

Philippians 1:27–30

27 Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel,

28 and not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God.

29 For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,

30 having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear is in me.

“Adorning the Gospel”

Philippians 1:27-30

Back when the Soviet Union still existed and the church endured persecution, Kathy and I used to receive a publication called “The Prisoners’ Bulletin”. This magazine contained news about the underground church. Reading the bulletin, I was struck by something Georgi Vins asked a pastor of a persecuted church. He asked what the Pastor would ask of his American brothers in the Lord. He answered, “I ask only that they would live in such a way that God would hear their prayers for their persecuted brethren in the Soviet Union.”

I thought of this statement when I read our text for today. The Apostle Paul was in prison when he penned this letter to the church at Philippi. The last time we were in the book of Philippians, we read about his uncertain situation in a Roman prison. He did not know whether he faced death or release back to the ministry. Verses 27-30 follow this to show the Philippians how they needed to live.

I. Be Good Citizens of Heaven(v. 27)

II. Endure the Conflict Involved in Serving (vs. 28-30)

I. Be Good Citizens of Heaven (v. 27)

“Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Philippians 1:27)

A. We noted last time the uncertainty Paul endured in his situation. Ultimately, God was his certainty. His future was unshakeable and his present life was in God’s all-powerful hands. What would help him most in this situation was to know how the Philippians acted in the Lord. He wrote in **verse 27**, ***“Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ.”***

First, they needed to conduct themselves as good citizens of heaven by living new lives that show what the Gospel produced in them.

1. The word translated “conduct” means to act as a citizen. The Amplified Bible translates this, ***“Only be sure as citizens to conduct yourselves that your manner of life will be worthy of the good news (the Gospel) of Christ.”*** Many in today’s world would tell you God does not care how you live today. Before we buy into this thinking, we must consider the Apostle Paul’s command in this verse.
2. The people of Philippi, being a Roman colony, prized their Roman citizenship. The Apostle Paul would again capitalize on that fact to exhort them in ***Philippians 3:20***, ***“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.”*** Heavenly citizenship like Roman citizenship provides us tremendous privileges to enjoy, but it also carries with it responsibilities to fulfill.
3. This verse echoes Paul’s exhortation to the Ephesians. In ***Ephesians 4:1*** he wrote, ***“I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called.”***
4. How do we “walk worthy of the Gospel?” In another text in ***Colossians 1:10-12***, this same Apostle Paul tells us a little more about what a walk that shows the value of the Gospel to others looks like. ***“[We pray] that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully***

pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.”

B. Second, they needed to be committed and united in their striving for the gospel. ***“That you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.”*** The Philippians needed a full and complete commitment to the Gospel. This asks us how committed we are to the Gospel in our lives? Do we share the truth of the cross? Do we seek to live so others can see what the Gospel can do in our lives?

II. Endure the Conflict Involved in Serving (vs. 28-30)

“and not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God. For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear is in me. (Philippians 1:28-30)

A. After writing about what they needed to do to encourage Paul, he wrote about another aspect of being committed to the Lord and His Gospel. ***“And not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God.” (Philippians 1:28)*** The Gospel produces adversaries. We do not preach the Gospel in a neutral world. We proclaim the Gospel in a world dominated by Satan, our opponent. The Apostle warns us not to allow the opponents of the Gospel to terrify us. The fact that they oppose us shows their sad condition and underlines the fact of our salvation.

B. Sometimes opponents cause us suffering. ***“For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear is in me.” (Philippians 1:29–30)***

C. God does not choose suffering for every believer. Yet, suffering is something a believer may be called to do. Do you remember what Jesus said in the Beatitudes? ***“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed***

are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” (Matthew 5.10-12) Notice the promise in the middle of these verses. God has a special reward for those who suffer for Him. He allows suffering and rewards those who suffer.

D. At verse 30, Paul changes the picture, ***“having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear is in me.” (Philippians 1:30)*** We are striving in an athletic contest for the Lord. We have a goal in sight, our goal is that God is glorified. We, too, if we are actively involved in the contest, will receive the comfort and encouragement in Philippians 2:1-4.

Not every Christian will suffer. There are Christians in our world today who are suffering greatly for their faith. Our suffering is usually limited to people who hate us because they hate Christ. These people can make life difficult for us, but they do not compare to those who actually put believers in prison or kill them.

How do we do when we measure our spiritual maturity against the standard the Philippians set? Are we believers who live as citizens of heaven, walking worthy of the Gospel? Are we united in our defense and proclamation of the truth of the Gospel? Are we steadfast, prepared to endure the trials and opposition which could come? Do we recognize God’s sovereign purpose in all of this? May God help us to do this for His Glory and His alone.

56 Day by Day