

SERMON NOTES

By Pastor John Paul Miller

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Philippians

Philippians 1:27-30 – “The Steadfast Church”

Philippians 1:27, *“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;”*

Paul is writing to the Christian’s in Philippi from a Roman jail yet, he is rejoicing (vs. 18)

Philippians 1:18, *“But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.”*

Paul had a single mind (vs. 20-21)

Philippians 1:20-21, *“I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.”*

He knew that God was using his circumstances to do three things:

1. strengthen the believers – *“fellowship in the gospel”* (vs. 5)
2. help in the *“furtherance of the gospel”* (vs. 12)
3. gave the church an opportunity to stand steadfast for the *“faith of the gospel”* (vs. 27)

The themes in our text:

vs. 27 – stand fast & striving together

vs. 28 – your adversaries

vs. 29 – suffer

vs. 30 – conflict

Paul exhorts the Philippians to remain steadfast, united, and unafraid and to regard it a privilege to be counted worthy to suffer for Christ.

The believer's in Philippi were in a battle for the "*faith of the gospel*"

What is the *faith of the gospel*?

The Christian faith as revealed by God and recorded in the Bible, God's Word!

Paul's warning:

1 Timothy 4:1, "*...in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;*"

2 Timothy 4:3-4, "*...they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.*"

Jude 3, "*...ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.*"

Like the Christian's of Paul's day we face a hostile world that is trying to destroy *the faith of the gospel*.

Paul gives us these admonitions explaining that there are three essentials needed for us to be steadfast in the battle.

I. Consistency of holy living (vs. 27a)

Philippians 1:27a, "*...Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ:*"

Notice the context; go back to verses 23-26

Philippians 1:23-36, "*For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again.*"

What does Paul mean by our conversation becoming the gospel of Christ?

The old English word conversation means our 'walk', not our 'talk'.

The Greek verb Paul used comes from the word for 'city' or 'citizenship' (polis) – found in the names Indianapolis and Minneapolis.

Paul was saying, live as citizens of Heaven

Philippians 3:20, "*For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:*"

Note: Philippi was a Roman Colony.

It means we are to live in harmony with the responsibilities and blessings the gospel brings.

As the people of God, we are to be living lives that are becoming of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

This brings to mind an important New Testament truth having to do with the Christian's two-fold relationship:

1. Positional Righteousness

Romans 8:1, "*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,*"

2. Progressive (Practical) Righteousness – *Sanctification*

Our practical righteousness should come up to our positional righteousness in Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 4:1, "*I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy (weigh the same as) of the vocation wherewith ye are called,*"

Are you conducting yourself in a manner worthy of the gospel?

- in the home
- on the job

Titus 2:10, "*...that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.*"

A story is told of an evangelist who held meetings in a town and after they were over he went to the train station to leave town. The man who sold him his train ticket intentionally gave him back more change than he was due. Upon receiving his change, the evangelist noticed the extra money and turned back to the counter and said, "you gave me more change than I was suppose to receive"; giving back the extra money. The man at the counter replied, "yes I know, I was in your meetings this week, and wanted to know if you practiced what you preached."

People are watching us!

**You are writing a gospel, a chapter each day;
By things that you do; by words that you say.
Men read what you write,
Whether faithless or true!
Tell me, what is the Gospel According To You?**

That's a good question!

II. Cooperation (vs. 27b)

Philippians 1:27b, "...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;"

As we face a hostile unbelieving world we need consistency in our walk; but also, cooperation in our work.

The only problem in the Church at Philippi appears to have been an issue over unity and cooperation.

**To dwell in love with the saints above,
Why, that will be just glory.
But to live below with the saints I know,
Well, that's a different story! ...**

The reason:

Philippians 2:1-4, "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."

Philippians 4:2, "I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord."

Two things we need to do:

1. Stand – stand fast in one spirit, with one mind or sole.

Ephesians 4:1-6, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

2. Strive – striving together for the faith of the gospel.

A word picture of an athlete or team - The word 'athlete', comes from the Greek verb translated as 'striving together'.

A team must work together for a common goal.

Let's work together to get the word out.

How?

- Prayer
- Bible study
- Serving
- Giving
- Going
- Telling
- Supporting others getting the gospel out

III. Courage (vs. 28-30)

Philippians 1:28-30, *"And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me."*

The sequence in this passage:

- Christian's living righteously
- Seeking to win the wicked world to Christ
- By preaching the true gospel
- Will be persecuted

2 Timothy 3:12, *"...all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."*

A. Don't be terrified

- the word 'terrified' was used of a horse that was spooked in a battle.

B. Your adversaries (world, flesh, devil)

1. Legalistic Jews
2. Paganistic Gentiles or Romans

3. Quarreling Church members

Three things to remember when you are suffering persecution:

1. Its evidence of who's lost and who's saved (vs. 28)

Philippians 1:28, "And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God."

Illustration: John Wesley, the great Methodist preacher, after not being persecuted for preaching the gospel became concerned about his spiritual condition.

2. Its a gift and privilege (vs. 29)

Philippians 1:29, "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;"

Notice the two gifts:

1. To believe

2. To suffer – For His sake

1 Peter 4:12-16," Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice in as much as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf."

In the book of Acts when the apostles were beat up and told not to preach in the name of Jesus, what did they do? They rejoiced!

Acts 5:41, "And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name."

3. Others have, and are suffering the same conflict (vs. 30)

Philippians 1:30, "*Having the same conflict which ye saw in me (Acts 16), and now hear to be in me.*

"You are not alone, you are not unique

Examples:

John Wycliffe – The Morning Star

John Huss

William Tyndale

Martin Luther

Modern times - Christians are suffering today in:

India

Indonesia

North Korea

Viet Nam

China

Middle East

We must:

1. Love Consistently
2. Work Cooperatively
3. Stand Courageously

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