

Philippians: Furthering the Gospel

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[0 : 00] Privilege and an honor and a joy to be here in Ireland and specifically in this area of Ireland. The team and I have been thoroughly blessed by our time with the Irish team.

It's been a great joy to serve alongside them. It's also a wonderful thing to recognize, to realize that wherever we go, God is already there.

He's not surprised by our arrival. He's already there and it's evident in our observation of how you live your lives and how the gospel is going out and reaching those who are lost here in your area.

So today we're going to be looking at Philippians chapter 1 verses 27 through 30. Philippians chapter 1 verses 27 through 30. Now we'll read that in a moment, but first I wanted to recap a little bit.

I know that Andy last week looked at verses 12 through 26 of chapter 1, where Paul addresses his current situation and his current considerations. He tells them that his only hope is that the gospel is advanced at any cost, even at the cost of his own life, which he would count as gain if the gospel was advanced.

[1 : 16] Ultimately, though, Paul believes that he will be released and reunited with the Philippians. Paul also tells the Philippians that in spite of his current situation, the gospel is moving forward.

In spite of his imprisonment, it is moving forward, which again is Paul's deepest desire. Paul also tells the Philippians that in spite of his current situation, the gospel is moving through the guards and going into the praetorian servants because of his time there in captivity.

In fact, his imprisonment is the actual reason that the gospel is moving forward. Paul tells the Philippians that he covets their prayers, which is important. As we pray today, we see how a critical prayer is.

Through those prayers and with the help of the Spirit of Christ, he believes he can be courageous to witness the gospel throughout the entirety of his imprisonment and his impending trial. Whatever the end results turn out to be, whether death or release, Paul wanted to be faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ.

To the very end. To the furtherance of the gospel. So now in this letter in Philippians, this portion of the letter of Philippians, Paul turns to his own circumstance and considerations to that of the church in Philippi.

[2 : 33] He's spoken about himself, now he speaks about the church. So with that, let us turn to Philippians, chapter 1, verses 27 through 30.

Philippians chapter 1, verses 27 through 30. Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.

Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel, without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you.

This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved, and that by God. For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him.

Since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have. Now, the beginning of verse 27, depending on the version you're reading, you'll find something similar to, only let the manner of life be worthy, or whatever happens, conduct yourself in a manner worthy, or above all, you must live as citizens of heaven.

[3 : 53] But in the original Greek, we find something similar to the words, just one thing. Just one thing. Even more specifically, this one thing, and only this.

Because it was Paul's hope that the Christians would always remember the most important thing within the community of believers. And that one thing was unity.

Unity. But unity for one exclusive purpose, and that was the furtherance of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul knew that absolute conviction to the gospel, tunnel vision for Jesus Christ, was the only goal that really mattered.

And because of that knowledge, he had peace and unity within his own heart and mind and soul. He knew that, that unity, that understanding of unity, was critical, not only within ourselves, but within the body of Christ.

Because everything he did, every situation he faced, every circumstance he found himself in, were for one end. The advancement of the gospel, of Jesus Christ.

[5 : 10] Paul's body, mind, and spirit, were unified for that sole purpose, of advancing the gospel. Paul also knew, that unity in the gospel, was the only thing, that could keep the church in Philippi, and by the way, for any church, this church included, healthy, and held together.

When Paul uses the words, conduct yourselves, in a manner worthy, of the gospel of Christ, he is setting, a new standard.

And this standard, is unfamiliar to the world. In this day and age, it's just as true, as it was then.

Living in a manner, worthy of the gospel, is unfamiliar, to the world.

It's not how people, are encouraged to live, by selfish standards, and pursuits, that only have to do, with advancing yourself. He's not saying, let your manner, be worthy of life, in the eyes of men, because, the world's view, of worth, is the furthest thing, from Paul's mind here.

Living in a manner, of life, worthy of the gospel, is why Paul finds it, a privilege, to be persecuted, in his imprisonment, and maligned, by so called Christians, who are preaching the gospel, out of envy, or rivalry.

