

Reminders

Scripture Reading — Philippians 3:1-3

*It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you. —
Philippians 3:1*

When pastors serve for a long time with the same congregation, sooner or later they realize they are probably repeating themselves. “As you have heard me say before . . .” can become a common refrain -after some years.

As Philippians 3 opens, Paul notes that he is repeating some instructions that are very important. “I know I have mentioned this before, but it bears repeating,” he says, in effect: “Stay true to God! Watch out for those who detract from God’s grace by making you think you have to contribute to your salvation!” When the matters at hand are important, reminders are a good idea.

Paul knew that the situation required repetitions to warn about false teachers who promoted things like circumcision as a way to make sure you had salvation. Apparently teachers like this followed Paul around and waited till he left town before sneaking in with false teachings. We see evidence of this in Paul’s letters to the Galatians and the Corinthians as well.

Some people could not -accept that salvation is by grace alone. They figured they had to do something to seal the deal. But Paul’s response was always “No!” As we have seen in this letter, being saved by grace does change us into people who begin to act differently. But those actions are a fruit of salvation, not the root. Paul could not remind people of that idea often enough! And we need constant reminders of it too.

Prayer

Your grace alone, Lord, is sufficient for us. Thank you for your gifts of mercy and grace! Amen.

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