

# Live Worthy

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[ 0 : 00 ] So Philippians chapter 1, beginning in verse 27, says, Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you're standing firm in one spirit with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel, in no way alarmed by your opponents, which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and that too from God.

For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for his sake, experiencing the same conflict which you saw in me, and now here to be in me.

Here's what I want to do. I want to take just a moment to do what I would, I guess, call a little brain surgery here, and show you what it is I'm thinking.

Because I think that when we come in here and we start asking questions, sometimes my questions don't always show you what I'm looking for. And some of you are such great, avid readers, you know so much, that you're thinking past kind of the questions that I'm asking.

You're already past my step. And so I just want to show you my thought process, and talk about it a little bit as we sort of see the structure that's going on here. So I want you to look here at this passage.

[ 1 : 26 ] This is verse 27 and 28. And if I were to say to myself, you know, what's the structure of this passage? That's a strange sort of word, but let me show you what I mean. First of all, you've got this word conduct here, right?

Only conduct yourselves. If you have the King James, I think it might say let your conversation. Does anybody have King James in front of them? Is that what it says?

New King James says conduct. Conduct, okay. Old King James says conversation. And if you're going to use the Old King James, let me just encourage you to go ahead and buy an Elizabethan dictionary, because you won't understand what it means if you don't have one, okay?

So this is a command. Conduct yourselves, right? He wants you to conduct yourselves in a certain way. And then what we have is we have this purpose statement right here. So that.

I want you to conduct yourself in a certain way. So that. Now, this whole statement of whether I come to see you or remain absent, for right now, just sort of ignore that, okay?

[ 2 : 29 ] Because that's just sort of modifying something, and we're just trying to get to the basic structure here, right? And so he goes on, and he gives this parallel. He says, conduct yourselves so that I'll hear that you are standing firm and striving together.

And here's what's interesting. He doesn't just have the parallel of standing firm, striving together, but he has standing firm in one spirit. Oh, where'd that go?

Standing firm in one spirit and striving together with one mind. So you can see the whole, you know, standing firm, one spirit, one mind, striving together.

That parallel structure, you know, where you've got, like, bookends and bookends, that's a very Hebrew way of writing. They would write bookended like that, right?

Okay? If you want to know what that's called, I'll tell you one day. Now, we can stop right there, because the structure of this passage, that's it. Everything else that we see here somehow modifies and helps us to understand all the ins and outs.

[ 3 : 39 ] So in other words, he says to conduct yourselves, and you would ask yourself, how? And the answer is? In a manner worthy of the gospel. It's okay. I'm so sorry. It happens.

It happens to all of us. Okay? Then he says, so that, so that what? So that when I hear that you're standing firm and you're striving together, I'm wanting it to be in one mind and one spirit.

Well, when do you want that to be? Whether I come here or whether I'm absent. And standing firm, striving together for what? For the faith of the gospel. And then the rest of that is just defining what it

means to stand firm and strive together.

Does that make sense? This is what it would look like if we just take everything out. Well, except, I've got to get rid of my little, my little circle's not going away. Just ignore my little blue circle.

So this is what it would look like if we take everything out and we just sort of outlined it. Right? This is what the passage is saying. Conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel so that I'm here, that you are standing firm and one spirit, striving together for the faith of the gospel.

[ 4 : 43 ] Now, I tend to think that most people, because I'm going to tell you something, I'm a terrible reader. Okay? I have a book that was written for teenagers.

I think maybe 12 year olds. Rage Song. Yeah. Okay? I've been reading that for three years. It's like 150 pages.

I just struggle to read. I really do. So, I think that most of the time when I start asking my questions, you're just a little bit ahead of me. And what I think we have to do for Bible study is slow down.

We have to take a step backwards in our Bible study and not get to the questions of what does it mean until we say what does it say. And look at that structure. Because that structure helps us to sort of grasp what's going on.

Let's look at verse 29 and 30 then. And kind of take in the structure that's here. In here, you have sort of the main clause in that it's, it has been granted.

[ 5 : 45 ] So, something has been granted. It, right? We're going to find out what that is. It has been granted. And here we have two things that sort of modify, right?

To you. It's been granted to you. Why? For Christ's sake. Okay? For Christ's sake. Actually, let me redo that. It's this for.