[6 : 23] Paul finds it, a blessing, to even be considered, to suffer, for the cause, of Christ. Paul also wants, the Philippians, to remember, that the church, is not a building, or an institution, but instead, something that literally, lives, and breathes, the gospel, of Jesus Christ.

Believers, followers, of Jesus Christ. Paul knew, first hand, that the gospel, doesn't just transform, our human institutions, and divisions, it also transforms, our circumstances.

Throughout chapter one, we've witnessed, that Paul's circumstances, never dictated, his attitude, or diminished, his commitment, to the furtherance, of the gospel. In fact, his circumstances, only fueled, his commitment, to the gospel.

The situations, in our life, and the challenges, and the things, that we face, on a regular basis, are we finding, that they fuel us, towards furthering, the gospel? Is it exemplary, an exemplary, in Christ, in all that we meet, and all that we say?

Or is it drawing us, further away? Paul knew, that God would make, his name known, no matter, the situation, or circumstance. Do we find, ourselves doing that?

[7 : 39] Do we find, that challenges, drive us away, from him, rather than to him? Okay, so, we get, that Paul is, totally committed, to Christ, and the advancement, of the gospel.

But, what does he mean, when he says, that we are to live a life, worthy, of the gospel of Christ?

Paul uses the word, worthy, several times, in his letters, to the churches.

In Ephesians, 4, 1, he tells us, that we are to walk, in a manner, worthy of our calling. In Colossians, 1, 10, he tells us, to walk in a manner, worthy of the Lord.

In 1 Thessalonians, 2, 12, he tells us, to walk, in a manner, worthy of God. And in 2 Thessalonians, 1, 5, he urges us, to live in a way, that is worthy, of the kingdom, of God.

So, what does Paul mean, when he uses, the word worthy? For Paul, it means, to live, in a worthy, way. A way, that shows, that we, know, what we believe, in, is of supreme, worth, and importance.

[8 : 50] For Christians, this means, that we live in a way, that makes Jesus big, and thus small. That brings glory, to God, and not to ourselves. That is why, Paul states, in verse 21, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

Paul's confession, and conviction, were demonstrated externally, in the way, that he lived. In the way, that he lived. If we are truly living, lives for Jesus, then this, this life will pose, no threat for us. In John 11, 25, Jesus tells us, that even if you die, you will live. For those united, in Christ by faith, death has no sting, it has no victory.

In fact, to be present, with the Lord, is better than life. Okay, so, now maybe we begin, to understand, Paul's logic, of why it would be, better to be with Christ, than here on earth.

But, how can we live, in a manner of life, here, and now, in this life? To live a manner of life, worthy of the gospel, means that believers, are making a statement, about the gospel.

[10:07] Not only with their lips, but most certainly, with their lives. And those lives, are being lived out, in community, with other believers. And those lives, are being lived out, in community, with other believers.

Producing evidence, of the gospel. The gospel, is about love, therefore we should be, loving people. The gospel, is about justice, therefore we should be, seeking justice.

The gospel, is about life, therefore, there should be, a vitality, and a joy, in the gatherings, that we have, and in our relationships. The gospel, is about liberty.

Therefore, we should not, be stuffy, legalists, clinging to, every legal thing, that we believe, Christianity is, but rather, living out, the gospel, publicly.

Living it out loud. Showing the love of Christ, to others. The gospel, is about humility. Therefore, we should be, humble people, gladly, serving, others.

[11:13] The gospel, must influence, and shape, every single, facet, of our lives. We must live, the gospel, out loud, in speech, and in action.

You see, living, a manner, of a life, worthy, of the gospel, of Christ, cannot be done, in a bubble. It cannot be done, on an island.

It cannot be done, in seclusion. It must be done, in community.

It must be lived out, in community. The verb, Paul uses, in verse 27, in the original language, means, means, to fulfill, one's duty, or to lead, one's life, towards something.

But more specifically, in this context, it means, to live, as a citizen, discharging, one's obligation, as a citizen. As citizens, of Ireland, as citizens, of America, we have obligations, as citizens.

[12:25] Well, how much more important, are our obligations, as citizens, of heaven? In Philippians, 3.20, Paul tells us, that our citizenship, is in heaven.

