

Becoming The Gospel of Christ

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[0 : 00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word. Take your Bible and go with me to Philippians chapter 1, if you would. We are normally, for you folks that are here with Kenisa, we are normally in the book of Exodus on Thursday night.

But since you're here, I didn't think y'all needed to be leaving. And so, instead of trying to tell you how to get out of persecution, I thought I'd tell you how Paul liked it. And it's a wild chapter. This is a wild chapter.

And so, I would like to look with you, if I could, in Philippians chapter 1. And I'd like you to look at verse 12. To start with, we're going to actually preach from 27 to 30. But I believe, verse 12, we need the context.

The Bible said, I would, you should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me, and a lot of bad stuff's going on in the Apostle Paul's life. Been locked up, been beaten, being made fun of, people are picking on him, things aren't going too good.

I would suppose that the majority of us as missionaries will never have as many bad things happen to us as the Apostle Paul had happened to him. And when the Apostle Paul liked to brag about his ministry, he one time goes crazy and said, y'all excuse me, I'm fixing to act like a fool and brag.

[1 : 12] And he didn't brag about how many churches he started or how many men he trained. He bragged about how much suffering he'd done. And he said, hang on, this is what I've seen the Lord do. And he starts saying, I've had all this happen to me.

And ends up with the care of the churches. Look, if you would, in chapter 1, verse 12, he says, unto the furtherance of the gospel. He said, to the furtherance of the gospel. All these things have happened to me, and they've had the cause of Christ go forward.

If you have your Bible open there, verse 13, I wish you'd circle the word bonds. He said, hey, I'm in bonds. I've got handcuffs on. I'm locked up. He said, so that my bonds in Christ are made manifest.

Look at verse 14. He says the word bonds again. And many of the brethren in the Lord have waxed confidence by my chains, by my bonds, by being locked up. They're getting, man, they're excited about talking about Jesus.

They heard me being in jail. That seems to really make the things of God go forward. I'm pretty happy about that. Verse 16, he said, some of them are preaching Christ of contention, and not sincerely supposing to add affliction to my bonds, to my chains, to me being locked up again, he says.

[2 : 17] Verse 15, we skipped it, but there he said, there's envy and strife. Those aren't exactly good things going on. And then verse 16, there's affliction. They wanted to add affliction to his bonds.

Now, we don't have time to go through all this, but it's interesting. It's interesting. Verse 19, he says, guys, this is all going to work out good. All this beatings, all this being put up, all this being locked up, everybody making fun of me, everybody poking fun of me and trying to preach Christ just to hurt my feelings.

It's really good. I'm excited about it. Preach him any way you want to preach him. Just preach Jesus. I'm excited people are preaching him, he says. And then he says in verse 19, I know this shall turn to my salvation.

God's going to prove that I am right. I am the man of God. He's going to prove that I've been doing what's right and it's going to all work out. Then he says in verse 20, some of the things I think that if anybody were to say them today and really say them like the Apostle Paul did, we would put him in the nuthouse.

We would have him locked up in a padded sail. Because he starts in chapter 1. He starts in chapter 1 in verse 20. He said in nothing that I would be ashamed. With boldness I will preach and I want him to be magnified.

[3 : 26] And it doesn't matter to me if he does it while I'm alive or if he does it by killing me. I just want him magnified. I hope he gets magnified. Kill me if you want to, but magnify Jesus. And then he steps into these crazy verses.

I just wonder what we would say if we heard somebody say this. For me to live is Christ. But man, if I could die, that would be a great thing. I mean, I'd like to stay alive and serve God. But hey, dying would be the better thing. If I had my choice, I would just die.

That's what he says in verse 21. Verse 22 he says, because if I live in the flesh, I've got to work. And you're the fruit of my labor. I don't know what I ought to do. I'm not sure what I ought to do. I can't choose what I ought to do.

And in verse 23 he says, I'm in a fix. I can't figure out what I'll do. I'm in a straight between two. I can't figure out whether I ought to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. He's sitting around talking. He says, hey guys, I'd like to die.

