

*MOTHER'S DAY ~ May 13, 2012*



## **PHILIPPIANS: To Know Christ and Make Him Known**

### **“The Fight” Philippians 3:17–4:1**

This week we continue our study of Philippians – one of Paul’s warmest and most personal letters in the New Testament.

While warm and personal, this week’s passage also shows that Paul was a controversialist when he needed to be. He warns the Philippians that “many live as enemies of the cross of Christ.” He knows that the Philippians are going to be (as the hymn says) “tossed about with many a conflict, many a doubt; fightings and fears within, without.”

This is why Paul encourages the Philippians to stand firm in the Lord by following good examples, avoiding false teaching, and thinking often about future glory. May we at UPC do likewise!



## KNOWING GOD

**Read Philippians 3:17-4:1.** In light of what Paul says earlier in Philippians 3, who are the “enemies of the cross of Christ” that he refers to in 3:18? Why does Paul say in verse 19, “Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame”?

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Why should we take theological error seriously?

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How does meditating on our future glorification enable us to “stand firm in the Lord” (4:1) in the present?

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## GROWING TOGETHER

What does it mean to you on an everyday, practical level to think that your citizenship is in heaven (3:20)?

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Philippians 3:17 is a great reminder that we need role models and mentors in our lives. Name a couple of heroes or examples that have had a big impact on you, and tell why.

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You probably know at least one person who is not “standing firm in the Lord” these days. Whatever the reason may be, how can you serve that person?

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Note Paul’s affectionate language in this week’s passage. Twice he calls the Philippians his brothers (3:17, 4:1). In 4:1 he adds the term “dear friends,” or “beloved.” In that same verse Paul says he loves (from the Greek word *agape*) and longs for the Philippians, and calls them his “joy and crown.” What do you learn from this? How does your talk about other Christians compare or contrast with Paul’s?

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## **IN YOUR FAMILY...**

(a) The best way to help your children avoid what is false is to nourish them diligently on what is true. Are you having family devotions – a time when the family gathers around to read and discuss the Bible and pray together? It’s an essential part of parenting and helps build spiritual habits in your children’s lives.

(b) You may have been a bit shocked by Paul’s strong language in 3:18-19. Can you think of current examples of people who, because of their heretical teaching, are enemies of the gospel and whose priority is material gain rather than heavenly glory? Help your children understand that it’s important to be people of truth as well as grace.

# **SERMON NOTES**