

The Joy of Cheating

*“...many live as enemies of the cross of Christ.
Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach,
and their glory is in their shame.*

*Their mind is set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven.
And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ...”
Philippians 3:18-20 (NIV)*

Psychologists tell us that for some people the real delight in stealing is not getting something for nothing, rather it is getting away with something illegal. For example, in western society we speak of “joy riding”. This is when a young person steals someone’s car for the pure delight of riding around in the car and knowing you have gone against societal rules.

The young person fully intends to leave the car somewhere for the authorities to retrieve it for the owner. The momentary thrill of getting away with the crime is the reward sought, not to acquire a car for the long term.

If the owner of the stolen car had tossed the young person the keys and suggested they take it for a “joy ride” the fun would not be there. That would have spoiled the action.

Paul speaks of the momentary joy of sin in our verses for today especially when he says,

“...their glory is in their shame.” This refers to the delight that is the reward of going against the laws of society.

I recall Monday morning sales meetings in the board room of the company I worked for briefly in the 1970’s. Before the sales manager arrived the salesmen would sip coffee and brag about their activities on the weekend. One had cheated on his wife at a party, another was drunk but managed to drive home from his friend’s party. On it went as each tried to outdo the others on how sinful they had been. It was great fun for them to describe their exploits.

So we recognize that sin, in its many forms, is fun and exciting most of the time. What is discovered, down the road, is that sin is no longer fun because it has, for example, broken up our family; caused us to lose our driver’s license for drunk driving; and so on. The short term joy of sin turns into long term sorrow. So Paul says, “Their destiny is destruction...”

Perhaps you know someone who has destroyed their family through the short term joy of cheating one way or another. Such a person should not lose all hope of redemption. Those who have proven enemies of their Creator, their families, and even themselves, are invited by Him to lay down their arms of rebellion and surrender to His will.

The marvelous thing about the Lord is what Paul says in Romans 5:8 (NIV) “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

We hear the Lord inviting us to become citizens of heaven and to await the Savior Who shall soon return for His people. May you find grace today to turn away from the short term joy of cheating in order to find the eternal love and joy of the Lord’s presence.

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