If I had my choice, Jesus would just take me on to heaven right now. You can't threaten me with heaven. That's where I want to go. You say you're going to kill me. Kill me. That's what I'd like. And if I stay here, I'm just going to work anyway.

[4 : 24] For me to live as Christ, to die as gain. If I had my choice, I'd leave. But I'll hang around because that's more needful for you in verse 24. But I'd like to talk to you about verse 27 and follow me if I could.

Read with me Philippians 1, 27 again. And only let your conversation, your manner of living be as becometh the gospel. Be as adorning the gospel. Be as what looks good on the gospel of Christ.

I want to look good on the gospel of Christ. I want my life, my manner of living, my lifestyle, my thought life, the way I act and live, I want it to make Jesus look good. I want it to make the gospel of Christ look good.

That whether I come and see you or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs that you stand fast in one spirit with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel. The first thing we're going to look at in just a minute is going to come out of verse 27.

We are to stand fast. You might underline that while you're in that verse. Verse 28. In nothing terrified by your adversaries. That's a wild thought. In nothing terrified by your adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you a salvation and not a God.

[5 : 28] Hey, we got adversaries. They don't like us. They don't know what we're doing. That's a good sign they're going to hell and a good sign God likes us. So we got adversaries. Don't be scared of them. Just go forward. Then he says in verse 29, For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.

Now that's a crazy verse. In that verse he says, I think this is what he says. He says, can you believe it? God's given us the privilege of getting beat up. This is like wonderful. Aren't y'all excited?

God said to us, hey, y'all can get beat up. Y'all can get killed. Y'all can be put in jail. Y'all can be crucified. You have all these bad things happening. Wow. God has given us that opportunity and that privilege.

And here's what the passage of scripture is about. This passage is about becoming to the gospel, looking good to the gospel. I ought to live, think, and act in a way that brings glory to God, that is attractive in my appearance, suitable, appropriate, and proper for the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Let's bow our heads forward a prayer. Let me run you through some of the things I think you can see from this passage. Father, I thank you for Philippians chapter 1. I thank you for the opportunity to talk to great men of God that are here today because they are doing what nobody else does.

[6 : 35] They're going where no one else goes. They're risking their lives and in many ways they're risking their families and are taking a stand to get the gospel around the world. And I count them heroes. And I thank you for the privilege of talking to them.

But I pray, dear God, tonight you let Philippians 1 speak. Your Holy Spirit would take your word. I would only say what you say. And you would make it real and alive and powerful to us. And I give you praise and honor and glory for all that you do in this passage of scripture and through us tonight.

In Jesus' name, amen. Verse 27 says, Only let your conversation, your manner of life be as it becometh the gospel of Christ. Be sure that what you're doing suits, gives pleasing effect or attractive appearance.

It's suitable, appropriate, or proper. No matter whether I come or not, I want to know that what you're doing brings honor and glory to the cause of Jesus Christ. I'm not going to go through this. When I preached this here at Vision about five years ago, the Bible said we are to walk worthily.

We walk worthily of the Lord. The Bible says in Ephesians 4, 1, walk worthy. In Colossians chapter 1, 10, walk worthy. In 1 Thessalonians 2, 12, walk worthy of God.

[7 : 43] In 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, verse 1, the Bible says that you as you have received of us how you ought to walk. That's what's going on in this verse as becoming the gospel. I am representing Jesus Christ.

I am wearing his uniform. I'm going by his name. And Paul says in Philippians chapter 1, I want what you do to look like you really belong on the team. I want you to act and walk like somebody who knows me, knows my gospel, knows how powerful I am, knows what I'm doing.

Somebody who knows Philippians chapter 1 and verse 6 who says, what I began in you, I will finish in you. You don't have to worry about that. I am the God of heaven. Walk worthy of me. In Titus chapter 2 and verse 10, the Bible says, not purloining but showing all good fidelity that they may adorn the doctrine of God.

