

23/05/10 (pm) - Series on Philippians - Sermon 23

The Armour of Knowing

Philippians 3:1b-3

Theme: To guard themselves against harmful teaching, Christians must be clear about what they are in Christ.

The Circumcision Group

(*cf.* Titus 1:10)

They were also known as Judaisers.

They were Jewish Christians who taught that faithfulness to Old Testament ceremonial Law had to be added to faith in Christ, in other words that Gentile Christians had to become Jews, *cf.* Acts 15:1, 5.

A Threefold Description of the Circumcision Group (3:2)

Paul used strong language against the
Judaisers.

1. Beware of those dogs.

2. Beware of those men who do evil.

The Judaisers engaged in energetic
missionary activity to make converts.

3. Beware of those mutilators of the flesh.

They placed emphasis on *physical* circumcision.

The Gospel concerned circumcision of the *heart*, *cf.* Deuteronomy 10:16; Romans 2:28-29.

Any Christian embracing circumcision
would be adding to God's grace,
putting a "+" sign after Christ
concerning salvation.

There are dogs, workers of evil,
mutilators today.

Many draw people away from faith *in
Christ alone* for salvation.

*Christians must be on guard against
such teaching, recognise it, not fall
prey to it, condemn it.*

A Threefold Description of the True Circumcision (3:3)

Paul condemns Judaisers as *the mutilators* (false circumcision).

He reminds the Philippians that Christians are the true circumcision.

Romans 2:28-29.

He then defines what a Christian is:

1. Those who worship by the Spirit of God.

Worship means service in terms of how Christians are devoted to the Lord in the way they live.

The true circumcision are serving by the power of the indwelling Spirit.

2. Those who glory in Christ Jesus.

The great test of the genuineness of our Christianity is our attitude to the Lord Jesus.

3. Those who place no confidence in the flesh.

National identity and religious ceremony are not bad in and of themselves but they must be rejected as the foundation of a person's relationship with God.

Being reminded of what defines a
Christian should always elicit heartfelt
praise...

...when we see that we fit the
definition.

*Do those of us who profess to be
Christians fit this Biblical definition of a
Christian?*

Conclusion—The Armour of Knowing

This knowledge—of what is error and what is truth—is like armour for the mind.

May God give us grace to clothe our minds with it so that it will be a safeguard against our contemporary dogs, workers of evil and mutilators of the flesh.