

Philippians 3:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:

Analysis

For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ (πολλοὶ γὰρ περιπατοῦσιν οὓς πολλάκις ἔλεγον ὑμῖν, νῦν δὲ καὶ κλαίων λέγω, τοὺς ἐχθροὺς τοῦ σταυροῦ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, polloi gar peripatousin hous pollakis elegon hymin, nyn de kai klaiōn legō, tous echthrous tou staurou tou Christou)—Polloi ("many")—numerous false teachers. Pollakis elegon ("I told often")—repeated warnings. Klaiōn legō ("weeping I tell")—Paul's tears show pastoral grief, not mere polemic. Echthrous tou staurou ("enemies of the cross")—they oppose cross-theology. Who are they? Possibly Judaizers (who add works to cross, nullifying its sufficiency, Gal 5:11) or antinomian libertines (who abuse grace, 2 Pet 2:19). Context (vv. 2-3, 19) suggests former. Paul's tears reveal heart: false teaching damns souls, warranting sorrow, not just anger.

Historical Context

Paul wept over those destroying gospel (Acts 20:31; 2 Cor 2:4). Unlike detached philosophers debating ideas, Paul anguished over souls. 'Enemies of the cross' aren't atheists but religious people whose teaching undermines cross's sufficiency. Judaizers taught circumcision necessary for salvation (Acts 15:1), making cross inadequate—hence 'enemies.' Early church battled both legalism (add works to faith) and libertinism (abuse grace). Both oppose cross-theology: Christ's work is necessary and sufficient.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. Who are the 'enemies of the cross' in contemporary contexts—those undermining its sufficiency?
2. How do Paul's tears ('weeping I tell') model appropriate emotional engagement with false teaching?
3. What teachings today add requirements to the cross or abuse grace, making them 'enemies of the cross'?

Interlinear Text

πολλοὶ γὰρ περιπατοῦσιν οὓς πολλάκις λέγω ὑμῖν
many (For walk of whom often I have told you
G4183 G1063 G4043 G3739 G4178 G3004 G5213

νῦν δὲ καὶ κλαίων λέγω τοὺς ἐχθροὺς
now and you even weeping I have told that they are the enemies
G3568 G1161 G2532 G2799 G3004 G3588 G2190

τοῦ σταυροῦ τοῦ Χριστοῦ
of the cross of Christ
G3588 G4716 G3588 G5547

Additional Cross-References

Ephesians 4:17 (Parallel theme): This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,

Isaiah 8:11 (Parallel theme): For the LORD spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying,

Galatians 6:12 (Cross): As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.

Jeremiah 13:17 (Parallel theme): But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride; and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the LORD'S flock is carried away captive.

Galatians 2:14 (Parallel theme): But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

Galatians 1:7 (References Christ): Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

2 Peter 2:10 (Parallel theme): But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.

1 Thessalonians 4:6 (Parallel theme): That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.

Philippians 1:4 (Parallel theme): Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy,