

Living Worthy of the Gospel

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Preacher: Rev. James Maciver

[0 : 00] Let's turn together tonight to the scriptures of Philippians chapter 1 and verses 27 to 30. Paul's letter to the Philippians and chapter 1 verse 27.

Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you, that you are standing firm in one spirit and with one mind striving side by side, or the faith of the gospel.

And so on through to the end of the chapter at verse 30. Paul was confident, I think we mentioned this morning as well, that he would be set free from prison and would come in the providence of God and goodness of God to see the Philippians again, to return to them.

And that was certainly his desire. He wanted that to be something that would be provided by God for their furtherance, as he puts it, and progress and joy in the faith in verse 25.

But he wasn't certain about that. And so he gives instructions to them here and other parts of the epistle, which are applicable whether or not he would actually ever see them again.

[1 : 21] The passage that we have here in verse 27 onwards is a passage that stands by itself, whether or not the apostle was going to return to the Philippians, or whether he would in fact be executed or die in prison or whatever.

And that's why the instruction there covers all eventualities. And of course it's the same in terms of our gospel ministry too.

Ministers come and ministers go. But this remains as one great objective for God's people, whether there is a minister or isn't, or whoever the minister is or isn't.

This remains as the constant objective and aim of God's people of the church of Christ. That they will live worthy of the gospel of Christ.

That they will stand fast in one spirit with one mind, striving side by side for the faith of the gospel. That they will not be in anything frightened by their opponents.

[2 : 37] You may recall that in August 2009, I preached from a little earlier in this passage in verse 25.

That was after I had declined a call that had come to me from the Free North Church in Inverness. And afterwards I felt constrained to preach on verse 25, I've convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith.

But had my decision been different, it would still be the case that verses 27 onwards would have remained in place and relevant as they are tonight.

So let's look at these verses and see what they contain for us. Because it is, as we say, an abiding instruction, an abiding principle, an abiding requirement, an abiding challenge for God's people in every situation and circumstance.

There are two or three things that we want to look at. First of all, they are not to be deflected from a life worthy of the gospel. Secondly, they are not to be intimidated by their opponents in the gospel.

[3 : 54] And thirdly, they are not to be mistaken about suffering for the gospel. Here he is saying, only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ.

And that word, only with which he begins there, really has force. Because he is saying, irrespective of what it is with me, irrespective of my circumstances, irrespective of what the future holds for me, as a prisoner of Christ, writing to you Philippians from this prison, irrespective of whatever that will turn out to be, let this be the case with you, that you live worthy of the gospel of Christ.

Only let this, as if he is saying, this one thing and one thing only, is what must be so with you. What I want to hear from you and about you, supposing I don't return to you, he is saying.

And the words he is using here, are very like words he is using in chapter 3 as well, this word, this manner of life.

It's the word conversation in the old translations, which is a bit misleading nowadays, because that tends to make us think just of speaking. But conversation in the old days, used to mean your, used to mean your whole manner of life and movement.

[5 : 18] How you live your life out. And you remember, in chapter 3, he says there that, in contrast to those who are enemies of the gospel, he says, our citizenship, verse 20, is in heaven.

And the word citizenship there, is very, very close, to this word, manner of life, that he uses in verse 27. They really have the same root, they're almost the same, almost identical, they mean pretty much the same thing.

Citizenship, and the kind of life that citizens must live. Now, of course, you realize that, Philippians lived in a very important region, it was in fact, a very important Roman colony, and Rome saw it as very important, within its massive empire.

So that, the citizens of Philippi, were regarded as really having a pretty special place. They were citizens of Philippi, this important strategic Roman colony, but they were actually also citizens of Rome, in the higher sense.

And these Christians in Philippi, could well understand, how Paul was illustrating, their relation to Jesus, and to the life that they had in him, how that was illustrated, by their ordinary, or natural situation.

[6 : 37] As they were living in Philippi, but citizens of the capital of Rome, so as Christians, they were living in this world, but they were citizens of heaven. Our citizenship is in heaven.

And what he's saying to them here is, let your manner of life, let your life as citizens of heaven, be worthy of the gospel of Christ.

They are citizens of heaven. Their life must show that. It must be demonstrable, from the way that they live, that they are indeed, people whose names are written, on the role of heaven.

