

# Belly Worshipers

by Ian Paisley

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*Paul weeps over the depravity of people's hearts, the damage of their actions, and the damnation of their souls, calling them enemies of the cross of Christ.*

**Scripture:** Zechariah 13:6, Luke 22:47

**Topics:** "Eternal Consequences", "Sinful Rebellion"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the consequences of rejecting Christ and living a life of sin. He warns that those who reject Christ not only face damnation themselves, but also have a negative influence on the church, neighborhood, and families they are connected to. The preacher expresses deep sorrow over the souls of those who choose to reject Christ and emphasizes the urgency of preparing for death and eternity. He uses a story to illustrate the danger of not taking sin seriously and warns that indulging in sinful pleasures will ultimately lead to eternal punishment. The sermon emphasizes the biblical principle of reaping what one sows and highlights the importance of living a life in accordance with God's laws.

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## Transcript

The third chapter of Paul's epistle to the Philippians, verses eighteen and nineteen. 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, whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things. I have entitled this message, Belly Worshipers.

The Apostle Paul had every characteristic that a Christian minister ought to have. First of all, he was watchful of those to whom he ministered and those to whom he preached. He was ever the unsleeping guardian of the welfare of the church of Jesus Christ.

He did not preach and then leave the people as a prey to the ravening wolves. But at all times, he was alert and watchful to preserve the purity and the peace of the church. Secondly, he was a fearless preacher.

He was not afraid to deal with sin in the church. He was not afraid to name the guilty parties, to expose their crimes, and to indict them at the bar of God because of their iniquities. Many today are afraid to deal with sin and sins in the church.

They are afraid to offend those that may come to hear. Not so the apostle. He was fearless.

And yet, above it all, he was a loving minister of Christ. He wept at the dangers that surrounded the church. There was nothing hard-hearted or harsh in the apostle's manner.

And I want you to notice that in this scripture, with all its fears, indictment of sinners, and all its ruthless surgery of the corruption that lie at the heart of sinners, yet this passage is wept with apostolic tears and pulsates with apostolic love. He says, I tell you, even weeping. That's an interesting statement of the apostle.

I tell you, even weeping. I read about Paul when he was persecuted. I read about the time when they beat him with rods and laid many stripes upon his flesh.

I read of the time when he was under the hammered blows of satanic opposition and human bitterness. But there never a tear came to his eye. He never wept when he was persecuted.

I have seen him jailed in the prison cell. And there I read he sang praises to God, but there is no mention of his tears. I see him in the dungeon of Rome.

He is cold, for he sends for the cloak that he had left behind. He is lonely, for he says to Timothy, Come before winter. He is about to lose his head, for he says, I am now ready to be offered.

And the time of my departure is at hand. But he never wept. He had no tears for himself, but he has tears for the church.

He has tears for souls. He has tears for those that are in imminent spiritual danger. God send us ministers of the apostolic stamp.

Why did he weep? If you examine this portion of Scripture, you will find that he wept over three things. One, he wept over the depravity of their hearts. He says, whose God is their belly.

What an indictment. Whose glory is their shame. Whose mind is weeping.

He is weeping over the depravity of their hearts. And then secondly, he weeps over the damage of their actions. For these people not only go to hell themselves, but by their accursed influence, they poison the church and the neighborhood and the families with whom they are connected.

And Paul weeps over the damage of their actions. And then last of all, he weeps over the damnation of their souls, whose end is destruction. Three objectives of his tears.

I want to talk about them tonight. Let's look at the depravity of their hearts. Whose God is their belly.

In the scheme of scriptural psychology, the heart is the center of affection. In the scheme of scriptural psychology, the belly is the seat of earthly, sensual, fleshly affection. And if you study the scripture, you will find that everywhere the belly is mentioned, it is mentioned in this connection.

The curse on the serpent. On your belly thou shalt go. What did it mean? That as far as Satan was concerned, Satan was to be the king, the ruler of those that had nothing better to live for than the beggarly elements of the dust of this earth.

And here he talks about depravity that is stamped and branded with sensuality. I needn't tell you, friend, this is essential age for we know it. The age of the permissive society is the age of the sins of the flesh.

We're living in a day when men live and labor and blight their bodies and steam their conscience and damn their souls in pursuit of fleshly, sensual appetites and an attempt to satisfy them. And let me tell you, friend, that in the church of Christ there are scab sheep. Don't let us think that the church is immune, that the church is not stained and marked by the very same sins of this evil age.