Our lives ought to be like decoration on the Christmas tree. Our lives ought to be like, here's the gospel and my life is evidence of that and my life is proof the gospel works. My life is proof that Jesus is worth believing.

I want to live a life that brings honor and glory to his name. 2 Samuel chapter 12 and verse 14, David's sin gave opportunity to the enemies of God to blaspheme him.

[8 : 54] Everybody's looking for a reason to make fun of the God of heaven. Everybody's looking for a reason to make fun of Jesus. We are to work at never doing that. In Titus chapter 2, the older ladies were told to teach the young ladies so that people wouldn't make fun of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

They wouldn't make fun of the word of God. But we are to walk worthy. We are to walk becoming of the gospel. Now, when I was a kid, they still used that word.

I know I'm so old and I can't even imagine anybody even use that word becoming. But you know, if somebody put a dress on it, that's really becoming to you. That really looks good on you. That's what they used to say in the old days. And that's what he said.

I want the gospel to look good on you. Now, look, if you would, with me at the first saying. We'll quickly go from this one. Chapter 1 and verse 27. He said, stand fast. We are to stand fast in one spirit with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel.

That's a word that says, man, things are going wrong. The world is falling apart. Enemies are attacking. Everything is trying to move us away from standing where we're supposed to stand. But you stay put.

[9 : 58] You don't let anybody push you off center. You don't let anybody get you away from doing what you ought to do. So stand fast. We're to stand for the truth. We stand in faith. Watch you. Stand fast in the faith.

Quit you like men. Be strong. 1 Corinthians chapter 16 and verse 13. We stand fast in grace. We know that it was grace that saved us. We're not going to be moved with that. Paul had a problem when the Judaizers came down to Galatia and other places, when the Gnostics came along.

And he said, hey, stand fast. We stand fast because we know salvation is only in one. We stand fast in our liberty. We want to be careful to teach people everywhere that it's not a performance-based relationship with Jesus Christ.

We don't live by rules that we think makes God like us or love us more. We stand fast in what the Bible teaches. We stand fast in the truth. We stand fast about what's sin and what's wrong.

Let's jump to verse 28. Skipping a bunch of the message. I want to get to this passage for you. Not for me. And by the way, I preached this exact outline at Vision Baptist Cobb County, and I preached it here at this church five years ago.

[11 : 03] So it wasn't prepared for you especially, but I think it really works. In Philippians chapter 1 and verse 28, he says, not terrified by your adversaries. Not terrified by your adversaries.

And nothing terrified by your adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation and that of God. And I will tell you, I've traveled to several countries around the world, and the scariest places I've ever been are Muslim countries.

The first time I was in a Muslim country, I can remember thinking, after living 18 years in South America, one year in Peru, after having traveled to several different countries around the world, and hearing the call to prayer, and Aaron was living in downtown Tangier, and I was walking those streets, and I was out there with just Cesar.

I was out there with him, and I'd hear him. Sometimes I was told to walk to a place, and I would just think, man, this is a weird place. I am not comfortable. I want out of here. I understood a little bit about being afraid, and I knew I had a ticket out of the place.

But here's what the Apostle Paul told the church at Philippi. He said, don't be afraid of your enemies. Don't be afraid of your enemies. In Matthew chapter 10 and verse 33, Jesus said this, I didn't come to bring peace.

[12 : 11] I came to bring a sword. He said, I came not to send peace, but a sword. Chapter 10, verse 34. I came to set families against families, and if you love your family more than you love me, you're not worthy of me.

And if you don't take up your cross, get ready to die, and follow after me. If you don't lose your life for my sake, if you don't lose it for me, you will not find it.

You have to lose your life for my sake to find it. In 2 Timothy chapter 3 and verse 12, he said, all of us who live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. That's a wild thought.

We don't know much about that in America. We don't know much about that in our churches here. But that was a definite truth. That's what the Apostle Paul, that's what the Holy Spirit said. We are going to suffer persecution. And we're in Matthew on Sunday mornings here at our church.