On the citizens role, of heaven where Jesus is. And that's what he's saying, in regard to, whatever for him personally, the future may hold.

This he says, is what I want to hear of you. That you are standing firm, in one spirit. That your manner of life, be worthy of the gospel, of Christ.

[7 : 44] The context, of course, is that which he mentions, as we'll see in a minute, in verse 28. The context of living, amongst opponents. It is important, that we see how he says here, let your manner of life, be worthy, of the gospel of Christ.

He's not just saying, worthy of Christ, your savior. And of course, that's included. But what he really, wants to emphasize is, let your manner of life, be worthy, of the gospel of Christ.

Your people of the gospel. Your people who live, for the gospel. Your people who live, out the gospel. Your people, in whom the gospel, is seen. In whom the gospel, is read, by those who don't, read their bible, or don't have a bible, to read.

The people of Philippi, that surrounded, these Philippian Christians, didn't have the scriptures. But they read, the scriptures. They read the gospel. They read, the message, that these Christians, were delivering to them, in the lives, that they lived.

Or at least, that's how Paul, wanted it to be. And so, it must be for us as well. Because verse 28, really, captures for us, the context, in which they lived.

[8 : 54] There were people, who were being noticed, who were being watched, who were being opposed, who had a conflict, of ideology, and outlook, with those people, around them, as their opponents.

We'll see in a minute, when it comes to opponents, what he meant by that, and why he's saying, not to be frightened by them. But that's the context, where he wants them, to be known as people, who live worthy, of the gospel of Christ.

In whom that gospel, is embodied, if you like. Is shown forth, in their manner of life. Now that's a great challenge.

No question about that. But it's something, to get into our minds, that here is, what God, actually is setting out, for us, on a daily basis, as to how we live, and as to how we live, in relation to the world, around us, in relation to opponents, of the gospel.

We are to live, in a manner, worthy of, of the gospel of Christ. Worthy of that, message, of that message, of salvation, of this gospel, of which Christ himself, is the very substance, and Lord.

[10 : 06] We are to live, worthy of that gospel. In other words, the gospel itself, is in many respects, and people's view, of the gospel certainly, is in many respects, tied up, with the manner of life, of God's people.

What they make, of you and I, indeed, will be what they make, of the gospel. If we are not, authentic Christians, they are not going to find, the gospel persuasive, even though we know, that only God, ultimately, can persuade anyone, of the truth, of the gospel.

But what Paul is saying, is this, that, in presenting, Jesus, to, an opposing world, we actually, have to, present it, as supported by, and reinforced, and backed up by, how they must, see Jesus, in us.

And that's the great, requirement, and that's the great, challenge for us all, isn't it, as Christians, that as we promote, Jesus, in the world, as we promote him, in our outreach, our evangelism, our worship, whatever, we promote him, in a way that, shows him forth also, in our manner of life.

Let your, manner of life, let your, way of living, your citizenship be, let it be worthy, of the gospel of Christ. And then he moves on to say, so that he may hear of you, that you are standing firm, in one spirit, with one mind, striving side by side, for the faith, of the gospel.

[11 : 47] You see, he's got the gospel again, in mind, and it's all to do, with the gospel, and living out the gospel, and being through, to the gospel. And now he's saying, with one mind, and one spirit, that this is how you live.

Now it doesn't, I think, mean that we're, to think of these two, as essentially, separate or different things, the mind, and the spirit, standing firm, in one spirit, with one mind.