This portion of Scripture is directed against false professors, men that pretend to walk as Christians, but their lives give the lie to what their lips profess. And in every flock there's a scab sheep, and in every Christian congregation there are those that have only a profession of salvation, but never have been born again. I want to talk to you, man, tonight.

I want to talk to you, woman, tonight, young person. I want to talk to you. Make sure you're really born again.

You say, how can I know? My friend, if you love the world, the love of the Father is not in you. That's what the Bible says. The Bible says, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation.

All things have passed away, and behold, all things have become new. But in this age, we have these belly worshipers. We have these sensual persons.

Let me tell you, friend, pursue your sensuality. Indulge in your iniquity. Fill your soul with every fleshly lust and pleasure.

And when you've had your fill of it all, with a blighted body, with a soul diseased, with a conscience scarred, you'll go down to mourn and hail fire for all eternity. The folly of breaking God's laws for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. I heard today of a young man, just 40 years of age, who was pursuing a life of pleasure.

He was pursuing a life of sin. He was in the world of this city's pleasure places. Where is he tonight? With mind deranged and body smashed, he's on the verge of death and on the borders of hell.

Forty years of age, Lord Byron, that wealthy English poet, parliamentarian, peer of the realm, tried every sin in the catalogue. And on his 30th birthday, he wrote a lament, My days are in the yellow leaf. The flowers, the fruits of life, are gone.

The worm, the canker, and the grief are mine alone. I would tell you even weeping, friend, this night, of the utter folly of pursuing the depravity of your own heart. They mind earthly things.

Is that what you're minding? Let me tell you, friend, that this earth will soon be gone. It's fleeing. It's fleeing quickly.

And let me tell you, friend, that you can climb to the topmost run of life's ladder of ambition. And you can reach the summit of your objectives. And when you get there, the higher the perch, the greater the fall into hellfire.

It will not satisfy you. Do you see the rich in this world? They are filled with misery. Do you see the film stars of this world? They end their lives after many divorces, usually as suicides.

There is no satisfaction in these things, friend. Oh, that you would be wise, that you would understand this, that you would consider your latter end. Life does not consist, said Jesus, in the abundance of the thing that a man possesses.

To God this generation would learn to think if they have this and have that and have the other thing, and they get this pleasure and this lust satisfied, they'll be happy. Friend, there's no happiness in sin. No peace for the soul that's in sin.

Nothing but judgment and unrest. Do you know what it says here? Whose glory is in their shame, glorying in their shame. That's a terrible indictment, isn't it? That they glory in those things that they ought to be thoroughly ashamed of.

You know, there's something in this that really speaks to our hearts. This is an indictment of our day and generation. Whose God is their belly.

Whose glory is in their shame. Who mind earthly things. Is that the story of your heart's depravity, friend? But there's something else.

Paul wept over the damage, the damage of their actions. I want to tell you what Paul called them. He called them the enemies of the cross of Christ.

That's a strong statement on religious professorship. I can understand old Herod being called an enemy of Christ. I can understand Pilate being called an enemy of Christ.

I can understand the soldiers that took the thorns and made them into a crown. And took the lash and battered Christ's body. And lacerated His tender, sensitive, quivering flesh.

I can understand them being called enemies of Christ. But here Paul is indicting religious professors in the church market. Those that profess to walk as Christians in the church.

I see my blessed Savior tonight. And I see that He has wounds in His hands. And in His feet.

And in His side. And I say, Lord Jesus, whence are those wounds? Who inflicted thee with pain? Who caused thy body to be torn? Who caused thy flesh to suffer? And thy teeth to be set in the edge with agony? And thy nerves to burn with white fire in your flesh? And the blessed Savior says, I was wounded in the house of my friends. I can understand Christ being wounded in the gym palace.

In the boozier. In the ballroom. In the house of Elphiam.

I can understand my Savior being abused in the crowds of the ungodly. And in the house that leads down to hell. But it amazes me that the deepest wounds that ever struck into the flesh of Jesus were inflicted by the hands of His so-called friends.

Do you profess to be a friend of Jesus? Unconverted church member. Unconverted communicant. Unconverted Sabbath school teacher.

Unconverted church officer. Do you profess to be a friend of Jesus? And yet by your ungodly ways. By the hypocrisy of your living.

And by the sinful thoughts that pollute your heart. You are wounding Jesus in the house of His friends. No wonder Paul wept over the damage of their actions.

They are the enemies of the cross of Christ. I want to tell you, friend, that a religious professor in the church does damage to the church. When the ungodly point their finger and say that man is a member of

the Free Presbyterian Church of the Raven Hill Road.