Believers, citizenship, is in heaven. We are strangers, in a strange land. We are an emcee, of Christ, an outpost, of the coming kingdom, of God.

While the world, sets its mind, on earthly things, we, are to set our minds, on heavenly things. Bible scholar, Peter O'Brien, gives us, a better translation, of the opening, of verse 27.

He says, quote, now, the important thing, is this, as citizens, of heaven, live, in a manner, that is worthy, of the gospel. As citizens, of heaven, live in a manner, that is worthy, of the gospel.

Paul is telling, telling the Philippians, and us, that our faith, must be lived out, in a tangible fashion. Beginning with, our own faith community, for us, that means, the community of believers, right here in Karageline, right?

[13:39] Right here in this room, and the other churches, that we're working, in association with. Let's read, verses 27, through 30, again, to remind ourselves, exactly, what Paul is saying here, that describes, how to live a manner of life, worthy of the gospel.

How do we live that out? Whatever happens, conduct yourselves, in a manner, worthy of the gospel, of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you, or only hear about you, in my absence, I will know, that you stand firm, in one spirit, contending as one man, for the faith, of the gospel, without being frightened, in any way, by those who oppose you.

This is a sign to them, that they will be destroyed, and that you will be saved, and that by God. For it has been granted to you, on behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him, since you are going through, the same struggle, you saw I had, and now hear, that I still have.

You see, Paul knew, if the church in Philippi, could stand together, they could accomplish, almost anything, for the sake of the gospel. Not individually, not independent, of one another, but together, as a body of Christ.

When Paul, instructs that they should, live in a manner, worthy, of the gospel of Christ, Paul is talking, directly to a people, that Jesus, is making for himself. Brothers and sisters, God is making for us, a people unto himself.

[15:05] But we are not doing it, as an island, excluded from the body. It is impossible. The people, the people, is the church.

Paul is talking about, the people, but he is talking about, the church. The church made up, of Jew and Gentile, male and female, slave and free, all living together, for the gospel.

A new humanity, united in Christ, by faith in Christ. A new humanity, who must serve, the purpose, of the glory of Christ. That's believers, throughout the ages.

Paul tells the church, in Philippi, that if they are to live, as that new humanity, the church needed to, stand firm in one spirit, with one mind, striving side by side, for the faith, of the gospel.

Paul is incredibly, redundant, on purpose, because he doesn't, want them to miss, what he is trying, to say here. He says the same thing, three times.

[16:16] Stand firm in one spirit, be of one mind, and striving together, side by side. There is no way, to misconstrue, that we are meant, to live, at our faith, alone, in a bubble, on an island, in seclusion.

There is no way, to misconstrue that. Paul gives two, very clear, word pictures, to describe, how a community faith, should operate. First, a picture of soldiers, standing firm, in one place. And second, a picture of athletes, one mind, striving together, side by side. The metaphor, of the word stand, was taken, from a military term. It means, to stand firm, and hold, one's ground. The term indicates, the determination, of a soldier, who stands his ground, not budging one inch. I will not move, from my post. Paul is reminding them, and us, that they're engaging, and we're engaging, in a war.

We must stand, our ground, faithfully, to face, intimidation. Again, in chapter 4, verse 1, Paul is them, to stand firm, in the Lord.

[17:31] We have the strength, to stand firm, because of what? Because of our union, in Christ. And because we walk together, in that faith.

Our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, has already won, the ultimate battle. Next, Paul uses the metaphor, of an athlete. The word Paul uses, for striving here, can also mean, contending, or, laboring.

The Greek word is, sunaltheo. You can hear the word, altheo in there, which is where, we get the word, athlete. Altheo, athlete. Which means, to strive, labor, or contend, to persevere, for something.

You can best picture, Paul, meant here, by envisioning, the defense, on a rugby, or soccer team. They block, side by side, for one singular purpose, of defending the team, and advancing, the position of the ball.

One, singular purpose. They have their eye, on the ball. We have our eye, on Christ. On sports teams, every player, must do their part.

[18:42] Every member, on the team, contributing, for one thing. The same thing, is true of the church. We must contend, side by side, for the gospel.

