

The Apprentice – Philippians 3:17-21

- No this is not a sermon about Donald Trump’s reality TV show!
- No it’s not about one of the underlying themes of Star Wars!

It’s about how we live into all that God has been proclaiming in Philippians!

What has been proclaimed thus far? What have we been called too?

Ch. 1:1-2–We’re called to be in this thing called the Christian life together

Ch. 1:3-11 – We are called to put Christ at the control center of our lives!

Ch. 1:12-18– We are called to suffer for the gospel & see it as a privilege!

Ch. 1:18-26 – Called to trust in the certainty of Christ amidst uncertainty!

Ch. 1:27-30 – Called to make the gospel look big by living worthy of it.

Ch. 2:1-11 – Called to put the “I” in the right place – “C”, “E”, “I”!

Ch. 2:12-18 – Called to work, not for, but work out our salvation!

Ch. 2:19-30 – We are called to be a family! Don’t just go to church, be it!

Ch. 3:1-9 – Watch out for the dogs! Find your joy “in the Lord” alone!

Ch. 3:10-16 – Reach/strive to meet the milestones of Spiritual growth!

This seems like a tall order, and it is, but we are not called to this alone!

Vs. 17 – “Brothers, join in...” NIV - “Join with others...” It’s a team effort!

The old cliché rings true – “You can’t, but we can!” Example of the Trinity

If we are made in God’s image & there is a plurality to God, what does that say about us? A life following Christ is a life joined with other believers!

We need each other, but we also need mentors/guides/examples to follow!

The rest of Vs. 16 says, **“Join with others in following my example, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you.”**

We are to be following in the footsteps of others who are living rightly!

For Paul, living rightly is living according to the pattern given in the gospel!

The gospel is not just the ABCs of the Christian life, it is the A to Z of it!

Are we walking in accordance with it, are we walking in it together?

The Greek word “stoichein” means “to walk in a row.”

Are we in line with the gospel? And who are we following?

Paul is calling us in this passage to “be an apprentice!” To keep our eyes on, take note of, imitate those who are living out the gospel! Learn from them!

Paul sets himself up as such an example, not arrogantly, but intentionally.

We all need examples to follow, but make sure they are following Christ!

Paul says, **“Follow my example as I follow the example of Christ.” 1 Cor. 11:1**

A master tradesman is worthy of following b/c he has shown himself to be such, & anyone who truly wants to master a trade becomes his apprentice!

For Paul, this is so important b/c too many Christians are being led astray!

Vs 18 – “For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ!”

Who are these enemies of the cross of Christ?

Anyone who adds too or takes away from the gospel of Jesus Christ!

To add to, is to say that the atonement is not the only way of salvation!

To subtract from, is when the atonement of Jesus has no effect on your life!

Vs 19 – “Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things.”

Again, the importance to being an apprentice to a Christian Jedi-master:

- It keeps the end goal/milestone in focus!
- It keeps us from only focusing on our own selfish desires!
- It keeps us humble, admitting our limitations & confessing our sin!
- It ensures that we celebrate the right things!
- It defines for us what we should be setting our minds on.

Paul has witnessed too many become enemies of the cross of Christ b/c they weren’t led well!

Who is leading well in our church? Are we following? Who are we leading?

We are called to live as citizens of heaven! Find an ambassador for His Kingdom and get in line with them, and lead others as you follow Christ!

Small Group Transformation Group Questions

- 1) Before this week's sermon there have been 10 messages given by Pastor Dan from the book of Philippians as highlighted in this week's sermon outline. Which one has impacted you most and why?
- 2) That which Paul is calling us to in this letter is a tall order. Why is it a good thing that this list is difficult/impossible for us to reach alone?
- 3) Why is the term "Lone-ranger Christian" an oxymoron?
- 4) Why is it so important to have a mentor in the Christian life? Do you have one? Why or why not?
- 5) Are those we are "walking in a row" with on a regular basis "citizens of heaven" or "enemies of the cross of Christ?" What impact are they having on us?
- 6) Why is the gospel not just the ABC's of the Christian life, but also the A to Z of it?
- 7) Have you ever been an apprentice? Have you ever been the master? What did you learn from each role & how can it be applied to the Christian life?
- 8) How does being a citizen of heaven define your life, how you live, and who you are striving to become?
- 9) In what specific areas of your life do you need to "imitate Paul as he imitates Christ?"

This week's verses

Philippians 3:17

1 Corinthians 11:1

2 Timothy 2:15

Matthew 7:15

1 John 2:15

Philippians 3:20