

Living in Light of the Gospel

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 06 August 2017

Preacher: Greg Hendrickson

[0 : 01] Philippians chapter 1 is found on page 980 in the Pew Bibles. This summer we've been doing a series in Proverbs, but today we're taking a break from that to look at a passage from Philippians.

So we're going to read Philippians chapter 1 verse 27 to chapter 2 verse 11. So let's read these words, the Apostle Paul's words to the church in Philippi and God's word to us today.

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, with one mind, striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, and not frightened in anything by your opponents.

This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. For 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.

So, if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the spirit, any affection, and sympathy, complete my joy, by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord, and of one mind.

[1 : 59] Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself.

By taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men, and being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Therefore, God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth.

And every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Let's pray.

Father, we pray that you would speak to us through your word this morning, open our hearts and minds, shape us, that we may live as citizens in your kingdom today because of it.

[3 : 22] In Christ's name, amen. Well, as we've said this morning, we have the joy of joining together with our Ethiopian and Eritrean ministry to worship the Lord Jesus Christ.

And I want to thank those of you from the Ethiopian and Eritrean ministry for coming to worship with us this morning. We're thankful for the way that you're reaching out to people who speak Tigrinya and Amharic with the gospel of Christ every week.

In Philippians chapter 3, verse 20, the apostle Paul says, our citizenship is in heaven. And from there, we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And that's really why we join together today. That whatever nation we belong to, whatever language we speak, whatever family we were brought up in, whatever place on earth feels like home.

The Bible says we're united in Christ because we belong to something greater than any of those things. That we're citizens of the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

[4 : 24] That's where our ultimate hope comes from, and that's where our ultimate loyalty belongs. So this morning, what we're looking at is what it means to live as citizens of Christ's kingdom in this world.

Chapter 1, verse 27, our passage begins, Paul says, only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ. Or more literally, the verse could be translated, only live as citizens worthy of the gospel of Christ.

Paul was writing to the Christians in the city of Philippi. And the city of Philippi was a proud, privileged, prosperous city. It was a leading city in the region of Macedonia.

It was located on the main east-west road, lots of people passing through. And most importantly, it was a Roman colony whose citizens enjoyed special advantages.

So here's the way it worked. If you were a citizen of Philippi, you were treated under the law as if you were a citizen of the capital city, Rome. So that meant a few things.

[5 : 31] That meant, first of all, you didn't have to pay certain taxes. Second of all, you had the right to purchase and own property and to appeal. And third, you had the right to appeal directly to Caesar in legal matters.

So you had more legal protections, you had more property rights, and you had freedom from some taxation. So even though you didn't, and normally those privileges only belong to people who lived in the capital city of Rome.

But for the Philippians, if you were a citizen of Philippi, even though you didn't actually live in Rome, you were treated as if you were a citizen of Rome. And you had all the rights and privileges and responsibilities of Roman citizens.

So what Paul's doing is he's reminding the Christians in Philippi, he's saying you're not just citizens of Philippi who have special privileges in the Roman Empire, but as Christians, you're citizens of heaven.

You're citizens of Jesus Christ's heavenly kingdom. And you have special privileges before God the Father. You have free access to the presence of God the Father through Jesus Christ.

[6 : 35] You have the Holy Spirit living inside you. You have the encouraging Word of God. God, your sins have been paid for. You don't owe anything on that account because Jesus Christ has paid it all.

Even though you live on earth, God treats you as citizens of heaven with all the rights and responsibilities that come with that. And so what Paul says in verse 27, he says, live as citizens worthy of the gospel of Christ.

Live in a way that rightly reflects your citizenship in heaven. And he even says, only do this. And in some sense, he's sort of saying this is the one thing you need to do.

This is the one thing you need to know in order to fulfill God's commands and God's calling on you as a Christian. He's saying, above all, at all costs, whatever happens, whether I'm with you or not, do this one thing, live as citizens worthy of the gospel of Christ.

And in this passage, Paul shows us that living as citizens of Christ's heavenly kingdom means two things. First of all, it means to stand boldly for Christ.

[7 : 46] And we see that in verses 27 through 30. That'll be our first point. We're to stand boldly for Christ because we're soldiers in God's army. The second thing Paul teaches us is that we need to serve humbly in Christ because we're members of God's family.