Advancing, as we contend, work, and labor together. Together we stand, divided we fall. Think about this. Why do athletes, practice hour after hour, day after day, even multiple times a day, disciplining themselves, to stay on grueling diets, and doing all kinds of, interesting exercises, that I couldn't possibly do myself.

Why do soldiers, put themselves, through difficult training, pushing themselves, to the very limits, of their strength, and intellect? because, they believe, that the goal, and ultimately, the prize, is worth it.

We must contend, for the faith, and engage, in a spiritual war, together, because Christ, is worth it. The gospel, is worth it.

Remember that, when you face challenges, at home, or at work. Remember that, when you are faced with, making a choice, to do something, that may disgrace, the name of Christ.

[19:59] Remember that, when you have an opportunity, to witness for Christ, or invite someone to church, don't miss the chance. Don't regret, what you've been prompted to do, what you know you should do.

But remember, above all, we don't, go up against, the enemy's team, or engage in battle, on our own. We were never designed, to do that.

We were never meant, to be secret agents, or ninjas, for the gospel. My voice would like, that illustration. We must be part, of a local church, part of a team, for the army of the Lord.

This is why, Paul gives, the threefold encouragement, to be unified, as a body of believers, for the gospel of Christ. Remember again, what those three things are. Stand firm in one spirit, be of one mind, or contending as one person, and strive together, side by side.

As believers, we must die with Christ, to our selfish desires. And then remember, that we are raised with him, to walk in a newness of life, with our brothers, and sisters.

[21:10] believers. This also means, that we must live, graceful lives, as we do life together, with other believers, in our church. In spite of, differences, and idiosyncrasies, we all bring, along with us, to the table of the Lord.

We all bring, different things, to the table. Different personality quirks. Right? Things that kind of, rub us the wrong way. You know? We say things, that maybe aren't kind at times. We do things, that aren't kind. We are sinners, in a broken world. If we expect, to be perfect, it's not going to happen. I love the saying, that says, if you find the perfect church, the moment you go in the door, it's no longer perfect.

That's certainly true of me. But it's important, that we remember, it's a body. It's a family. If you know your own, personal families, we say things we regret, we do things that are unkind, but ultimately, we love each other.

The same is true, of the body of Christ. We must raise each other up. We must forgive. We must seek forgiveness. We have to remember, something very, very important.

[22 : 28] At the foot of the cross, the ground is level. There is no better, there is no worse. The foot of the cross is even ground. And as believers, we all stand together, united there.

When all different kinds of people walk together in the unity for the glory of Christ, the gospel looks impressive. They're unified.

That's odd. That's not like the world. How is that happening? How are they loving each other in spite of indifferences, in spite of differences, in spite of conflicts, in spite of personalities? How are they doing that? That's because we love Jesus. Jesus loved us and forgave us. When we surrender our own selfish way to stand together for Christ, we make the gospel look valuable and persuasive.

persuasive. This is Paul's point when he says that we can accomplish much when we stand firm in one spirit, with one mind, striving side by side for the faith of the gospel.

[23 : 36] Pastor Matt Chandler, an American pastor, puts it this way, living a life worthy of the gospel does not mean pretending to be perfect. Instead, it means having the humility to think of others as better than ourselves.

It means putting self-concern aside to work together, realizing that we are all still in the process. Nobody's arrived yet.

We're all in the process. Let us have the grace of God for each other that He gave us in overlooking our sins and the outpouring of unmerited grace.

We didn't deserve it. We don't deserve His mercy and His grace and His love. And together we strive in holiness imputed to us in Christ and promised to us in the age to come.

End quote. As Christians, we have been given unmerited grace. And it is our obligation to give that same grace in return to others, especially other members of the body of Christ.

[24 : 41] The other very important instruction Paul gives us in these verses to the church and to us is that they and we are not to be frightened by oppression against the church.

We are not to be frightened. The original word for frightened here suggests something akin to causing uncontrollable, an uncontrollable stampede of horses. Startled horses stampeding out of fear.

