

SOUTH GROVE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH LONDON

Lord's Day Morning

Date 19th February 2023

Preacher Rev Philip Knowles Ps/Hymn Ps100, 286 318, 480 Read: Philippians 1:27-30

Text Philippians 1:27

Series: Philippians (36) Title : Live as Gospel Citizens

Philippians 1:27-30 starts a new section in Paul's letter. His closing words focus upon the saints at Philippi, instructing believers to live the gospel.

“Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ...” The word **conversation** does not have the same meaning that we think of the word conversation.

Therefore, the original reading is **“only let your conduct be....”**

This word conversation/**conduct** refers to gospel behaviour, manner of living, lifestyle.

The root of the word **conversation** is **citizen or citizenship**.

In the context Paul is dealing with the behaviour of a citizen of heaven living on earth.

The same word is used by Paul in **Philippians 3:20** **“For our conversation is in heaven; or citizenship, is in heaven.**

We can join the meanings together, and conclude, Paul in writing to the believers at Philippi as citizens of the gospel teaches they must conduct themselves in a manner worthy and in keeping with the gospel that glorifies Christ.

The believers at Philippi, knew what it was to live in one place, Philippians, and have citizenship of another place, Rome. They understood the term Paul used.

Remember, **Philippi** was Located hundreds of miles from Rome, yet it was under Rome's control.

Acts 16:12, It was a Roman colony, a little Rome away from Rome. The people of Philippi enjoyed all the benefits and privileges of the Roman Empire.

The Philippians recognised their duties, obligations, and responsibilities as Roman Citizens.

They lived in Philippi but behaved as if they were living in Rome.

However, Paul is not writing that they stop living and behaving as good citizens of Rome,

rather, Paul wants them to understand above any earthy, national, and temporal citizenship there is a heavenly, spiritual, and eternal citizenship.

As believers living on earth they are citizens of heaven, Christ is their King.

Whenever the Philippians were saved by the gospel, redeemed by precious blood, Christ gave them a new identify, nationality, name, country, a new way of living, and thinking, which is heavenly, the saints at Philippi.

The Lord Jesus said, **John 15:19** ***"I have chosen you out of the world..."***

(2 Corinthians 5:17 ***"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.)"***

1 Peter 2:9 ***"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light."***

Therefore, believer while we may be citizens or have citizenship that is earthly, and temporal, remember our true citizenship is

spiritual and eternal in the heavens, for we are citizens of Christ's eternal Kingdom.

Earth is not our final home, but on the way to our final home, which is heaven, ***let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ...*** live as gospel citizens.

I FIRST, THE EMPHASIS TO LIVE AS GOSPEL CITIZENS

Paul begins his concluding section of chapter one with a command to the people at Philippi and to our own hearts, "***Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ...***"

The word **only** is command as it's in the **imperative** in the Greek. It is also **emphatic**, meaning that Paul uses this word **only** to emphasise with force, to lay stress on what he's about to say.

He uses this word **only to get attention.**

This one thing you must know and do, and that is to live according to your citizenship, which is the gospel of Christ.

Living a life that matches the gospel.

Living the gospel is not part time duty, or a shift pattern for weekends only.

The command to live out the Gospel is the Gospel itself as it's founded upon the glorious person and Gospel ministry of Christ.

(That's why we are citizens of heaven, ***according to His abundant mercy He hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*** We have been purchased by blood; our name is written in the lamb's book of life.)

The gospel is good news, Christ is the glad tidings of great to a world of fallen humanity. Jesus Christ who was rich yet for our sakes He became poor.

He left fellowship with the Father and came into this world in the fulness of time to be born of a woman, as part of His sufferings, in order to save fallen men and woman. He took our humanity unto Himself yet without sin.

He dwelt among sinners He came to save. He earned eternal redemption for as many as His Father had given Him. He took their sin upon His shoulders.

Christ is our scapegoat, He took the sin of His people upon His own head and bore it all away into the wilderness, where it shall be found no more forever.

In delivering sinners from this present evil world, He sets fallen men and woman free from sins curse and condemnation.

He was buried to show there is no corruption in Him. He arose for our justification to show the offering of Himself to God was accepted. There is peace with God through Christ.

This is “good news,” this is the gospel of Christ.

Sinner there is good news for you, there is cleansing from sin, freedom from bondage, deliverance from hell by believing with your heart and confessing with your mouth that Jesus is the son of God, the only Saviour of sinners.

Believer this same emphasis belongs to us. Nothing must distract or divert us from this imperative of living as a citizen of Heaven.

Sin abounds on every side, we live in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.

Therefore, to you and you alone, “**Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ...**”

II SECOND, THE EQUATION TO LIVE AS GOSPEL CITIZENS.

“Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ...”

The word **becometh** means *worthy, in a manner worthy of, adorn, suitable.*

The word **becometh** gives **the idea of equation that which is equal, that which matches, adds up, identical.**

It is a word that pictures measuring weight, a scale and whatever is measured it must be level or equal on both sides otherwise it's out of balance, or it doesn't match, it doesn't add up, there's a contradiction, there is no agreement.

