian profession. (Matt.7:21-23)**

- a) These false Christians are dangerous because they attract unsuspecting real Christians and “mentor” them in the wrong way.

**C. But the good examples live differently. 20-21**

**D. So, stand firm in the Lord. 4:1**

**IV. One of the Primary Keys to Rejoicing (3:1) and Standing Firm (4:1): *Who you learn from!* (not just what you learn or what you “teach yourself”)**

**A. Learn from strong believers: Mentors.**

1. We grow by watching others, not just by reading books and sitting in classes.

- a) One of the great myths of our era is that people “make up their own minds” and are not affected by their peer group or teachers. This is simply not true.
  - (1) People usually do what either their peer group says, or what they think will please the people they respect.
- b) Kids act like their parents rather than doing what the parents say.
- c) Students imitate their teachers rather than just taking in the info.

2. It happens naturally, but can be cultivated.

- a) Like a garden. Things grow wild. But you can cultivate and keep a garden.

**B. Four things we should learn from each other, *that the world will never tell us.***

**1. Radical pursuit of Jesus Christ. 12-14 (1 Jn.3:1)**

a) Toward Him personally. 8, 10 “That I may know Him ....”

- (1) Sharing His sufferings? Yes. Sorrow and suffering put one in touch with God.

b) Based on His grasp of us first. 12. (Gal.1:15-17; Jn.15:16)

- (1) Because He had made me His own. He made Me His!!! His Grace precedes my decisions!

c) Focused on the prize of eternity with the Lord personally.

- (1) Many people want heaven (if there is one). They just don’t want God or Christ.
- (2) Ps27:4. With God in His temple forever? In Christ!

**2. Clear Awareness of our true citizenship. 19 (Col. 1:13; 3:1-5)**

a) Not relying on this age for identity. **1 Pet.1:1** (elect exiles: expats)

b) Not looking for life-fulfillment down here.

- (1) The Christian life is very fulfilling, even here and now, but the fulfillment is a byproduct of losing your life to Him—all your desires and hopes.

c) *Which world are you going for? Q, William Kelly*

**3. Eager anticipation of the Lord’s return. 20**

a) A genuine grasp of the reality that Jesus is coming back *unexpectedly*.

- (1) He will rescue us. **I Thess. 4:15-18**

- (2) He will examine us. **II Cor. 5:10**

b) *Patient active expectancy. Not tense, but ready.*

**4. Confident expectancy of resurrection life. 21**

a) Because we have already died and been buried and been raised with Christ.

b) Our humble bodies will be re-made into fabulous new bodies fit for living in God’s presence. (1 Cor.15:35-59)

c) Can you hardly wait to die?