What he really is, emphasizing is that, all of our being, all of our being, inwardly, and outwardly, everything we are, in our souls, and in our physical makeup, everything we are, is for the gospel, everything we are, is for the sake of Christ, every single thing, we can muster, all our faculties, of our mind, of our intellect, of our emotions, of our will, everything inwardly, that we associate, with our soul, as well as, what we are, outwardly, that's what he says, is what I want to hear of you, that you have, a oneness of mind, and a oneness of spirit, that together, collectively, and each of you, individually, that this is what you, come to, that this is what you're doing, that for the gospel, you are united, in standing firm, and striving side by side, so with that, emphasis on, all our faculties, to be engaged, all our being, to be engaged, he's saying, they are engaged, in two things, engaged in, first of all, standing firm, being steadfast, not being diverted, not being taken aside, to things which are of, lesser importance, except when that is appropriate, but when we're dealing with, the gospel, and living out the gospel, and witnessing to Christ, what he's saying is, stand fast, stand firm, don't actually be, diverted from your purpose, and stand firm against, as we'll see in a minute, against your opponents, he obviously means that as well, be steadfast, keep believing, what you believe, let the truth of God, be what informs your mind, not human opinion, not scientific, achievements, unless they're in line, with the word of God, stand fast, and secondly, that same oneness, of mind and spirit, with one mind, striving side by side, for the faith of the gospel, these words are, striving side by side, are in the language, of athletics usually, as Paul uses them, in the New Testament, as you know, he sometimes, borrows from, athletic activities, in order to, to give us a picture, of the strivings, especially of the Christian life, how the energy, that we are to expend, as illustrated, by athletes, as they compete, at the highest level, and seek to win, above the rest, and something like that, that he has here, striving side by side, for the faith, of the gospel, except of course, what he's saying here is, it's not simply, an individual striving, it's a striving together, and that fits with, what he's saying, have the one mind, have the one, the one mind, and the one spirit, striving side by side, in other words, yes you can borrow, from athletics, and the activities, of athletes, but this is teamwork, it's athletics, in the sense, not just of, all the energy, that's, that's expended, in that, but also, how it is so important, to act as a team, and living worthily, for the gospel,

Donna will tell you, that so often, if I watch football, on match of the day, or something, and you find, one of those, center forwards, coming, and an opportunity, to score a goal, and there are people, unmarked, on his own side, calling out for the ball, and what does he try and do, he tries to score himself, and he misses, and it goes over the top, and sometimes, he'll just shout out, at the telly, why don't you pass the ball, why don't you learn, to pass, to your teammate, why do you, continue to be so greedy, that's not what you're paid for, okay, it's a bit worked up, but you know what it says, we know what I'm saying, this is something, that Paul is saying, is so important, for the gospel, you're not, on your own, you don't try, to achieve everything, by yourself, you have to, be part of this, great gospel, teamwork, that Christ himself, creates, and brings about, through his spirit, and by his grace, where he places you, as an individual Christian, in unity, and in unison, with other Christians, like yourself, there's all the diversity, of course, within the church, all the different gifts, and all the different, abilities, and all the different, personalities, and they all, actually exist, in that sense, in their own, individuality, but they are, wonderfully blended, together by grace, so that they'll, act together, so that they'll, be a spiritual, body, and it's so, frustrating, isn't it, when you find, some Christians, so zealous, to do work, for the Lord, and want to really, engage, in whatever project, it is, in evangelism, and yet, they find it, so difficult, to encourage others, to participate, and to come together, to share that, with them, don't let it be, like that, with you, be of one mind, of one spirit, standing steadfast, but striving, side by side, be a team, for Christ, share together, the ups and downs, of living, for the gospel, support each other, in the different tasks, that Jesus has given you, and you see, he's saying, it's for the faith, of the gospel, and what he means, by that really, is what we usually call, the Christian faith, it's common, nowadays, to speak about, faiths, and some people, as Christians, don't like that, because they realize, of course, there is only one faith, in the sense of, the Christian faith, but even accepting, the fact, that other beliefs, are called, faiths, whether it's Islam, or Buddhism, or whatever, it's quite common, to think about, all these faith, and interfaith activities, and so on, in the world of our day, but what, what Paul is saying is, your business, is striving together, for the faith, of the gospel, the faith, that's encapsulated, in the gospel, that's set forth, in the gospel, that you find, in the message, of the gospel, the faith, that contains, salvation, in Christ, the glory of God, the authority of God, the grace of God, the mercy of God, all the things, that you find, in the Christian faith, that makes it, so distinct, and so different, and so superior, to every other, system of belief, strive, he says, together, side by side, for the faith, of the gospel, of the gospel, of the gospel, point needs the gospel,