We see that in chapter 2, 1 through 4. And finally, in chapter 2, verse 5 to 11, we'll see how through Christ we have the power and the enablement to do both of those things.

So first, as citizens of heaven, Paul says, stand boldly for Christ in the face of external pressures. Look down at these verses, verses 27 to 30 of chapter 1.

Look at some of Paul's language. Verse 27, he talks about standing firm. Talks about striving side by side. Not being frightened by opponents.

Verse 30, he says, you're engaged in a conflict. Paul's using athletic and military imagery to describe the Christian life. And the people in Philippi would have recognized that.

[8 : 51] The city of Philippi was full of military veterans. It was a place where veterans of the Roman army would go and retire. And so, they would have recognized this language because when the Roman army went into battle, they would march side by side.

Sometimes, the front row of soldiers would carry their shields in front of them, and then the people behind them would carry their shields on top of their heads. So, it was sort of like a wall and a ceiling that protected the army and made them, in many ways, almost invincible when they stood together.

And Paul says, as fellow believers, you need to stand firm and stand together, just like an army. Paul says, you're in a conflict.

Verse 30, that word conflict is the word agon. It's where we get the word agony. It's a word that can also refer to a long-distance marathon or a wrestling match, something that is intense and prolonged.

And Paul says, you're engaged in this agonizing conflict, this struggle. And so am I, he says. We're in this together. We're on the same team. And he says, we need to stand boldly for Christ together against opposition to the gospel.

[10:08] Now, just to be clear, Paul is not advocating for Christians to use any kind of physical violence or force or threats against non-Christians. But he is saying we're in a spiritual battle.

And we need to stand firm. We need to remain united and unwavering against external pressures. Now, you might say, well, what exactly were the external pressures that the Christians in Philippi were facing?

Well, if you look at Acts 16, it tells the story of when Paul comes to Philippi and begins preaching the gospel there and the church begins there. And for the first couple of weeks that Paul is there, everything seems to go pretty smoothly.

He finds a group of women who are meeting by the riverside on the Sabbath day, who are praying to the one true God, reading the scriptures. And Paul teaches them about the fulfillment of the scriptures in Jesus.

And Lydia, her heart is strangely warmed, and she comes to faith. And she opens her home to Paul and Silas and Luke and Timothy, who are with him. And for a while, everything seems to be going well.

[11:15] But then, a young woman starts following Paul around and making a scene day after day. She was a fortune teller. She was also a slave.

And Paul discerned that she was not only being exploited by her owners for financial gain, but she was also being oppressed by an evil spirit, which enabled her to do her fortune telling.

And so, finally, one day, Paul turns and he rebukes the evil spirit in the name of Jesus Christ, and the evil spirit leaves, and that's when everything goes crazy. Her owners are furious because their business is done.

They seize Paul and Silas. They drag them into the marketplace. They accuse them of being foreign agents and disturbing the peace of the city. They rally a crowd against them.

They have them beaten and thrown into jail. Now, that was how the church in Philippi began. Now, Paul and Silas were released.

[12:13] The authorities actually come to them, and they just want to release them quietly. And Paul says, actually, no, you need to acknowledge that what you did was wrong. And what Paul's doing there is he's actually sort of providing some legal protection for the Christians who are going to stay in Philippi after he leaves, because he doesn't want the same thing to happen to them.

And so, he makes the authorities publicly apologize because they were wrong. There was no grounds on which they should have beaten and imprisoned Paul and Silas as Roman citizens.

So, Paul stands up for the believers who are going to come after him, but still think about it. The church in Philippi began with verbal harassment, false accusations, mob violence, and imprisonment of its primary leaders.

Now, think about it. If that's how this church began, and everybody knew that Trinity Baptist Church began with a riot and violence against its leaders, and you knew that that was the reputation that whatever happened, that it was a mess.

Think about it. You might be a little hesitant to just come in here and visit on a Sunday morning, because you might think, I don't know what's going to happen to me. What if I join them?

[13:35] What if people turn on me? And if you did join such a church, you might be a little wary of publicly acknowledging that you were part of it. Oh, you're with them?