In Matthew chapter 5 and verse 10, he said, hey, let me tell you what your attitude ought to be when they're picking on you. When they're persecuting you. Matthew chapter 5 and verse 10. Look at the word.

[13 : 11] Happy, fulfilled, blessed of God, satisfied in God are those who are getting persecuted for righteousness' sake. Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake.

Rejoice and be exceedingly glad for great is your reward in heaven for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. Man, that's great. They're persecuting you. Get happy, man. Isn't this exciting? I don't think so.

But the Bible says it's exciting. We don't accept that in our terms, but God said it was true. In John chapter 15, he said, if the world, the world hates you. The world hates you.

It hates all of us. It hates us as we go out so well and even here in America. But it hates you, especially when you go into those dark places. The Bible says in John chapter 15 and verse 19, I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

The Bible says in John 15 and verse 20, it says, if they persecuted me, they're going to persecute you. You're following me. You're one of mine. You can't expect them not to persecute you.

[14 : 09] Those that they, when they do us harm, when they kill us, when they beat us up, when they put us in jail, they think they're doing God a service. John chapter 16 and verse 2. Yea, the time cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he does God a service.

In Acts 14, 22, Paul is talking to the church and he said, he's confirming the souls of the disciples, 14, 22, and exhorting them to continue in the faith that we must, through much tribulation, enter into the kingdom of God.

Now let me give you a couple of passages where he talks right to them. He said, I want you all to stand fast, guys. He said, I know a lot of bad things are happening. I know that I'm in jail. I know that I'm in chains. I know I'm in bonds. I know people are preaching the gospel just to aggravate me.

And everything's going wrong. And it seems like it's all going wrong. But it's all going to work out good, guys. It's all going to work out good. God started this and God will finish it. And God's going to do great things. And so he says in 1 Thessalonians chapter 3, when he wrote to that church, that no man should be moved.

Don't y'all be scared. Don't you be upset. Don't you be worried about these afflictions. For you were appointed to them. Look what it says in verse 3. 1 Thessalonians 3, 3, 3, 3. For yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.

[15 : 17] God said, I got some persecution for you. I wrote it in your calendar. I wrote it on your time clock. I got some persecution coming your way. And he came to the Thessalonians. Evidently, he says, for verily, when we were with you, I told you, we told you before that you were going to suffer persecution.

And it came to pass. And you know it. I heard a long time ago, I heard a Russian say, a Russian preacher say, that the doctrine that was least taught in America that ought to be taught is a doctrine of persecution.

Paul said to the Thessalonians, it's coming. It came. I told you it was coming. God had it in a plan for us. In 1 Peter chapter 2 and verse 20, we know that if we follow in his footsteps, that we will suffer.

And it won't be what we did. 1 Peter 4, 12, he said, think it not strange. Don't even think it's unusual. But get excited. Rejoice in 1 Peter 4, 13.

Be happy in chapter 4, verse 14. But let him glorify God on this behalf. Do right. You're going to suffer. I think we all know that.

[16:23] I think when we go to the mission field, the very first thing we think in our minds is, I've got to figure out a way not to suffer. I've got to figure out a way not to get in trouble. I've got to figure out a way not to be caught. I've got to figure out every way I can. But it seemed like the Apostle Paul had a totally different attitude.

His attitude was, hey, God's got it on the counter. Let's go do it. God's got it on the counter. Let's go and let it happen. Look at what he says in Hebrews chapter 13 and verse 6. We do not have to be frightened or shocked or scared that we have adversaries.

13, 6 says, so that we may boldly say, the Lord is my helper. I will not fear what man shall do unto me. That's a crazy verse of scripture.

The fact that they have adversaries shows that they are adversaries shows that they're lost. The fact that we have enemies to our faith and to the gospel is evidence of our salvation and us preaching the truth.

I wish you'd look with me at Philippians chapter 1 and verse 29. If you would, Philippians chapter 1 and verse 29. Crazy verse.

