

Series: Standfast in the Lord

# BEWARE

## PHILIPPIANS 3

Text: Philippians 3:2

### ***Philippians 3:2***

<sup>2</sup> **Beware** of dogs, **beware** of evil workers, **beware** of the concision.

Introduction:

In Philippians 3:1-3, the apostle Paul contrasts true and counterfeit Christianity.

To understand this section of Philippians, you must know a bit of history.

Soon after the gospel began to spread among the Gentiles, some Jewish men who claimed also to believe in Christ began teaching the Gentile converts that they could not be saved unless they also were circumcised according to the Law of Moses.

They did not deny that a person must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, but they added to faith in Christ the keeping of the Jewish law, especially circumcision, as necessary for salvation.

It is this group of false teachers that Paul warns about in these bewarees.

In this verse Paul gives three things to beware of.

- Dogs
- Evil Workers
- Concision

Note as we consider these bewarees Paul gives to the believers at Philippi and may they serve as warning for us as well.

Sermon Content:

## **1. PAUL DESIRED TO SAFEGUARD THEM FROM A COLD CHRISTIAN LIFE**

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

*<sup>1</sup> Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe.*

God never meant for the Christian life to be a burden but a blessing.

God never intended the Christian life to be endured but enjoyed.

In the book of Philippians Paul more than once stated that the Christian life should be a joyful one.

***Philippians 1:18***

*<sup>18</sup> What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.*

***Philippians 1:26***

*<sup>26</sup> That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again.*

***Philippians 2:2***

*<sup>2</sup> Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.*

***Philippians 2:18***

*<sup>18</sup> For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me.*

***Philippians 4:4***

*<sup>4</sup> Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.*

A. This rejoicing is commanded

How can you obey this command and keep your heart rejoicing.

Notice that this rejoicing is "*in the Lord.*"

The secret is to not let anything come between you and Christ.

B. This rejoicing is to be continual – “Rejoice in the Lord always” (Phil 4:4)

Note only did Paul desire to Safeguard Them From a Cold Christian Life but also:

## **2. PAUL DESIRED TO SAFEGUARD THEM FROM A CORRUPT CHRISTIAN LIFE**

### ***Philippians 3:1-2***

*<sup>1</sup> Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe. <sup>2</sup> Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.*

The message was worth repeating because there is the danger of being corrupted by those who seek to corrupt us.

Just like today, in Paul's day there were false teachers who sought to corrupt people doctrinally and spiritually.

The Lord on several occasions warned about false teachers and told us to watch out for their corrupt teachings and ways.

**Matthew 24:4-5**

*<sup>4</sup> And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. <sup>5</sup> For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.*

Note these that Paul warned about:

A. They were Devouring

Paul called them "*dogs*." When he spoke of dogs he was not talking about a pet.

He was speaking of the filthy scavengers that existed in his day. In those days there were packs of mangy, flea-bitten, vicious, starved scavengers that ran the streets and garbage dumps. They did nothing but devour and destroy.

I don't know of a better description of false teachers and prophets than "dogs."

They are spiritual scavengers and predators that devour and destroy.

Have you ever noticed that the cults and false teachers spend very little time reaching the lost, but are always after the saved?

Church people are their primary target.

They want to make other church members their converts.

They are like a pack of mangy dogs.

Not only were they Devouring but also note:

### B. They were Depraved

Paul also calls them "*evil workers.*"

The word "evil" speaks of that which is depraved.

These false teachers were corrupt on the inside, thus that what they were on the outside.

"They were men of fair words and foul conduct."

They may call themselves good but they were bad.

Not only were they Devouring and Depraved but also note:

### C. They are Deceiving

These false teachers did not deny that faith was the essential element in salvation, but they added works as a prerequisite for salvation.

False teachers often say a lot of truth that is right.

But it is the error they add to the right that is deceiving.

Quote:

The most dangerous thing is that which is closest to the truth.

They were not only devouring and depraved, but were also deceiving the people by what they taught.

Three times Paul said, "Beware."

You get the idea that he wanted the Philippians believers to safeguard their life from being spiritually and doctrinally corrupted.

Note only did Paul desire to Safeguard Them from a Cold and Corrupt Christian Life but lastly:

### **3. PAUL WANTED TO SAFEGUARD THEM FROM A CONFUSED CHRISTIAN LIFE**

#### ***Philippians 3:3***

*<sup>3</sup> For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.*

After Paul described the false he described the real.

He names some essentials and foundational stones of the Christian faith.

He says, "*For we are the circumcision.*"

Paul was making reference to a physical ordinance that was symbolic of the covenant made with Abraham.

There were Christian Jews who were insisting that in order for one to become a part of the kingdom of God this physical ordinance had to be observed.

Paul declares three great essentials of those who are truly saved and a part of the kingdom of God.

He speaks of certain things one should not be confused or uncertain about.

#### A. The privilege of salvation

First Paul speaks of how we "*worship God in the Spirit.*"

To a Jew; access to God was limited.

It involved a special place and a special person – the priest.

But Paul declares that we all have access to God and the privilege of worshipping Him.

As believers we have an unlimited access, an unhindered access, and an unrestricted access.

Not only did Paul speak about the Privilege of Salvation but also:

B. The person of salvation

Secondly Paul says, *"Rejoice in Christ Jesus."*

The word "rejoice" that Paul uses in this case means to "boast in."

Paul is saying that our ground of boasting is the Lord Jesus.

The songwriters said it well:

*Nothing in my hand I bring  
Simply to Thy Cross I cling.*

*On Christ the solid rock I stand  
All other ground is sinking sand.*

Not only did Paul speak about the Privilege and the Person of Salvation but also:

C. The provision of salvation

Finally Paul says that we are to *"have no confidence in the flesh."*

Paul was saying that salvation does not come by what we do, but by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus and the salvation He purchased and provided.

Close:

These truths need to be settled in our hearts.

Don't be cold, corrupted, and confused.

That's a message worth repeating!

This makes it possible for us to Stand Fast In the Lord.