

## ***Three Ways to Identify True Christians***

August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017

### ***Philippians 3:1-3***

Paul moves toward closing his letter with the encouragement “Rejoice in the Lord”!  
“In the Lord” means that Christians are trusting in God’s sovereignty over every situation in our lives. Christians rejoice in His finished work of salvation, His will, purpose, design, plan, and ultimate destiny for our lives to glorify His name and for the display of His splendor!

#### **Paul warns the Christians to be alert for dissensions and for those promoting legalism within the church!**

*“Same things”*

- We need constant reminders to be alert!
  - 2 Peter 1:12-15

*“No trouble to me and is safe for you.”*

- These exhortations were given for the well-being of the church.

*“Look out for the dogs”!*

- “Dogs” was a derogatory title.  
*Revelation 22:15 “Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.”*

*“Evildoers...those who mutilate the flesh”*

“Paul’s opponents here may be either Christians (as in Galatians) [Galatians 5:1-15] or non-Christians who champion the law of Moses and insist on circumcision as the badge of salvation. (cf. Acts 15:1).”<sup>1</sup>

#### **In Contrast, Paul gives the three identifying indicators of true Christians.**

##### 1. “Who worship by the Spirit of God”

- ❖ Jesus’ insight into worshipping God ...
  - John 4:22-24
- ❖ Worship of God is not going through the motions of Sunday liturgy – but genuine, heart-felt, sincere expression of our adoration to God, moved by His Holy Spirit!
- ❖ God designed worship to be expressive!
  - Psalm 47:1; 98:4-6; 63:4; 149:1-3; 150:3-5
- ❖ Worship and Praise is a choice!
  - Psalm 101:1-3; 103:1-5; 104:33

##### 2. “[Who] glory in Christ Jesus”

Glory: (Greek – *Kauchaomai*) “to boast...”<sup>2</sup>

Boast: “Magnify or exalt. ... To exult in confident expectation.”<sup>3</sup>

*1 Corinthians 1:30-31 “And because of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, ‘Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.’”*

- Colossians 3:1-4

*Galatians 2:20 “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”*

*Philippians 1:21 “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”*

- ❖ To follow Jesus means to obey His word!

*Luke 6:46-49 “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you? ...”*

*Matthew 28:20 “teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. ...”*

*2 Corinthians 13:8 “For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth.”*

### 3. “[Who] put not confidence in the flesh”

- ❖ Beware of taking credit for the good things or accomplishments in your life!

- ❖ “Flesh” means our natural inclinations.

*Galatians 5:16-21 “Now the works of the flesh are evident...” (verse 19)*

*1 Corinthians 4:7 “... ‘What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?’”*

*1 John 2:15-17*

“As Calvin points out, to place one’s confidence, i.e. one’s trust, in anything outside of Christ is to have ‘confidence in the flesh’; and this would subvert the gospel and endanger the soul. Therefore such confidence is to be rejected.”<sup>4</sup>

- ❖ Christian can have confidence in God in the midst of trials!

- 1 John 4:1-6

#### Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup> Sproul, R.C. *The Reformation Study Bible*. Orlando: Ligonier Ministries, 2005.

<sup>2</sup> Vine, W.E. *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words*. Nashville: T. Nelson Publishers, 1997.

<sup>3</sup> Webster, Noah. *American Dictionary of the English Language (1828 Facsimile Edition)*. San Francisco: Foundation for American Christian Education, 1989.

<sup>4</sup> Martin, Ralph P. *The Epistles of Paul to the Philippians: an introduction and commentary*. Grand Rapids : Eerdmans, 1978. (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries)

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