Lewis needs the gospel, Scotland needs the gospel, world needs the gospel, but Paul is saying, as he wrote, to the Philippians, Philippi needs the gospel, and it is you, Christians, who must strive, together with one mind, with one purpose, and do it, side by side, for the faith, of the gospel, live your lives, in that way, worthy of the gospel, of Jesus Christ, secondly, he is saying, don't be intimidated, or frightened, in anything, by your opponents, this is a clear sign, to them, of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that, from God, that's the second thing, he is saying, firstly, don't be deflected, from a life, worthy of the gospel, secondly, don't be intimidated, by opponents, now this word, frightened, is quite a strong word, it was used, in the ordinary sense, of, what happens, when a horse, is frightened, you know, at the, bonfire night, or whatever, those who have horses, complain that the fireworks, frighten the horses, and they weren't tied down, they would bolt, and they would run away, well that's the kind of word, that's used here, frightened, not frightened, in anything, by your opponents, and he is saying, don't be frightened, in anything, by your opponents, well, what would make, these Christians, be startled, to that extent, it would have to be, something really, powerful, something, really, intimidating, something that really, is big, in its influence, or in its threat, and, it would seem that, we could think of,

[21 : 31] Philippi, because it was such an important, Roman colony, that, the cult, of the emperor, would be very prominent, in Philippi, and the cult, of the emperor, was really, pretty much, where the emperor, was held up, as a god, within the Roman, pantheon of gods, the emperor, belonged, to that group, of gods, that were worthy, of worship, and sometimes, especially, on important occasions, certain people, made sure, that people, bowed to the emperor, as a god, and went round, on special occasions, demanding, that even Christians, enter into, this celebration, of the emperor, and worship, of the emperor, which of course, Christians could not do, without, denying their lord, grievously, and you can imagine, how difficult, it would be, when that sort, of situation, surrounded, this little church, in Philippi, when the state, and the government, of the day, demanded, that you had, to confess, that Caesar, or the emperor, whoever he was, was god, was a god, that you owed him, the obeisance, and the worship, as god, that he demanded, and there was, very, very often, the threat, of execution, and sometimes, it was carried out, if you didn't comply, but he's saying, don't be frightened, in anything, by your opponents, if we assume, that these were, the opponents mentioned, were not certain, but certainly, that would have been, one of the, elements, and the circumstances, of Philippi, that these Christians met, let's just assume, that that's what,

Paul meant, by these opponents, because there certainly, would be that opposition, and he's saying, don't in any way, be frightened, don't be panicked, don't bolt, by any threats, that they make, now of course, you have to, take that, right into, our circumstances, today, there's no Roman emperor, but you still have, the state, and you have the state, encroaching, very, very fast, on Christian liberties, and you have, the state, increasingly, insistent, that Christians, must comply, with whatever, regulations, the state lays down, even if they, actually contradict, what you owe, to Christ as Lord, and the threat, is there, and the weight, of intimidation, is there, just look at, this, well-known, case, in Northern Ireland, the Asher's Bakery, that refused, to provide, a message, of same-sex marriage, on a cake, that was, requested, by this couple, that came to them, still to be resolved, but, what a magnificent, magnificent, example, of faith, and of being true, to Christ, these young Christians, are showing, who own that business, they're not frightened, by their opponents, they're not running, into a panic, just because, the big state, is wielding, its big stick, and saying, if you don't do this, then we'll punish you, no, what they're saying, is well, you can punish us, you can put us, in jail, but we're not, going to be, untrue to Jesus, we're not, going to give, any other person, whether it's,

Mohammed, or whoever, the same status, as our king, as our lord, as our savior, as our god, don't be frightened, in anything, by your opponents, after all, Paul is writing, from prison, and who would imagine, that being, thrown into prison, and held as a prisoner, would in any way, be an advantage, to the gospel, but as we've read, through, this chapter, itself tonight, you can see, that Paul, was not in any way, mistaken, as to God's, sovereignty, and God's wisdom, in putting him here, in giving him, to stand, for the gospel, the way he did, even if it meant, that he was now, in prison, awaiting the verdict, of Caesar, I want you to know, brother, she said, that what has happened, to me, has really served, to advance, the gospel, so that it has become, known throughout all, the whole imperial guard, and to all the rest, that my imprisonment, is for Christ, and most of the brothers, having become, confident in the Lord, by my imprisonment, are much more bold, to speak the word, without fear, if you start, cowering, in the face, of intimidation, from the state, whatever opponent, it is, how is that, going to be, an encouragement, to your fellow Christians, he's saying to them, continue with one mind, and with one spirit, and just as surely, as I'm saying that, he's saying, don't be frightened, be of one mind, in this as well, don't in any way, be intimidated, by your opponents, because they will, come through that, something, which will, ultimately, as God will use it, to the advantage, of the gospel, and that's in fact, what he goes on to say, because, he's saying it is, a clear sign, to them, of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God, now he's saying there, this is a clear sign, in one direction, he's not saying here, it's a clear sign, to your opponents, of their destruction, but it's a clear sign, to you Christians, of your salvation, from God, what he's saying, is, your steadfastness, under threat, your refusal, to be intimidated, by your opponents, is a sign, to them, of two things, their own destruction, and your salvation, how does it work, only God knows that, but it may be the case, that Paul is actually speaking, from personal experience, because when you go back, to the book of Acts, and you read about, his conversion there, in the book of Acts, and where you find that, famous passage, where he speaks about, meeting Christ, in chapter 8, on the way to Damascus, in chapter 9, and then in chapter 8, all the havoc, that he was causing, as he caused people, who were Christians, to be thrown into prison, and really gave his approval, to their execution, as well as he did, to the death of Stephen, but, as they were stoning Stephen, he called out,