Opponents of the Christians in Philippi were trying to throw them into a panic. And in so doing, they were trying to strike terror into their hearts. But if believers stand firmly together, side by side, with one's spirit and mind as a congregation, then at no point they or we should be intimidated by our adversaries.

So Paul instructs them in no way to let their adversaries intimidate them. In fact, in verse 28, he tells us that opposition against the Philippians' faith, against our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, is a clear sign of our opponents' destruction.

Sadly, that destruction will ultimately mean to their eternal torment in hell without any hope for parole or release. Now that should not bring us that condemnation should not bring us any joy by any means.

[26 : 05] Our hearts should be breaking for the lost and broken around us. That's why personal evangelism, sharing Christ with others, is so incredibly important.

We hold the cure to their eternal destruction and damnation. But in any case, we should never be frightened or threatened by opposition to our faith.

Verse 28 actually tells us what the good news is. When we are opposed for our faith, our faith in Christ, it is actually a sign of our salvation.

In Matthew 5, 10 through 12, Jesus puts it this way, Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad. For your reward is great in heaven.

[27 : 08] For so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. We are to hold firmly to Jesus as our treasure. We are to hold loosely to the things of this world, ultimately fearing nothing.

Opposition will come. Paul made it very clear in his letters and to us today. It is not if opposition comes. It is not if challenges happen. It is not if trials happen.

It is when they happen. When they happen. But we must remember that Jesus Christ has overcome the world. So back again to the question, what exactly does it look like to live a life worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ?

Christ. It looks like people from different backgrounds and situations and environment loving each other in spite of their differences and conflicts and doing life together.

What binds us together is our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Living a life worthy of the gospel of Christ means striving together to make Christ known.

[28 : 20] Courageously standing together against all oppressors. Remember to live is Christ and to die is gain. With that in mind everything else becomes clear.

Not easy. Clear. So how are you doing with that? Are you living out deeply your faith with others? With other believers? Are you pressing into Christ together? Are you chasing him together? Fearlessly committed to the cause of the gospel? Are you living a life worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ?

Have you found Christ worth living and dying for? Are you fearful when confronted about your faith? Are you growing in your faith or are you stagnant and cold?

Are you bravely sharing your faith when given the opportunity? I challenge you this week to take stock of these things. Ask yourself hard questions and then take appropriate steps to make a difference for Christ.

[29 : 31] What a gift he has given us. He has given us the church. Christ died for the church.

What an amazing gift he has given to us. To be able to come together, to walk together, standing firm in one mind, walking side by side for the gospel.

What a privilege, what a joy it is. Let us never take for granted how wonderful his bride is. What a blessing it is for us to be a member of that body.

Let us pray. Father in heaven, we thank you so much for your holy word. Lord God, how it exhorts us, it behooves us, Lord God, it encourages us.

Thank you for this time together. I am so incredibly privileged and feel honored to stand here before this body of believers and to share your word. May we, Father, remember the importance of the body of Christ.

[30 : 36] May we remember how critical it is to our walk. We will not thrive in our faith without it. Help this congregation to love each other, Father, to walk in the light of Christ, to forgive each other, to mend differences, help them to encourage one another, breaking bread together, spending time together, and then in the process reaching out to a lost and broken world.

As that world sees that unity, as the world sees how incredibly different it is. We are not like the world. We are not the same.

What we have is incredibly better. Give us courage and strength, Father, to forgive and to love in the name of Jesus.

Help us to go out and proclaim your word to everyone we meet, using every circumstance and situation like Paul did to further the gospel. We love you, Father.

We thank you for your sweet, beloved son, our Savior, and for your spirit that prompts us, walks with us, and encourages us. We say this all in the beloved name of our Savior, the wonderful Jesus Christ.

[31 : 58] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you, Henry. And I encourage you, please, at the end of our time together that if you want to talk through anything that was said or anything that Henry shared, please do talk to him afterwards.

We're going to sing together. Let your kingdom come, let your will be done. If you could just flick to the next verse, it tells us of God's cause, that Jesus Christ would be made known wherever we are we are called to join in that to see the good news of christ not just on our own but we do it together

as we've just been reminded as a community of believers let's stand together as we sing