For Christ's sake. Now, you can sort of skip the whole not only and some of these other things.

We're just looking for the structure. And what do I see?

I see that there's two things granted. Now, let me ask you. Can you see the two things that are granted? They match. They're parallel in the way they're spoken. To suffer and to believe.

Those are the two things that are granted. It's granted to believe in him and to suffer for his sake.

Now, this whole experiencing, because it has that I-N-G, makes this whole phrase right here supportive of what this means right there.

[ 6 : 52 ] So, if I were to take out all the mess, right? Take out all the extra and just look at the structure, then we would have something like this. For it has been granted to believe in him and to suffer for his sake.

That's what the it is. It has. To believe. To suffer. It's the experience of the same conflict you saw in me and now here in me to you for Christ's sake.

Now, that's how that structure works. Now, let me just pause and ask you. Do you have any questions about that? It's really important that you learn how to do this.

And I don't mean that you don't know how to do this. But I mean you need to slow down. Because I really think that you already do this. But you just do it fast. And here's how I know this.

How many of you read a newspaper? Even if it's online. How many of you read the newspaper?

What's wrong with you? Okay. How many of you read directions for how to do something?

[ 8 : 00 ] Do you read the directions for how to do something? How many of you read fiction books?

How many of you read, you know, I mean there's all kinds of things you read all the time. And you don't ever look at somebody and go like, Uh, uh, uh, I don't know what this story is saying.

Or, I don't know this. Or, I don't know that. You know, you read it and you understand and you do things. And it's because you see the structure immediately. And you move on ready to use the information.

I'm saying in Bible study we've got to slow down and look at the structure. Because, as I told the kids at the Great Commission camp, One of the first things you have to do to interpret the Bible properly is you need to read it like any other book.

You need to read it like any other book. And the reason I say that is because when I was a kid, I told you all about, um, my dad's question and answer time when I was a kid.

So my dad would have this question and answer time. He was pastor, right? So he would have stumped the pastor a night. And he would have people ask questions. And there was this one guy who always asked the same question. I don't know where he got this from, why he was even asking it.

[ 9 : 07 ] But what he would ask is he would say, Okay, now where's that verse again that you can read over a cut and it'll stop the bleeding? Like what?

Ezekiel. Right. There's a verse of scripture in Ezekiel that people claim that if you'll just read that verse over and over again over a cut, the bleeding will stop.

That's treating the Bible like it's some sort of talisman, some sort of magic book. That is not what the Bible is. The Bible has truth in it.

It's built on the truth and the stories of who God is. So we need to read it like we would any other book, any other story, any other writing that we want to understand.

That's the way we need to read the Bible. That does not mean that we're saying that it's not a divine work. It is. But it's just not all magical and talisman-like.

[ 10 : 09 ] Okay, so with that said and kind of laying out that structure, I want to go back then to verse 27 down through and kind of see if we can understand then in this structure what things are meaning.

So let's go back here and let's think about this word conduct. Conduct or what this word means. Now I have three verses where I have found sort of a parallel passage that has this same word in it. Okay? And let's go to the first one. This is the first one. For our citizenship is in heaven from which also we eagerly wait for our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now all I want you to do is just remember what this one says. Let me go read the other two. And let's see if we can figure out which word is the word I'm talking about. Okay? So you got those.

The next one is, for he was looking for a city which has foundations whose architect and builder is God. Don't worry about what it means. Just looking for the word. Okay? We're going to read one more. It's also in Hebrews.

[ 11 : 10 ] But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to a myriad of angels. What's the word that sort of is in all three of those? City. City.

That's exactly right. So let's see that. Okay? We've got it right here. Right? Then we go back one. We've got it here. And we go back one. And we have citizenship. That is the root behind conduct. That's the root behind conduct. So if the root behind conduct is citizenship, city, what kind of conduct are we talking about here? We're talking about the conduct that shows you belong to what? Christ. Christ. Christ. Christ. Christ. The kingdom of God. You should act like a kingdom citizen. You should act like a citizen of Christ. You know? As a good citizen in that city, act like you are there for Christ.

Christ. Now let's think about the word standing firm for a second. Standing firm. Also, if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules.