The guy who caused a riot? You see why Paul has to encourage the Philippians to stand boldly for Christ? They really did have opponents.

Paul wasn't making that up. There were real things they could have been fearful of, and Paul said, don't be frightened. Don't be driven by your fear. Now, what about us?

Right? Most of us aren't facing the same kind of physical threats, the same kind of opposition that Paul and the Philippians were, but what are the external pressures that we face?

You know, in the book of Revelation, it's quite interesting. There are three figures in the book of Revelation that represent different forms of opposition to God's people.

[14:36] One of them is the beast. And the beast simply attacks God's people by intimidating them and by physically persecuting them. The second is the false prophet who seeks to lead God's people astray by deceiving them, by filling their minds with lies and half-truths.

Just like the serpent in the Garden of Eden who said, did God really say that? God must be wanting to hold something back from you that would be good for you.

Don't you see this fruit? Why would he say no to that? Just try it out. Deception. And the third figure is the prostitute who undermines God's people by seducing them.

The picture is she's enchanting God's people to fall in love with this present world and its pleasures and to lose all desire for Christ. So we have intimidation, deception, and seduction.

Each of these are tactics of the enemy of our souls, and we need to be vigilant against them all. But here in Philippians 1, Paul focuses on intimidation.

[15:53] The things that press us to be driven by the fear of man instead of by faith in God. Now what might that look like for some of us here?

Maybe you work in academia. Now physical violence is pretty rare in academic circles. But there's plenty of passive-aggressive undercutting and sly political maneuvering.

Some of you have experienced that and been in the middle of it. And then occasionally a professor publicly adopts a position that is outside the current boundaries of academic orthodoxy.

And they might find protesters outside their house, their names slandered in the student newspaper editorial page. Perhaps they even get fired. Now, I am not promoting the example of all professors who publicly espouse controversial views.

The Bible doesn't encourage Christians to be obnoxious. It does encourage us to be discerning and wise. But you know, if you're a professor or a PhD student or a trainee of some kind, are you intimidated into saying nothing publicly about your faith in Christ?

[17:09] Or only acknowledging your faith privately to groups of fellow Christians? Are you trying to be like Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus but secretly out of fear of the authorities?

You know, you may need to discern what this means, given your particular context and your particular position. But let me encourage you, students, professors, stand boldly for Christ.

Don't let fear drive you to be silent or to make your faith a completely private thing. Now, maybe some of you feel pressure from a different direction.

Maybe some of you feel pressure from non-Christian family members. You know, when Paul was seized and dragged before the authorities in Philippi, they accused him of disturbing the city and advocating foreign customs.

They said, these men are Jews and they're advocating customs that are unlawful for us as Romans to practice. They were basically framing Paul and accusing him of being a foreign outsider who was undermining their culture.

[18:21] And maybe you feel a tension along these lines. Right? Maybe your parents or your grandparents are from a different religious background. Maybe you come from a country where there are very few Christians, or a culture or part of the world where there are very few Christians.

Maybe your family members have even told you, either explicitly or implicitly, if you become a Christian, if you get baptized, you'll be betraying your heritage.

You know, our religion has been good for our family for generations. Why isn't it good enough for you? Or maybe your parents are happily non-religious, modern American secularists, and they can't see why you're so into this Jesus thing.

Why do you spend so much time reading the Bible and meeting with other Christians and praying? Why do you want to give away so much money and go overseas to do mission work or move to the inner city?

Can't you just settle down and live a normal American life? The Apostle Paul says, stand firm and strive together, side by side.

[19:35] Don't try to fight these battles alone. You need the prayers and the encouragement and wisdom and discernment and the love of your brothers and sisters in Christ. Whatever might be the external pressures that you're facing, stand firm and stand together.

And Paul encourages them to trust that in all their struggles, in all the pressures they're experiencing, that God is working out His purpose. Verse 28, this is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation and that from God.

One writer said, it is God who sends the trials they must undergo. It is God who gives the solid resistance with which they must confront them. And it is God who gives the assurance of salvation which follows.

And Paul goes on, verse 29, for 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. That's a very strong statement. Right? Sometimes we talk about how faith is a gift from God. This verse affirms that. But this verse says, not only is faith in Christ a gift of God, but suffering for Christ's sake is also a gift from God. [20 : 55] It's actually the same verb, the same verb that's used when talking about spiritual gifts is used right here. It has been granted. It has been given to you by God.