[17:30] Paul said, I mean, God blessed us. He gave us the privilege of getting saved. He gave us the privilege of believing in him. Isn't that great? And we're all going, yes, that's wonderful. We got to accept Christ. We're going to heaven.

Our name's written above. We're seated in the heaven. He's were accepted in the blood. This is exciting. But he said, hey, guys, in the same way he gave you the privilege of believing on him, he also lets you have the privilege of suffering for his sake.

Paul actually wanted to suffer. Paul actually wanted to suffer. If we believe the Bible. How many of us believe the Bible say amen?

Philippians chapter 3 and verse 10, if you would. Philippians chapter 3 and verse 10. Years ago, I took this verse and I really wanted it to be my verse. I didn't understand the last half of it. I kind of ignored the last half of it.

Look at what he says. That I may know him. Boy, I want to know God. I want to know Jesus. I want to have a personal, special, close relationship. I want to know the power of his resurrection. That's exciting to know that God can overcome death and God can work great miracles in my life.

[18:31] I want to know him and I want to know his power. And then Paul says something that just doesn't make sense. And the fellowship of his sufferings. If he's suffering, I'd like to suffer too.

If they're going to hit him, I want him to hit me. If they're going to lock him up, I want him to lock me up. I want to get involved in the fellowship of his suffering. He said, that's not really what he means there. Read the rest of the verse.

And he said, I want to be made conformable unto his death. I want to look like him when I die. I want to have a death like he had. I want to suffer like Jesus. That's crazy.

Come on, just tell the truth. That's crazy. If he were alive today, every one of us, if he were alive, if we had a preacher sitting here, if tomorrow somebody spoke at the Kinesia conference and just quoted Paul in today's modern English, we would say, call the police.

Get somebody out here who got a straitjacket and put him in it. Take him. He says, guys, I can't figure out what I want to do with my life. I'm not sure if I want to stay here and preach the gospel and build churches and train leaders.

[19 : 28] To be honest with you, if I had to choose, I'd rather not do that. I'd just like to go ahead and die and go to heaven. That'd be my choice. But you can mark this one down. Hey, I'm in bonds. Boy, God's using that, isn't he?

I'm locked up in jail. God's using it. I've got chains on me. God's using it. Isn't that great? Hey, by the way, let me tell you, I really want to know him. I want to know him. I want to be so close to him. I want to be so intimate with him. I want to know the power of his resurrection.

And, man, I'd like to suffer with him. I would really like to suffer with him. I want to get involved in, hey, we're going to have a fellowship after church, guys. Let's all get together and have some hamburgers and milkshakes. Paul said, I want to go to the fellowship where we all get to suffer.

We're going to call some doctor on this one, ain't we? I mean, we're going to be calling a doctor. He doesn't even say the fellowship of his sufferings. I mean, all right, good. Beat me up.

Take away my Bible college land. Let some bad things happen to my family. Let it last a few hours. Let it be over real quick. He said, I'd like to be made conformable to his death. Now, that doesn't leave a lot of options.

[20 : 26] I mean, that's like dead. I mean, that's bad. That's pretty rough stuff. I didn't say it. It's right in the Bible, Philippians chapter 3 and verse 10. To them, to the apostle Paul, he said it was a privilege.

Philippians 1, 29. For unto you it is given on the behalf of Christ. To you it's given for Jesus to believe on him. But you also get to suffer. Yes.

I'll say it, guys. When I say believe, we get the privilege of believing in Jesus. Y'all say amen. Okay, are you ready? We get the privilege of believing in Jesus. We get the privilege of suffering with Jesus.

Now we're like, I want to get saved. I don't like that last part. He said, by the way, you've seen that same conflict in me. And you hear about it being in me. That's nothing unusual about the apostle Paul.

In Acts chapter 5 and verse 41, they departed from the council and the presidents of the council rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. What a crazy verse.

[21 : 30] They're out here and they get threatened and probably beaten. And they're on their way back to the church and they're high-fiving each other and chest bumping each other. Boom. Did you see that?