But that man is crooked in business. His words are not true. He would do anything to defraud a man.

To make an extra pound or two. That man is a disgrace to the church that he professes to be a member of. And he wounds Jesus in the house of God.

And there is nothing hinders the church more than a man like that. He does damage to the church's testimony. I will tell you what else he does.

He does damage to the souls of man. Let me tell you a story. A minister one evening preached a very solemn sermon.

A young man sat in the congregation. And that young man was stricken with conviction of sin. He was so concerned that he went to the minister afterwards.

And he said, can I walk home with you? And the minister said yes. And he asked the minister a couple of questions about the matter that the minister preached so solemnly about it. And the minister put him off.

He put him off just with light talk. They came to the home. Both of them went in.

There was a company of people there. And that minister cracked a lot of jokes, acted foolishly, told stories that bartered on the barter of licentiousness. And that man went out of that house.

And he said, religion is a lie. Christianity is a farce. I'll never sit in church again.

And I'll never be a Christian. Not very long afterwards, that young man was stricken down in sickness. The minister was sent far.

And he went with his book to the bedside. And the young man said to him, don't open that book here. He said, why? He said, one night I heard you preach.

And I was concerned. I walked home with you. I tried to speak about the things of God.

But you put me off with levity and laughter. I went into the home. And you told jokes, some of which were almost licentious.

And he said, I went out and I said, Christianity is a lie. The Bible is a farce. And he said, sir, I'm now going to hell.

But at the judgment day, you'll be indicted for my damnation. Friend, it's true. A false professor of religion, even if he be a preacher, is the greatest hindrance to precious souls coming to Christ than you could have.

Oh, the tragedy. Is it any wonder that Paul went? And I've gone around this province of Ulster. I've seen God's work wrecked.

Good testimonies for Christ smashed. You know why? Because scabbed sheep were allowed to come in and destroy the flock of God. That's why.

That's why there's got to be discipline in the church. That's why this church has a standard of conduct and discipline. You'll not be a communicant member of this church and live any old way you like.

I want to tell you that. And you know it. Praise God, we're not going to pull down our standards either.

We're going to keep them as high as we can in this apostate age. Yes, sir. Let me tell you something.

Paul went because they did damage. My dear sinner, I want to talk to you. Maybe you have been damaged through the life of some false professor.

Don't let it keep you out of heaven. The man wasn't a Christian anyway. He was only a professor.

Don't let it keep you away from my Savior. Don't let the devil use it to rob you of heaven's peace and Christ's pardon. He wept over something else.

He wept over their damnation. His end is destruction. Now we're coming to it.

There's an end, friend. There's an end to it all. The life of sin ends.

The pleasures of sin end. You know what we read in Hebrews 11? The pleasures of sin are only for a season. Mark the word.

You can have your sin. You can have your pleasures. You can indulge yourself to the full in this permissive society, in this accursed adulterous generation.

But let me tell you, friend, the end is coming. It comes more quickly than you think. We are going down the valley one by one.

With our faces toward the setting of life's sun. Down the valley where the mournful cypress grows, where the stream of death in silence onward flows. We are going down the valley.

We are going down the valley. We are going down the valley one by one. How near, my hearer, are you to the valley of death tonight? And alas, you're unprepared.

Your soul is unwashed. You have no passport to open heaven's gate, but rather you're branded for the blackness of hell's fire's darkness forevermore. Oh, eternity! Eternity! Soon shall we reach its awful shore.

Soon shall the shadows of God's great, unfathomed, untrod, immeasurable eternity break upon us all. Then what shall the reaping be? You're going to reap what you sow. There's a harvest coming, friend.

That's why, as a Christian, we weep when we consider the end of the Christ-rejector's life. That's why we cannot keep back the tears when we think of our fellows whom we have met, whom we have talked to, whom we have done business with, whom we have preached to. And alas, we're going to part with them forever to say a long farewell, to bid them goodbye forever, as in the night of a lost soul's eternal experience they are separated from God forevermore.

I tell you, even weeping, he wept over their damnation. Oh, that I could urge you, friend, to come to Jesus Christ. Oh, that I had arguments that you couldn't answer.

Oh, that I had angelic power to drag you from the flames of Sodom. Oh, tonight that I could stand with the great red warning light on the road to hell and bring you to a standstill and instill eternally and permanently into your heart that you need to turn to Jesus Christ and be saved for all eternity. We're dealing with vital matters, friend, the matter of your soul's salvation.

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