Now, Paul's not saying that every kind of suffering that we endure is a gift from God in the same way. Right? Sometimes suffering is God's instrument to correct us when we fall into sin. Sometimes suffering is just part of the human experience. Living in a fallen world. Sometimes it's, it's not always a good thing. But Paul here is talking about suffering for the sake of Christ. For the sake of righteousness and faithfulness and loyalty to Christ. In other words, think about it this way. Have you ever suffered, have you ever gone through a difficulty and thought, you know, if I wasn't committed to following Christ, I would have an easy way out of this. Or I wouldn't even be in this situation in the first place. If you're in a situation and you realize following Christ is going to be harder, and yet you say, yes, I'm committed to following Christ, even if it is harder.

[22 : 08] Paul says that, Paul, that's what suffering for the sake of Christ is. And 1 Peter 3 says, if you should suffer for righteousness sake, you will be blessed. Jesus said in the Beatitudes, blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

How are we blessed when we suffer for Christ's sake? It's probably not how most of us tend to think about it, right? Well, I think for one thing, it draws us deeper.

It draws us closer to our Savior who suffered for us and who even now suffers with us. You know, when Jesus confronted Saul on the road to Damascus and Paul was going to persecute the church, Jesus did not say, Paul, or Saul, Saul, why do you persecute the church?

Even though that's exactly what he was going to do, he said, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? In other words, when you're opposing God's people, you're opposing me.

When you're hurting God's people, you're hurting me. Jesus is united with us. And so, when we suffer for his sake, he is right there with us.

[23 : 25] He feels that. And so, when we suffer for Christ's sake, we're united more deeply with him and with believers who suffer throughout the world for the sake of the gospel of Christ.

So, Paul encourages us. It's the first way we live as citizens worthy of the gospel. Stand boldly for Christ against external pressures, against intimidation, because we're soldiers in his army.

But the second expression of living as citizens worthy of the gospel of Christ is found in chapter 2, verses 1 to 4. We're not just to stand boldly for Christ, we're also to serve humbly in Christ.

Because we're not just an army, we're also a family in Christ. If the end of chapter 1 is about our response to external pressures, the beginning of chapter 2 focuses on our response to internal challenges.

And if you've been around the church for any length of time, you know that the enemies we face as Christians are not only external. When I joined the staff of InterVarsity to do full-time campus ministry in 2003, my pastor at the time said to me, the number one reason why missionaries leave the mission field is not because of external opposition, but because of internal conflicts with coworkers.

[24 : 54] And it was a helpful word for me. In my first year doing campus ministry, one of my biggest challenges was my relationship with my supervisor. He and I were very different in personalities and working styles.

As a result, some of our sinful tendencies and weaknesses became quickly evident to one another. I had to learn to initiate hard conversations when I became frustrated.

Instead of just being silent and growing inwardly resentful, I had to listen to his feedback and examine some of my own blind spots. It wasn't easy and it didn't always come naturally.

But this is what Paul says we must do here in verses one to four. Look down at verse one. Paul begins by reminding us of all that we share in common in Christ. He says four things we share in common with every other Christian.

Encouragement in Christ, comfort from the love of God the Father, participation or sharing in the Holy Spirit, and affection and sympathy with other believers. Paul says, think about this. You have

the whole Trinity, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit on your side.

[26 : 01] And you have the community of faith, the affection and sympathy that we have for one another. You're part of the family of believers. Think of all that you have in common with every other Christian, even the ones you think you share very little in common with, the whole Trinity and the church.

And then in verse two, he gives us four things to pursue, being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord, being of one mind. And that word translated mind in verse two, as well as in verse five, it's a word that means both feeling and thinking.

So Paul's not just saying, have the exact same ideas. Because you know what? We won't always have the exact same ideas as Christians or opinions. Paul's talking about sharing a common attitude and purpose and being able to sympathize with one another's thoughts and feelings.

And Paul says, this is what will fill me with joy as we feel and think according to Christ. Psalm 133 says, behold how good and pleasant it is when brothers and sisters dwell together in unity.