Lord, they just beat me. Wow. Check that out. I'm going to tell Peter. You see what happened to me, Peter? You see what happened to me, John? You see what happened to me, Paul? I've been out past out tracks and they tore up my tracks and spit on me and had a dog attack me.

Yes! That's what's going on in that verse. They rejoiced all the way home. They're skipping and jumping and saying, hey, look at that. I've got a black eye. Woo! I've got a black eye. What happened to you?

My ear's half torn off. Isn't that neat? We're going to call a doctor on these people. Say amen. But that's what it says. I know we don't believe it. That's what it says. In Acts chapter 16 and verse 23, it's midnight.

They're in the inner prison. Their feet are fast in the stocks. They've been whipped. And at midnight, instead of going, oh me, get me out of this, Paul or Silas, one looked at the other.

[22 : 24] I don't know how it happened. One of them said, hey, let's sing. How about Amazing Grace? They started making melody and singing. All I've got to do is have somebody be rude to me.

I'll be honest with you. You know, when the men of the church, this church, say something ugly to me, it takes me a week to get over it. I'm sometimes going up the door and tagging the door in one of the rich sections. I just think to myself, what if they open the door and shoot me right now because I'm on their property.

It's fixing to tag their door. I get these weird thoughts. What if they let that dog go and it bites my leg? Here's what they said. Hey, they just beat us. Let's sing.

That's a pretty weird group. Pretty weird group. In Acts chapter 4 and verse 17, the Bible said that it spread no further among the people that have straightly threatened them, that they speak henceforth to no man in his name to threaten them.

And they called him and commanded him, don't y'all talk about it? Don't you teach about it? And Peter and John looked at him and said, you tell us if that's right. Should we do what you tell us or what God tells us?

[23 : 24] Drop dead. We're going to keep talking about Jesus. Do anything you want. Now, I've been a Baptist pastor for over 40 years now. And I can tell you that if I got in trouble and I got beat up and bad things happen, when I'm all the way home, all the way to my pulpit, I'm going to be thinking, how do I put a good spin on this?

Because I don't want to lose no church members over this. I've got to explain it in a good way. I've got to somehow lessen the impact and not say anything. But that's not what they did. Verse 23, being let go, they reported to their own company and reported all.

Look at what it says. Underline it in your Bible. Underline it in your Bible. Acts chapter 4 and verse 23. They reported all. I used to write prayer letters all the time.

You know, you don't write prayer letters about the bad stuff. You want them to be mischievous. You don't write and say, my daughter got raped last month. You don't typically want to say that. You don't want to write and say, hey, hey, my daughter was sexually accosted this week on the streets.

Two times that happened. You don't want to say that. You want to say, oh, the good stuff. Boy, people got saved. The lives were being changed. And we love guinea pig. And so you want to say all the good stuff. No, he said, let's just tell them.

[24 : 33] So they reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. And verse 24, when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord and said, Lord, thou art God, which hath made heaven and earth and the sea and all that's in them, who by the mouth of thy servant David has said, why did the heathen rage and the people imagine vain things?

The kings of the earth stood up. The rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against his Christ for of a truth against the holy child Jesus, whom thus anointed both Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles and people of Israel were gathered together to do whatever their hand, thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

They could only do what God had approved. Verse 29. And now, Lord, behold their threatenings and protect us. Help us to be more secretive.

Help us to learn how to not be known. Help us to hide a little bit better. I wish it said that. But the Bible says, Lord, behold their threatenings and grant us more boldness that we could speak your word.

They said, God, give us more boldness. And they came in in verse 31 and they prayed and they were filled with the Holy Ghost and they spake the word of God with boldness.

[25 : 49] They came in. Can't you imagine his church service? You know, years ago in my first church, one of the ladies told me, she said something about you, pastor. She said, I know you've had some really rough times, but you can really put on a nice face and make everything look like it's okay when I know all the junk you've been going through and I know all the stuff that's happened in our church and you just really put on a nice face.