You think of getting weighed at the doctors, they ask for your height, but then they ask you, do you know your weight?

At that stage I often say what I believe to be my weight, yet when I stand on the scale, the nurse looks, and what I have said, compared to what the scale shows doesn't add up, it's not equal. There is no agreement.

The problem is ether the scale or me, what I claimed to say. It's me.

Therefore, the phrase ***becometh the gospel of Christ...***” means **to live lives worthy of the gospel, to live a credible testimony as born-again believer.**

It matters to God how His people live.

People who claim to be believers, and yet state it doesn't matter how I live, or God doesn't care how I live are redefining the power of the gospel and promoting a false gospel, a causal gospel a people's gospel.

The gospel of Christ not only saves a life but also transforms the life. The transformed life demonstrates the gospel's power daily.

That's why **J C Ryle** a preacher said "***a Christian is a walking sermon, they preach far more than a minister does, for they preach all week long.***"

The world has witnessed many who claim the gospel when in fact they shame the gospel. They commit grievous sins, involved in scandals, and it's known by others.

In using the picture of this word, as seen by a scale, the point is this, if one side of the scale says saved by the gospel, then the other side of the scale must be to live the gospel.

Otherwise, a life is out of balance, it doesn't match up, it doesn't add up.

The problem is either the gospel or what I claim. The inconsistencies lie with me.

Paul is saying "***Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ...***" he means your conduct in the gospel must match your confession of the gospel.

The testimony of the gospel, must equal the transformation by the gospel.

Your gospel behaviour must be equal to gospel belief.

You see **when there is a gospel work within it will be matched by a gospel walk without.**

Allow me to say this, if you are a citizen of heaven, then to be in balance, to have the scales of testimony level, there will be impact in your life privately by Bible reading, prayer, living for Christ in the home,

but it will also impact your life publicly in attending Church services and prayer meetings **when you are able**, and living for Christ in the open air.

We have been saved by the Gospel, changed by the Gospel, transformed by the Gospel of Christ, our lives will be lived according to the Gospel.

But here is the blessedness of the gospel, Christ enables believers to live out the gospel, He enables and empowers our walk to add up to our witness, as we run the race continually looking to Jesus.

Because the Greek tense of the word, ***let your conversation*** is in the **middle voice**, which means ***this is you must do yourself, as you are enabled by Christ.***

We are enabled to live the gospel because we are empowered, enriched by the gospel.

That's why Paul said let your or your responsibility to live out the gospel, is to walk in the newness of life, or a Peter said **in 1 Peter 2:24** we "***should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.***

Christ enables us to live the gospel by the power of the Holy Spirit, because He set us free from sin's bondage, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Believer, read the Bible yourself, prayer yourself, attend church yourself even when opposed by the world, the devil and the flesh, when you don't feel like Reading scripture still read it, when you don't feel like praying still pray, when you don't feel like attending God's house still attend, because you are enabled and empowered to do so by the gospel ministry of Christ and through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Paul uses this same word **becometh** only translated **worthy** in **Ephesians 4:1** *“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk **worthy** of the vocation wherewith ye are called.”* **Col 1:10** *“That ye might walk **worthy** of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; 1 Thessalonians 2:12 “That ye would walk **worthy** of God, who hath called you unto His kingdom and glory.*

Believer God has not finished with you yet, the Good work He begun in you, He will continually perform it on earth, working in you, moulding you, removing hindrances from you, and His work will be finished when you reach glory.

III THIRD, THE ENDURANCE TO LIVE AS GOSPEL CITIZENS.

Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

The word **affairs**, means **things concerning you**. Paul's point is this, if I'm present with you or absent from you, yet I will hear about your affairs, be consistent.

As gospel citizens, redeemed by blood, belonging to Christ the King, when your conduct, matches your confession I will hear ***that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;***

What a lesson that is to us all, in private or public, on your own or in a crowd, if parents, work colleagues, there or not, in all things, in all places, with all people, live as gospel citizens, worthy of the gospel.

Live your life knowing Christ is always present, chose your words knowing Christ always listens, be mindful of your actions knowing Christ always watches.

In reference to Christ in John 8:31-32, **many believed on him.**
³¹ Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.

I say that because in John 6:2 “**a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did.** They followed the Lord for a few days, they heard His teaching.

They called themselves His disciples, followers of Jesus. They seen the gospel at work in the lives of others, but when it came to them living the gospel in their own life. v60 Christ teachings were too strong. V61 His teaching offended them.

Verses 66-67. **⁶⁶ From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him. ⁶⁷ Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away.**

What about you today, does your live your life in agreement with the gospel, walking worthy of Christ to *stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel*; will you *continue with Christ*, or will you say this a hard saying, and from this time walk no more with Him, confirming as Christ said by their fruits ye shall know them.

Believer as we go on with Christ, may the gospel advance through our witness and walk.