

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	G3588	that they are the enemies
G3568	G1161	G2532	G2799	G3004		G2190
τοῦ	σταυροῦ	τοῦ	Χριστοῦ			
G3588	of the cross	G3588	of Christ			
	G4716		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,