

BROKEN CHAINS
The Philippian Series #12
June 11th, 2017

TEXT: Philippians 3:1-14

CONSIDER THIS: As much as we desire that the things which hold us back (discouragement, worry, guilt, shame, regret, anger, resentment, fear, depression, grief, etc.,) become **BROKEN CHAINS**, there is a real danger that we will become **CHAIN MAKERS**. Today's passage warns us about the chains of false spirituality and points us to the only true **CHAIN BREAKER** – Jesus Christ!

GOD'S WORD TEACHES US ...

I THE CALL TO JOY (3:1)

- A) This constant theme of Philippians is explicitly or implicitly referred to 18 times in this short letter. The fact that it is a command reminds us that at the most fundamental level, joy is a choice of the will.
- B) "in the Lord" ... your joy and ability to rejoice is directly connected to your relationship with Jesus Christ. Only when you pursue intimacy with Jesus as your number one priority and take hold of the One Who has taken hold of you will joy become a constant companion on your spiritual journey through a life lived in a fallen world.

II WARNING! CHAINS BEING FORGED! (3:2-3)

- A) False forms of spirituality are the most destructive and enslaving power on earth. This is where chains become unbreakable. Look out! Beware!
- B) The immediate reference in 3:2 is to the Judaizers. These were Jews who professed to be Christians. Their relentless agenda was to convince Gentile Christians that faith in Jesus was **not enough**. To become a Christian, according to the Judaizers, required taking on Jewish ways and this meant circumcision was necessary. Circumcision was a sacred command for Old Testament Jews (see Genesis 17:11-14). The Judaizers were the kind of people who said they were trusting in Christ for their salvation, but their real hope was not in what **Christ had done**, it was in their own effort and deeds.

Churches in America are filled with people who wear the label of Christian, but when you really press them for an answer about why they hope to be in Heaven they appeal to the good things they have done and the bad things they have not done. This kind of thinking robbed the Galatians of their joy (see Galatians 4:8-11, 15A).

- C) False spirituality has many faces, but it primarily produces two attitudes:
1. **Insecurity** ... have I done enough? Am I good enough? Have I lost my place in Heaven? What if I mess up?
 2. **Pride** ... I am a good person. I have been baptized. I attend church. I have not done the bad things he/she has done. I am more spiritual than him (see Luke 18:9-14).
- NOTE:** Both the insecure person and the prideful person tend to measure themselves against other people. This forges the chains that enslave. We must fix our eyes on Jesus Christ **alone**. This was Paul's message to the Philippians.
- D) Other types of false spirituality include asceticism (harsh rules; Colossians 2:20-23), antinomianism (no rules; Jude 4, 8) and mysticism (only I know the rules; Colossians 2:18).
- E) Along with the false spirituality Paul warns about in 3:1-3, the other major **JOY KILLER** in Philippians is the presence of broken relationships that have not been addressed biblically (Philippians 4:2-3 and 2:1-4).

III PAUL'S TESTIMONY (3:4-14)

- A) In 3:4-7 Paul out Judaizes the Judaizers to give credibility to his rejection of the Judaizers (this was not a rejection of biblical Judaism!).
- B) Genuine Christianity, true spirituality, joy that endures ... it all comes from and is about Christ alone. The righteousness by which we stand and by which we have **BROKEN CHAINS** does not come from our efforts, it is through Christ Who gives us His righteousness (3:9).
- C) Salvation encompasses the past, present and future. Justification is our standing. Sanctification is our living. Glorification is our destiny. Following Paul's teachings:
1. I give my past to Christ (3:13; I Timothy 1:15-16).
 2. I live my present for Christ (3:12)
 3. I trust my future to Christ (3:14; 20-21)
- D) Joy, Peace, Contentment. These glorious promises found in Philippians 4 are rooted in finding our greatest satisfaction in knowing Christ. He is Savior, Brother, King, Friend, Redeemer, Intercessor, Shepherd, Provider, Reconciler, God, Lord, Giver of gifts. His love for me is perfect. Nothing I accomplish will cause Him to love me more. No failure of mine will cause Him to love me less. He is for me, not against me. Nothing in all creation can separate me from the love of God that is mine in Christ Jesus the Lord (Romans 8:28-39).

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