Lord Jesus, receive my spirit, and falling to his knees, he cried out, with a loud voice, Lord do not hold this sin, against them, and when he said this, he fell asleep, and what does the previous verse say, the witnesses laid down, their garments, at the feet, of a young man, named Saul, then you have chapter 8, Saul, wreaking havoc, on the church, then you have chapter 9, Saul's conversion, things were happening, before you reach chapter 9, in the mind, and the experience, of this man, Saul of Tarsus, he never got over, Stephen's death, he never got over, the spirit, and the manner, in which Stephen, faced his death, not intimidated, by his opponents, even though he knew, they were going to kill him, and for Paul, something registered, on that moment, and it was something like this, what he's saying, to the Philippians, it is a clear sign, of my own destruction, and of the salvation, of this Stephen, what I'm seeing here, and hearing, with my own eyes, you see,

God, was making Stephen's death, have an impact, or beginning, to have an impact, and we understand, a considerable impact, on the mind, of this man, even though he still, wreaked havoc, for a time, on the church, it was through, the death of Stephen, that Jesus, that God, yes, that Jesus, was preparing, his greatest ever missionary, in Saul of Tarsus, you'd never believe that, from chapter 8, you'd never believe that, laying down the clothes, of Stephen, at this young man's feet, would have had any impact, when you read chapter 8, how he just went up, and wrought havoc, in the church, you would say, that hadn't the weight, of a feather, on his conscience, then you come to chapter 9, and you realize, from that, and other references, like this one, the death of Stephen, made its own mark, on the conscience, of Saul, and now he's saying, don't be frightened, in anything, by your opponents, this is a clear sign, to them, of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God, whatever we have, to put up with, for the sake of Jesus, whatever opposition, whatever disappointments, whatever, as they are for him, so they are bound, to be productive, not just for ourselves, but even, bearing upon, the lives of others, that we may be tonight, are nowhere near, the kingdom of God, but when they see your life, and they see your consistent, walk with Christ, and they see you, walking worthy, of the gospel of Christ, and they see you, with others, holding, standing firm, in one spirit, and they see you, striving side by side, for the faith, of the gospel, and they see, that you are not, frightened, by the opposition, that comes your way, you believe God, they don't leave, that situation, untouched, something registers, that may yet, by the blessing of God, lead to that conversion, that's why, it's so important, not just for our own, well-being, that we live, this life, but that we do it, so that others too, hopefully will benefit, as God will bless that, to them, and if you ask the question, why does the world, have such, little conviction, of sin, or of their need, of Christ, or of God, or of his judgment, or of any of these things, could it not be, that the answer, to that question, lies within the church, in your life, and mine, that perhaps, it's not just, quite as committed, as true, as consistent, as fearless, as zealous, as it could be, thirdly, he says, don't be mistaken, about suffering, for the gospel, for he says, it has been granted, to you, that for the sake, of Christ, you should not only, believe in him, but also suffer, for his sake, engaged in the same conflict, that you saw I had, and now hear, that I still have, now this is interesting, not going to take long, over it, but it's interesting, that he puts together, here these two words, believe, and suffering, because to Paul, where you have the one, you have to some degree, or other, you have the other one, as well, where you have the believing, you have, in some way,

