

THE CHRISTIAN HOPE

Text: Philippians 3:17-21

INTRODUCTION: Here are presented two types of people and their conduct and character and consummation. Paul is warning the people against following the example of certain people. He gives a withering denunciation of those whose example it would be fatal to follow. Paul weeps as he speaks because these people are in the Church. Professing grace, nevertheless they pervert it. They are professed Christians who bring reproach upon Christ by their conduct.

1. The Disguise they wear--The pose as friends of the Gospel but their practice shows them to be enemies of the cross.

2. The Doom they face--"Their end is destruction."

3. The Diet they serve. "Whose god is their belly." We have here a terrible description of what the real religion of many men really is. They conceive of no higher good than the satisfaction of their bodily appetites. This is the NEW IDOLATRY: to make the senses and whatever gratifies them our chief delight and our god. It is an idolatry that pervades the ranks of professing Christians.

4. The Disgrace they bear. "They glory in their shame." The things they are most proud of are the miserable successes of which they ought to be ashamed.

5. The Disposition they display. "Who mind earthly things." Their lives are horizontal--all soil and no sky. They wear the Christian label, but libel the Christian spirit. No error is so fatal as to look only to material good.

But the difference is--they are earthly, we are heavenly. Our citizenship is in heaven. "We are a colony of heaven." The pattern of life we must follow is "in heaven." Although we live on the earth, our real country is in heaven. The Philippians would understand this. Philippi was a Roman colony. Even though miles from Rome, it was just like Rome. The people acted like they did in Rome; wore Roman clothes, spoke Latin, etc. Paul is saying, "Just as the Roman colonists never forget that they belong to Rome, you must never forget that you are citizens of heaven; and your conduct must match your citizenship." Wherever the Christian is, his conduct must prove that he is a citizen of the Kingdom of heaven, and our King is Jesus Christ. Do not be intent on earthly things. The Christian is not a settler here; he is a pilgrim. The Christian is the Great Anticipator. "The best is yet to be." He is the man with the forward look. Here are the Components of the Christian Hope.

III. THE PROVISION OF A SUPPLEMENT RESERVE

"By the power which enables him to subject all things to himself."

If any one has attained to the glory of plain living, he must recall the power of the Holy Spirit.

I. PROCLAIMS A SURE RETURN

"We await a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ."

1. Saviour is a word seldom used in the New Testament. It originally meant a king who was supposed to have saved the state in a time of crisis.

(1) Paul thinks of the Church as an outpost of the mother city in heaven. It looks in that direction for a deliverer, the true Lord, to whom it owes allegiance, and who will not forget it in its distress.

(2) The Church is militant, not triumphant. The coming conflict the antichrist--persecution--promise of Scripture-2 Thess 1:7.

2. Our attitude is to be one of expectation. At best earth still has its sorrows. Our eyes are turned heavenward. Christ is the King in the heavenly kingdom. He is coming back to complete His glorious work.

The word "await" means an attitude of intense yearning; eager waiting--attention is withdrawn from everything else and is centered and concentrated on one object, Christ.

3. This is a sudden return--startling, shocking the unbelieving world. The promise of the first coming of the Messiah was long in realization, but in the fulness of time Christ came. Christ's own word is "Watch," that we may be ready.

II. PROMISES A SPLENDID REDEMPTION.

"Who shall change our vile body like unto his glorious body." The King will come and will finish His work.

1. Vile means lowly, humiliated. The body itself is not vile--but our bodies are subject to decay and death, valueless. Our bodies are imperfect mediums through which we try to live a spiritual life. The word means the unfitness of our present bodies to fulfil the claims of the spiritual life.

2. He will refashion and change our bodies, like unto his body of glory. We shall be fit for the family of God in heaven. We shall have on the garment of glory--suitable for our new environment in heaven.

3. At this transformation our bodies will then become a perfect medium through which our inner spiritual lives can express themselves. Heaven will be unhampered fellowship and worship with Christ. Is this our hope, our greatest desire? If we really loved Jesus more, revival would break out in our church. This is the expectation of love.

III. THE PROVISION OF A SUFFICIENT RESOURCE

"By the power which enables him to subject all things to himself."

If any one hesitates at the stupendous claim that Paul makes--he must recall the power at Christ's disposal.

Questions? There are many questions. The answer is simply this: "He is Able."

1. There are two things in Scripture of paramount importance.

(1) In the death and resurrection of Christ God invaded the domain of sin and Satan. The overthrow of Satan has begun.

(2) Not only the church, but also the whole world is now moving toward a purposed consummation under the Lordship of Christ. This is to be the exhibition of the victory which He has already won at Calvary.

(3) The ultimate outcome is never in doubt. Sin will be uprooted. Suffering will be ended. Disease will be banished. Rebellion will be put down. Death will be hurled into the pit.

"Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Doth his successive journeys run;
His kingdom spread from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no more."

2. The world says, "How?" HE IS ABLE. Allow God to be God.

Where is your hope?

I. THE MEANING OF RECONCILIATION

"Having been alienated from God by our sins, we are reconciled to Him through the death of His only Son, Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:10)

1. The word "reconciliation" means to make something other than it was; a radical change in relationships. It is a new stage in our mental and spiritual development in which previous hostility of mind has been put away by some decisive act. It is the changed relations between God and man which are the result of the death and resurrection of Christ.

2. It is making Peace--the ending of War.

II. THE METHOD OF RECONCILIATION

"Through the blood of His cross." "In the body of His flesh through death."

1. It is provided by Grace. The wounded party sought the reconciliation. "Where art thou?" "Away should have gone to God and we should have seen you."