For there the Lord has commanded His blessing, life forevermore. You know, pursuing unity and love with other believers is not always easy. Sometimes it can be even more challenging than dealing with external opposition to the faith.

[27 : 23] But Paul says, it's necessary and ultimately it's life-giving. You know, I think one of the sweetest blessings that I have experienced as a follower of Christ is seeing Christian believers who were once angry and adversarial and accusatory against each other humble themselves before God, confess their sins to one another, ask and receive forgiveness, be reconciled, and go on to appreciate and honor and love one another and even to work together.

I can think of times this has happened in my own life with some people that I know and love even today. It's also happened in the history of this church. A long time ago, before most of us were here, in the 1990s, there were some messy conflicts in this church.

There were bad decisions made, many people were hurt, many left the church, and for five years this church struggled and barely survived with about 25 members and no pastor.

And then one night there was a church prayer meeting and people began confessing their sins even from years ago and seeking one another's forgiveness and beginning to heal, seek God's healing from hurts that had been from long in the past.

And the people who were there at that prayer meeting say it was an important turning point. And God began to work in this church in new ways after that. In particular, the next month God brought a new pastor seemingly out of nowhere and the church began to grow again.

[28 : 59] Now I want to acknowledge reconciliation doesn't always happen immediately when there's been conflict and wrongdoing in the past. Sometimes people want to reconcile but they're not quite ready to repent or they are so blind to the ways they've hurt someone else in the past that it's hard for the other person to fully receive them.

Sometimes we need patience through that process. Sometimes there's real forgiveness but then trust takes longer to rebuild and that can be appropriate at times.

Reconciliation is often a process that requires patience and prayer. But Paul encourages us. This is what we're called to in Christ and let me just say it's really sweet when you can persevere through that process and be able to look back and say boy we've come a long way and God has kept us together and we haven't just cut each other off and gone our separate ways and left each other alone but we found a way in Christ to love one another.

Whatever the situation might be Paul shows us how to pursue unity in verses 3 and 4. In each of these verses there's a contrast. You notice there's a not but contrast.

He says do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit but instead live in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Don't let each of you look not only to your own interests but also to the interests of others.

[30 : 38] Someone said humility is not thinking less of yourself but thinking of yourself less. Seeking the good of others and not just our own. Even seeking the good of others above our own.

So Paul says we need to stand boldly in Christ because we're an army. We need to serve one another humbly in Christ because we're a family. Now before I go on to the third point let me say this.

There are some Christians who are bold and confident. They know the word of God. They preach the gospel to people even if they've never met and people who they've known all their lives.

They start new ministries even if the money hasn't come in yet. They pray for people to be healed. They drive out demons in Jesus' name. They confront people with the truth. They correct people who have fallen into error.

But you know what? Sometimes to be honest these bold Christians can be hard to deal with. Because some of these bold Christians are stubborn and they think they're always right and they don't listen well.

[31 : 37] They think I know the facts so I don't really care how you feel. And in their zeal for the gospel they damage relationships without even realizing it. And then on the other side there are some Christians who are humble and kind.

They visit the sick and feed the hungry and hug the lonely and listen to the perplexed and forbear with difficult people. They forgive those who have hurt them and give them another chance. They take out the garbage and close up the building after everyone else has left when no one else is looking.

They have a servant's heart. You know sometimes these kind and humble Christians can also be hard to work with too. Because sometimes they can be timid and indecisive and always wanting to please the people they're serving.

So they make excuses for people instead of correcting them. And sometimes the result is they enable people to remain in unhealthy attitudes and patterns of behavior. Now all of us probably tend toward one side or the other of this spectrum.

Right? If we're honest with ourselves, one or even both of those descriptions sometimes applies to us. But Paul says we need both. We need to pursue boldness and kindness.

[32 : 51] We need to stand boldly and we need to serve humbly. This is what it means to be citizens of Christ's kingdom because this is what it means to reflect Christ's own character. It's to pursue both of these and not just one at the expense of the other.

So in our concluding section verses 5 to 11 of chapter 2, Paul shows us that there's one source of both kindness and boldness. Humility and boldness. He says have this mind among yourselves. Share this attitude among yourselves which is yours in Christ Jesus. us. And what we see in these verses, in verses 6 to 8, we see Christ's humility. We see how Christ humbled himself and became our brother and brought us into God's family.