[ 12 : 23 ] Okay? And then now we're going to see another parallel passage in Hebrews. But remember the former days when after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of suffering. Now this one's not quite as easy to pick out.

But what do you think is the primary sort of word in both of those that... Yeah.

And here it's the word competes. Right? And over here, it's going to be this conflict. So he wants you to stand firm.

It's this idea that you're in there and don't lose ground. You can almost think of it like tug of war. Right? You and I play tug of war? Did you play tug of war as a kid? How do you win doing tug of war?

Do you win doing tug of war by doing this? No. No. No. You've got to dig your heels in, down low, right? And pull. That's a standing firm. You're ready like an athlete for a great conflict.

[ 13 : 19 ] Okay? Let's take the word striving together. Striving together. Oh, you know what?

I got them backwards. So, the verses we just looked at is striving together. The verses for standing firm are these. It is for freedom that Christ has set us free.

Therefore, standing firm, and do not be subject again to the yoke of slavery. Or Philippians 4.

Therefore, my beloved brethren, whom I long to see, my joy, my crown, in this way, stand firm in the Lord.

And then 2 Thessalonians. So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught. So, the striving together is the conflict. The standing firm is being immovable.

So, let's just go back for a second. Conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel, so that whether I come and see you, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit with one mind.

[14:39] Talk to me about that. One spirit, one mind. Big idea. What is that? Well, when you would visit or hear what was going on, you know, you started hearing different things coming from the law versus the gospel.

Mm-hmm. And they were people who were like-minded and kind of struck straying away. Right. So, what Paul wants then is so that when somebody comes in, they hear that they're all saying the same thing.

They believe the same thing. They're working towards the same thing. Here's what's interesting. The word for spirit is spirit. And the word for mind right here is actually the word for soul. So, soul and spirit be one with each other.

Standing together. Striving together. Striving together. For the sake of the gospel. And part of this has to do with verse 28.

In no way being alarmed by your opponents. Now, who do you think their opponents are?

Non-believers. Non-believers. And specifically in Philippians, we haven't looked at this yet, but in chapter 3.

[15:51] I'm trying to find my... Let's go... Oh, the circumcised. That's right. In Philippians 3, 1 through 3, we have to write you the same thing.

It is a safeguard for you. Beware of the dogs. Beware of the evil workers. Beware of the false circumcision. Okay. And then in the next verse, chapter 3, verse 18 and 19.

For many walk of whom I've told you before and now tell you, even weeping, that they're enemies of the cross of Christ. That's who their opponents are. And he's telling them, don't be afraid of them. But your lack of fear, you're standing firm in one. It is a sign of destruction for them. And it's a sign of salvation for you. Now, how is that? How is it that a church standing firm with unity in doctrine is a sign of destruction for false teachers and outsiders?

Well, you're not... You can't be penetrated. You're fortified in God. Right? Right? Are we going to add something? No, I'm just...

[17:06] I can't remember the song. The one foundation standing... The church is one foundation. It's Jesus Christ our Lord. That's right. And because we are one together, because they are outside, that is the sign of their destruction.

Because they're not one with us. That is then the sign of our salvation. Right? Because we're one in the Lord. They will know that we're Christians by our love.

Our unity shows that because... And not just unity, unity. But unity over the faith of the doctrine and over the gospel. It shows our salvation.

Let's then take a look at verse 29. There are the two gifts that are given in verse 29.

I don't know if you remember what we're talking about here. But we have the gift of to believe and to suffer for His sake. It is granted to believe in Him.

[18:13] This is the salvation faith. It's saving faith. It's not a naturally occurring thing in the human. Now we can have faith about a lot of things.

Right? You get up one day. You tell your kids, hey, you know, when you get home, I need you to take care of something. And they say, okay. And you've got to take off.

And when they get back, they take care of it. But you had faith that they would do it. You trusted that they would do it. But that's not the same thing as saving faith in Christ. Saving faith is not something that naturally occurs because our hearts are wicked.

Right? We do not have faith naturally. So it has to be given to us. It has to be granted to us. We go to Ephesians chapter 2, 8, and 9 and see the same thing.

But then he goes on to say that suffering for his sake is also a gift from God. Suffering is a gift from God. And he gives us, in Matthew, this is just a parallel passage.

