

Philippians 3:17-4:1

“Keep Our Eyes On Jesus”

February 21, 2016

Our text begins; **“Join with others in following my example.”** This is a call for us Christians to join together. Not only are we to join together in worship, but in all things because we are facing a fight for our souls. When we become Christians, we no longer are of this world. We now are part of God’s Kingdom. Our struggle is to stay in God’s Kingdom and not allow the distractions of our world to pull us back into the world. Those distractions have been defined in our text as **“earthly things”** or the **“god of their stomach.”**

The world calls us away from God. When we get upset with someone, it is hard to be in fellowship with them and puts a strain on our relationship with God. The church has so many divisions because of so many strong personalities among other things. These strong personalities claim that their way is the only way. Strong personalities are not wrong if they humbly submit to God rather than trying to demand that others do it their way. Strong personalities can even be right but still be offense to others because they try to bully their way rather than humbly submit to God and allow His will to be done.

We are blessed by a man called Martin Luther. He was a strong personality that saw a wrong and he set about exposing it. He was also a man of his times. He

used strong offensive language to challenge others to see it his way. I wonder how many more souls would have listened to him if he had used less offensive language. Likewise would people listen to a person who was less offensive? The struggle is that Paul used the same kind of language in the Holy Spirit inspired letters that he wrote. I think of the passage in Galatians where he wished that those false teachers would cut off their private parts. I guess our task is to be humble and look beyond the personality and hear what God through the Holy Spirit is saying to us. Think of it this way, contrast Ben Carson and Donald Trump.

In Hebrews it says to **“keep our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.”** Bills that need paying are an ever present reality in our lives. Health concerns are an ever present reality in our lives. Family problems are an ever present reality in our lives. The list of world distractions could go on and on. These distractions of the world are not going to be solved this moment if ever. These distractions will continue as long as we live. Often these distractions increase and multiply as we get older. They can even cause us serious faith problems if we are not able to find the peace of the Lord in the midst of them.

Again our purpose is to join together and encourage each other in the faith. Our purpose is to point each other to Jesus so that we remain strong in Him as we face the distractions of our world. Therefore, the greatest words that we can say to

each other are that “Jesus loves you.” If our relationship is strained, then those words will not be received well.

Some people want us to agree with them or they reject us. We cannot agree when someone is wrong in the eyes of the Lord. Abortion is wrong because we are taking a life. Sex outside of marriage is wrong because among other things it can lead to the need for an abortion. Those who engage in these things are focused upon earthly things and it is getting them in trouble with God. Abortion and sex outside of marriage can even be socially acceptable in the eyes of the world and still be wrong in the eyes of God. Sadly when we do wrong, other Christians find it harder to trust us and that encourages distance in our relationships.

The need for sex outside of marriage is not just because of lust although that plays a part. The need for sex outside of marriage can also be an issue of feeling insecure about ourselves. I need that relationship to prove that I am significant. Again we are coming back to the need of Christians to support each other and encourage each other in the faith. When we feel insecure no amount of encouragement can change our mind about ourselves. When we feel insecure no amount of worldly relationships can reassure us that we are significant. When we and those around us point to the Lord Jesus Christ who gave His life for us, we can see that we are significant in the eyes of our God. We do dumb things and we can pay a terrible price because we are insecure, but Christ paid the greater price as He

the innocent one paid for our sins on the Cross at Calvary so that we can share eternity together. Amen.