

Bible Study Series 4, Week 8

Personal Bible Study

Day: 1

Read Philippians 3: 17

In verse 17 Paul uses himself as an example to the faithful. He addresses them in the intimate way as "brothers" or as The Message translates it as "friends." This once again shows his love for the congregation. With this he also place emphasis on the close relationship between them.

1. Is it not presumptuous of Paul to more or less push himself to the front? In your answer keep the following in mind:
 - Christ is always the best example. Read Philippians 2: 5-8. In Corinthians 11: 1 you will see that it is not uncommon for Paul to use himself as an example.
 - Paul's humility can be seen clearly in verse 13. This is what he has just written to the congregation.
2. What are the matters that he tells them to follow his example in according to verse 7-14?

We really have an urgent need of Christians that live an exemplary life (1 Timothy 4: 12!) If God's mercy is manifested in the lives of Christians it is still the best "proof" that Christ is alive.

Day: 2

Read Philippians 3: 18

Paul is crying. One does not expect it from such a deep person as Paul. Most of the time we see it as "beneath us" to show our emotions - especially when it comes to religion.

1. Which emotions can you identify in Paul in the following verses: 1 Corinthians 15: 9, 1 Timothy 1: 15-16, Ephesians 3: 8 and 2 Corinthians 11: 28?
2. The emotional has a place in our religious experience. Read Matthew 22: 37 and decide whether you agree.

Day: 3

Read Philippians 3: 18

1. When Paul gets emotional and cries, he did not work himself up into this state. He is weeping because of the many members of the congregation who are "enemies of the cross of Christ" and because there are so many of them!

2. In contrast to the enemies of the cross there are also many "friends of the cross." What do you learn from Mathew 20: 28, Romans 15: 3, Philippians 2: 5-8 and Galatians 6: 14?

Day: 4

Read Philippians 3: 19

Let's have a look at these people.

"Whose end is destruction" Being cast out for ever, lost! Compare Matthew 25: 46.

"Whose god is their belly" Some think Paul is speaking about the Jews here. He previously called them "dogs" (week 6, day 1 and 2) They were very careful to eat only certain foods (as prescribed by the law) - so they definitely made a "god" of their stomach. It is far more likely though that he was speaking of the Christians who allowed themselves all kinds of sexual freedom because they believed that as long as "you had God in your heart, the devil can stay in your body"

"Whose glory is in their shame" this is self explanatory in the light of the previous.

"Those who mind earthly things" The end of their horizon is the earth. They are not familiar with the vertical line, the connection to God.

1. Read 1 Corinthians 6: 19-20 and test your life to it.
2. How is one supposed to act against the "enemies of the cross?"

Day: 5

Read Philippians 3: 20

The second coming of Christ is one of the most wonderful Biblical truths, but for most of us it is not really important for our every day spiritual life. Paul looked forward to it very much.

1. What is the attitude we should have towards the second coming of Christ?
2. Read the following and try and see if you can identify the people concerned's attitude towards it: 2 Thessalonians 2: 1-2, Revelations 2: 8-11 and 3: 14-22.

Day: 6

Read Philippians 3: 20

On the basis of your birth you are a citizen of the country you were born in, but on the grounds of your salvation you are also a citizen of God's kingdom in heaven.

1. Have John 3: 3 and John 1: 12 become true for you already? Without it Philippians 3: 20 is not possible.

2. If you are a citizen of heaven already, have a look at what Romans 8: 16-17, Hebrews 11: 3, 1 Peter 1: 3-5 and 2: 11 has to say to you!
3. Do you experience something of it in your life? Motivate your answer.

Group Bible Study

Read Philippians 3: 17-21

1. Paul writes in verse 20 that we are "citizens of heaven." We have dual citizenship, an earthly one and one in Heaven. How is a citizen of heaven supposed to act on earth? (Compare Romans 13: 1-7 and Matthew 22: 17-21.)
2. What is a Christian to do when the government acts in a unchristian way according to him?
3. Paul often said "be my followers" or "be imitators together of me" as in verse 17. We really have a need of Christians that live an exemplary life!
4. Should Paul not rather have said that we must be followers of Christ? Motivate your answer.
5. In what are the congregation supposed to follow him according to verse 7-14?
6. Discuss: "we should still live in such a way that we can, in clear conscience, beg for others to become the way we are. (Compare Galatians 4: 12.)
7. In verse 21 Paul speak of "our body of humiliation." Discuss: "Our bodies are inferior and not important to God - it is only the soul that is important and that should be saved." Have a look at 1 Corinthians 6: 12-20.
8. As member of the heavenly state we are one day going to have glorified bodies. What does the Bible teach us about it in Romans 8: 29, 1 Corinthians 15: 2, 1 Corinthians 15: 49 and 1 John 3: 2?
9. With His second coming Christ is bringing the big change. How does Paul explain it in 1 Corinthians 15: 51-55? Also read 1 Corinthians 15: 42-50. What is the message in it for you as a group?