[19:18] Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad for your reward in heaven is great. For in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

There is this sense in which our suffering for the sake of the gospel is something that Christ the Lord has given to us to experience. It is a gift from him.

It's granted. That word granted is root, is gift. He's gifted us to suffer for the sake of the gospel. Now that doesn't mean that we go running after that kind of persecution and suffering.

But it means that when it comes to us we must take it in and welcome it. You see something similar in 1 Peter chapter 4 verse 15 and 16. Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer or a thief,

an evildoer, or troublesome meddler.

But if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is to not be ashamed. But it's to glorify God in that name. And then Paul goes on to say in verse 30 that the same kind of conflict that you saw in me and here is in me, you also are going to have this same conflict.

[ 20 : 31 ] What is this conflict that he's talking about? For I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf and for those who are at Laodicea and for all those who have not personally seen my face.

A struggle that he's had on their behalf. This struggle is about him taking the gospel to them. 1 Timothy chapter 6 verse 12.

Fight the good fight. This is that conflict. Fight the good fight of faith. Take hold of eternal life to which you were called. You made the good confession.

Paul's point in verse 30 is that the conflict that he's in is the conflict of being persecuted for the sake of the gospel. He's in this battle between the forces of the Lord and the devil.

Between the world and the gospel. And so as we suffer for the sake of the gospel, we are in that same conflict with him.

[ 21 : 34 ] The athlete is fighting against things. Paul is saying to the Philippians that they will and encounter the same conflict.

So that's sort of taking a look at the structure and the meaning of those words. So what does all this mean for us? Let's just make some application of these things.

The first thing is that in application we want to understand what it is we need to believe. There's things we need to believe because of these things. So here's a couple things I have for you.

Number one, our behavior should always match the greatness of the gospel even if no one is looking.

What did he say? Whether I'm with you or absent. Think about that. When was the last time nobody was looking? And you'd be sure there was nobody looking.

[ 22 : 36 ] With our cell phones around, we have no idea if somebody was looking. But someone's always looking. Right.

God's watching us. That's right. But unfortunately, sometimes we as humans, we have a tendency to think that when no human is looking, that there's no God looking either. And so sometimes we will just go ahead and sin and do that thing when we feel like we're not going to be called to account.

And so we have to live worthy of the gospel, but particularly with integrity. When no one's looking, when no one's holding our hands, when no one's there to chastise us, that's an important thing.

It's an important thing to teach our kids as well. So second thing is that our behavior must include the body of Christ as we strive for the gospel. In other words, my striving for the sake of the gospel, my standing firm for the sake of the gospel is not a solo act.

This whole thing is he's talking about you're striving together, you're standing firm in one mind with one spirit.

[ 23 : 46 ] Now think about that for a second. So often we apply these things very individualistic. How do you function this way? What about you when you're driving your car late at night and you come to a four-way stop at 4 a.m.

and there's nobody around and you're tired and ready to go home? Do you stop? Or do you just keep going? Right? That's a very individualistic way of thinking about it. But what about all of us? How can we all stand firm together? We need to live in such a way as to show that the gospel is worthy of everything. So how do we do that together? How do we stand firm together?

How do we strive together? How do we fight the fight of faith together? That's really Paul's emphasis. It's not just about what you're doing on your own.

So I think a part of that is that we have to be there for one another to encourage one another. Which means we have to be in one another's lives. Which means we're going to have to spend time together outside of Sunday morning 10 a.m.

[ 24 : 47 ] Thursday morning 10 a.m. And there's going to have to be more time together. There's no other way that you can encourage one another to live the Christian life. Stand firm together if you're not with each other.

I know that there's all kinds of things in life that get in the way of that. But so how do we how can we be creative and figure out how to be together? That's really the question for you to kind of think on.

Our faith for salvation is a gift from God and so is suffering. They're both gifts. I think I think a case could be made that not just suffering for the sake of the gospel is a gift.

But I think that all suffering is a gift from the Lord. That's a difficult thing to say because nobody likes to suffer. But I think I think if suffering is not a gift from God.

Then what is it? Is it a work of Satan? If it is then does it have a purpose? If if God is not involved then is it purposeless things happening to us?

[ 25 : 48 ] At least if it comes from the hand of the Lord it comes from a good God who loves us who cares for us. You know I think I think of the difference.