He showed us unsurpassed kindness. He was equal with God. But he didn't count equality with God a thing to be grasped. That means he didn't forcefully retain his power and privileges for his own advantage.

Instead he willingly emptied his divine glory into the form of a bondservant. Now that's not saying that Jesus stopped being fully divine when he became fully human.

[34 : 03] Instead it's saying that Jesus manifested the full divinity and glory of God as a fully human being. Subject to all the human limitations that we experience.

Hunger and thirst, heat and cold, time and space, weariness, and ultimately death. Paul says, Christ became obedient to death.

Even the shame and pain of death on a cross. In another Bible passage in Titus chapter 3 verses 3 and 5 puts it this way, describing the kindness of Christ.

It says, at one time we were all foolish, disobedient, deceived, and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another.

But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us. Not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. Jesus didn't just extend kindness and humility to his friends and family members and people who liked him and thanked him.

[35 : 12] Jesus extended kindness to people who were indifferent and who could care less. He extended kindness to people who were full of hate and envy toward him and one another. He extended kindness to people who were addicted to all kinds of passions and pleasures.

He extended kindness not because of righteous things that we had done, but because of his mercy. You see, the message of the Bible is not, be a good person and try to live a good life and everything will be okay in the end.

You know, that message never changes anybody's heart. We might all admit that it would be a good thing to pursue, being a nice and good person, but that message alone is vague and powerless.

The message of the Bible is that we are more flawed and sinful than we ever dare to believe. Every one of us without exception, even our best deeds are tainted by self-serving and impure motives. Our sin was so bad that the Son of God had to die on a cross and in our place to save us from it. But the good news is that in Jesus Christ we are more loved and accepted than we ever dared to hope.

[36 : 17] We're more flawed and sinful than we ever dared to believe, but we're more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared to hope because God extends his kindness to us despite all of our flaws and failures. We can be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ because of his kindness.

Because he humbled himself to share our humanity and even to take our death, to die our death. So we can serve humbly because of the humility of Christ who served us and saved us.

But then we see in verses 9 to 11 that Christ, it not only displayed humility, that Christ is strong. We can stand boldly because our Savior is risen and exalted.

Verse 9 says, Therefore God has highly exalted him. The same one who died on a cross is now risen and ascended and seated at the right hand of God, and God has bestowed on him the name that is above every name.

That is the name of Lord. Jesus is Lord. And that word Lord means God himself. The one at whose feet every knee shall bow and every tongue confess.

[37 : 35] In the book of Isaiah, the reading we had earlier in the service, it says, Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God and there is no other. By myself I have sworn.

From my mouth has gone out in righteousness a word that shall not return. To me every knee will bow. Every tongue shall swear allegiance. Only in the Lord it shall be said of me are righteousness and strength.

In the Lord all the offspring of Israel shall be justified and shall glory. And what Paul is saying is that the crucified and risen Jesus is that Lord.

The Lord God at whose feet every knee will bow and every tongue will confess. That only in him are righteousness and strength and justification and glory.

His kingdom will remain forever. And we have the privilege of being citizens in that kingdom so we can stand boldly in the strength of the risen Christ. So in Christ we can serve humbly and we can stand boldly because we have a Savior who humbled himself to serve us and we have a Lord who is risen and exalted over all.

[38 : 54] Let's pray together. Our Father we thank you for your son Jesus Christ.

We praise you for his humility in laying down his life for us on a cross. And we praise you that you raised him in power and glory that he is risen and exalted.

We pray that by your spirit you would fill us today with boldness and confidence to stand firm in you. Lord that we would not be driven by the fear of other people.

Fear of other people. Or a longing for their approval. But that we would stand in the confidence that we have through Christ.

We pray also Lord that you would give us the humility and servant heartedness of Christ. To love one another. To pursue unity through humility.

[40 : 07] Lord we pray that this would characterize Trinity Baptist Church. We pray that this would characterize the Ethiopian and Eritrean ministry. We pray that this would characterize each of our families and our lives.

Lord that you would fill us with the boldness and humility of Christ. We pray these things in Jesus name. Amen.