



**SERIES: Philippians (May / June) “Finding Joy in the Journey”**

**SPEAKER: NAT CRAWFORD**

**Monday, June 14, 2021**

**Scripture: Philippians 3:18-19**

**NC0176**

**TITLE: How to Handle False Converts**

“Luke, I am your father.” (“No, I am your father.” *Star Wars: Episode V – The Empire Strikes Back, 1980*)

That is one of the most iconic phrases in movie history. You know the scene. Luke Skywalker has been fighting Darth Vader. Vader had killed his mentor Obi-Wan Kenobi and has been in hot pursuit of Luke and his friends. But in a shocking move, Darth Vader reveals the news that he is not who Luke thought he was. He was more. He was not just an enemy, but his father. Shocking. Unforgettable. Though this scenario is not common, it is an unfortunate reality that people can be someone we didn’t know. Friends become enemies. Bosses become competitive. Church leaders become false teachers.

Well, the Apostle Paul faced similar disappointment. Here’s what he says about this topic in Philippians 3:18-19 (NLT):

“For I have told you often before, and I say it again with tears in my eyes, that there are many whose conduct shows they are really enemies of the cross of Christ. <sup>19</sup> They are headed for destruction. Their god is their appetite, they brag about shameful things, and they think only about this life here on earth.”

Ouch. Paul is crying as he pens this letter. There are people, likely one-time church leaders, and even potentially friends from the Church, who have embraced a false gospel. They have fallen away and are now being exposed.

It’s not an uncommon occurrence today to hear about pastors, ministry leaders, or high influencers who change their tune. They either drift into heresy or sin, and eventually become exposed. If you’re like me, when you see this, you get angry. And that makes sense. But it’s not just a cause for anger. It’s a cause for sadness. That’s why Paul is crying.

To see someone reject the offer of grace, and either add to it or abuse it, is tragic. It should be mourned. There is nothing sadder than when I have a parent come to me and say, “My child has walked away from the faith. They are an atheist.” That’s sad. That is tragic.

Why? Because as Paul says, “They are driven by their desires. They live for themselves and their sin. They brag about their sin. They are displayed with parades, billboards, and advertisements. They are so focused on their desires and what this world offers.” What’s the result? Well, according to Paul, “[They are headed for destruction](#)”. By this, Paul means eternal Hell.

Pastor J.D. Greear said, “It doesn’t matter how you start. It matters how you finish.” In other words, you can say you’re a Christian, but let’s see the fruit - Challenging words and a sad reality.

So here’s my challenge for you today: Pray. We need to pray for our family and friends who identify as Christians. Some are truly saved, but some have believed a false gospel. They either have fallen slave to legalism or license. Those hold no hope – just destruction.

So let’s pray for our family and friends that those who are saved will follow Christ faithfully. And those who are notional Christians, that their hearts will be broken and they will see their need for our wonderful Savior.

No one is too far gone for God to save. So let’s pray for them and watch the Spirit do the rest.