I have a guy on the battlefield with a leg that's been shot or hurt or whatever and the doctor comes along you know he's trying to help you know just bandage him up to get into the hospital.

And so he's got to do some things that are going to hurt him. Maybe he's got to do something and put medicine or dig a bullet out or something and it's going to hurt. And he's not wanting to hurt the man.

He wants the man to survive. He wants the man to get along. And so this this guy this medic digs it out hurts the guy on purpose in order to heal the guy so that he can go home to go on.

That's that's the attitude of goodness. Goodness and care that God brings suffering to us. I'm just thinking about probably he was going to feel this way but any of the hurt or the terrible things that could have happened in life.

[ 26 : 51 ] It it helped us with our faith. It helped us grow in faith. That's always been that's a good way to look at it. Yeah. That's right. That's right. How would Mary and Martha understand that Jesus is the resurrection and life had not Lazarus died?

Yeah. So a couple of attitudes maybe that we need to adopt then based upon these truths. One is that we need to make sure we're pursuing unity in the body of Christ specifically with our church family.

It's it is one thing to pursue and understand that there are more Christians in this world than just us. And there are other churches in this world than just our church. There's a church over there and there's other churches around.

And so my point is is that while we pursue unity with the broader body of Christ, we need to pursue unity within this body as well.

This body exists for a reason. We are here because we believe a certain way. We believe certain things. And so the unity that we need to have needs to be something that is a priority over the unity with the entirety of the Christians in the world.

[ 28 : 03 ] Does that make sense what I'm saying? It's not it's not that I don't love my extended family, but this is my immediate family. And there has to be a priority upon that immediate family.

Yes, ma'am. I keep coming back. Take hold of eternal life. That is the promise that, you know, we've been preaching, you know, accept Christ and you will have eternal life.

A lot of people, they know there's eternal life, but it's so far away they can't see it. Yeah.

Yep. Brady, there's something else that came to my mind when you were talking about suffering.

Yes. Some people have the attitude that you're suffering because you're not close enough to God. Because you're not in reading His Scriptures and so forth. If your faith is strong enough, you won't have any suffering. I've encountered some of those that were very judgmental.

[ 29 : 18 ] Right. Right. What have you done wrong? What sin do you need to confess? Yeah. Yeah. I need to tell them. Mm-hmm. Yeah. Yeah.

They just need to look at Jesus. Mm-hmm. Jesus certainly suffered. Yeah, without sin. Yeah. That's right. So the last couple things I want to say is that as we're thinking about suffering and working together as a body, Christ, for these things, I think it is good for us to think to ourselves that we need to prepare for suffering and prepare for suffering for our faith.

And suffering for our faith is that sometimes we're going to be called to give a reason for the hope we have in Christ. And sometimes we're going to be called to give a reason why we believe a certain thing.

There's going to be some people who will call us on the carpet for these things. You'll probably not find it in an academic setting. You'll probably not find it in someone that you don't know. But it's going to be a loved one.

It's going to be somebody in your family. It's going to be a child, a grandchild. It's going to be a cousin, an uncle, or whomever. And the challenge to your faith is going to be one of those where

they're questioning it themselves.

[ 30 : 29 ] And they're just asking you to explain, well, why do you believe what you believe? And how can you believe that? And why do you have so much hope? And are you sure you have hope? Because I've watched the way you act. And so preparing for that questioning.

Now that's not, that being questioned about our faith is probably level one of suffering and persecution. And it goes down to probably about 10 or 12, right? So it's really not that difficult. But that is the start that if we can learn how to deal with the questioning of what we believe by others and do it in a winsome, gracious, firm way, that starts us on a path of preparing for greater suffering.

But part of preparing for suffering is not about, it's not like there's a gym somewhere that we go to and we get to work out preparing for suffering.

But it's being with the body of Christ, hearing His word, understanding the theology so that we understand who God is, and growing in our relationship with Him and one another.

[ 31 : 35 ] Those are the things that help us to begin to be prepared for that suffering. Paul is saying, listen, if I'm telling you to live as Christ and to die as gain, then you need to live like a citizen of the kingdom.

And living like a citizen of the kingdom means that you are striving for the gospel and you're not afraid of the persecution that is to come. Just hold on.

Just hold on. All right. All right. All right.