[34 : 09] small or great, you have the suffering, as well, you have what it means, to take the bite, of the opponents, of the gospel, to some extent, or other, but the other, interesting thing is, that he's putting them both, under the word, granted, which really means, the same thing, as gifted, and of course, that means, when you think of, gifted or granted, you think of, the grace of God, the favor of God, and the remarkable thing, he's doing here, is not just joining up, believing, and suffering for Christ, believing in Christ, and suffering for Christ, but not only, is he joining them together, he's putting them both, as joined together, under the gift, of God, as surely, as faith, is his gift, so too, is suffering for him, and what he's saying, to the Philippians, is don't be mistaken, about that, don't think that, indeed as we've seen, in Peter, in recent times, don't think that, suffering is out of place, in a Christian witness, or in a life, worthy of the gospel, it has been, gifted to you, not only to believe in him, but to suffer, for his sake, and it's all about him, isn't it, to suffer, for his sake, suffering, by itself, is pretty much irrelevant, suffering, suffering, suffering, for his sake, fills, the suffering, with meaning, with purpose, indeed, with an element, of glory, because it is all, for him, as it is all, about him, and today, has been all, about him, remembering him, in his death, thinking, of the cost, of our redemption, fulfilling the commandment, to come, and do this, in remembrance of him, and now, here we are, at the end of this,

Sabbath day, saying, this is still, all about him, when I think of, my responsibilities, and you, when we think of, what the church, must be together, what Christians, as a team, must be, in living out, the gospel, it's, accompanied, by suffering, and it's all, for his sake, and isn't it, true, really, and Paul, would certainly, say yes, to this, even the worst, prison conditions, don't come, anywhere near, the extent, of suffering, that it took, to redeem us, what God, is really saying, to us by this, is, here is my son, and this is, what he suffered, to bring you, into my kingdom, is it too much, for you, to suffer a little, for his sake, don't be, say it's been, mistaken by this, it has been, gifted to you, to suffer for him, the apostles, came out of, a thrashing, on the part of, the authorities, and the early, chapter of Acts, and they, counted it, something, worthy, something, worthwhile, to suffer that, for his sake, they sought, as their privilege, to suffer, for the Lord, who had suffered, so much more, for them, is that how, we see it tonight, is that how,

I see it, is that how, I see it, as a minister, of the gospel, am I prepared, to suffer for him, am I prepared, to put up with things, ridicule, whatever, are you prepared, to do that, is that part, of your outlook, as a Christian, do you see it, as much of a gift, as the faith, that you exercise, engaged, he says, in the same conflict, that you saw I had, and now here, that I still have, with me, well, what he's saying is, the Philippians, in the church, there are not unique, you're going through, hard times, he's saying, but remember, it's part of, what it means, to be a Christian, but remember, he says, this is the same, conflict, that you saw, in me, and still here, to be in me, or with me, the same conflict, and how encouraging, that would be, for them, to realize, that their sufferings, were not different, in principle, even if they were, of a different kind, to those of the apostle, he was in prison, they were not, his sufferings, were the sufferings, of being confined, theirs were different, in that respect, but they are the same, from this respect, they are the same, conflict, they are for the gospel, they are for Christ, and when you know, in your sufferings, that your sufferings, are shared, by other Christians, even throughout the world, what an assurance, that gives you, and what a strengthening, that you are not, on your own, that God has not, given you sufferings, unique to yourself, isolating you, from the rest, of God's people, no you belong, as a person, as an individual, to this number, of the body, of Christ, of Christ, and if one member, suffers, the rest, suffer with it, that's the beauty, of that imagery, isn't it, that we are never, on our own, that we are joined, to others, who are in the same, conflict, conflict, don't be deflected, from a life, worthy of the gospel, don't be intimidated, by opponents, of the gospel, don't be mistaken, about suffering, for the gospel, let's pray, oh Lord, our gracious God, we give thanks, for the strength, that your spirit, gives to us, we give thanks, for the way, that you answer prayer, when we call upon you, for our strengthening, we thank you, for the way, that we are assured, that we need not, be afraid, of facing the world, and its opposition, whatever it may entail, for the sake of Christ,

Lord we thank you, for your own lordship, for its perfection, and authority, we thank you, for the way, in which you, hold all things, that take place, and all human beings, in the hollow of your hand, and so we have confidence, that in every respect, in every detail, small and great, you will constantly, look after your people, and be their guide, and their stay, so receive our thanks, we pray now, cleanse us, and worship from all that is of sin, for Jesus sake, Amen.