I said, well, thank you. I really work at that. Paul didn't do that. Paul came in and said, let me just tell you all what happened. They just beat the living slop out of us. Peter said, they just beat us up.

John said, they told us if we keep doing it, they're going to get us even worse. That's the way it is. They had a testimony meeting like this. If y'all go out here and keep preaching, you're probably going to get the devil beat out of you. Let's all pray so we'll get out there and get the devil beat out of us.

Amen. These are weird people, but they are becoming the gospel. They make it look like this is really worth living for.

This is really worth dying for. This is really worth suffering for. They stated they had no choice. They sought out the church to share what had happened. They prayed for boldness and they went out.

[26 : 57] They fled only to preach the gospel in another city. In Acts 14. For the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and made their minds evil effects against the brethren.

Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord. Everybody stirred up. Everybody's out to get them. Man, it's on the internet. Everybody's talking about it. And they're boldly speaking about Jesus still.

They don't get timid. They don't hide. They're boldly speaking. And they gave testimony to the word of his grace. They were granted signs and wonders to be done by his hands. They made an assault in verse 5.

You're in Acts chapter 14 in verse 5. And they made an assault, both of the Gentiles and also the Jews, to use them despitefully and to stone them. When they figured it out, they just ran to another city.

And verse 7, and there they preach the gospel. You want to beat me up in Alpharetta? I'll make it to Roswell and start preaching there again.

[27 : 55] You want to beat me up in Roswell? I'm going to Sandy Springs. I am not stopping. I am not running. I'm not getting quiet. I'm not going underground. I've got the privilege of being saved and the privilege of suffering.

My job is to stand fast. Before Paul goes to Rome, in Acts chapter 21, of Jerusalem, excuse me, Acts chapter 20 in verse 11, when he came unto us, he took Paul's girdle and bound his own hands and feet and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost.

So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the hands of the man that owns this girdle, and they will deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. It's a wildest story. They come and they say, Paul, if you don't watch it, they're going to bind you.

You're going to go to Jerusalem. They're going to bind you, and bad stuff's going to happen to you. And here's what Paul said. Wow. Sounded like fun. Read the passage. He said, Sounds like fun.

Nothing's dear to me, not even my own life. I count him worthy of my suffering for him. And he says in Acts chapter 21 and verse 13, the last part he said, I'm ready not to be bound only, but also to die.

[29 : 09] They have a prayer meeting. They've got spiritual people talking to him. They say, Paul, if you're not careful, you get out there. They're going to tie you up and beat you up, and you're going to be bound and hurt. And Paul said, That's okay with me.

I'm ready to die. Let him take me. Now go back with me to Philippians chapter 1, and I'm through. This is a wild story. He said, I want you all to live becoming the gospel.

Stand fast. Don't run. Don't quit. Stand in the doctrine. Stand in the truth. And I know that what we'd like to say, Man, that stand fast is about a standing true to doctrine.

It is. But the context is, man, The whole world's falling apart. Paul's in bonds, bonds, bonds. Affliction. Strife. Envy. Trouble. Contention. And Paul said, I know everything's falling apart, And I know everybody's mean to us, So stand fast, church.

He wasn't even talking to preachers. This isn't written to Timothy. This isn't written to Titus. This is written to Vision Baptist Church in Philippi. Stand fast. Don't you run.

[30 : 11] Don't you quit. Don't you quit. Don't you give up on Jesus. Don't you quit preaching the gospel. Live for Jesus. And while I'm on it, Don't you just stand fast.

Don't you let your adversaries scare you. Don't you let them scare you. Yeah, we got to. What'd you expect. Jesus had adversaries. We're no better than him.

Jesus died. We're no better than him. Jesus was mistreated. We're no better than him. The prophets were mistreated. No better than them. We're expected. When Jesus was alive on earth, He said, Y'all be happy if you ever get beat up.

That'll be great. It's a crazy passage of scripture. And then the last thing he says is this. You've been given a privilege. Privilege of getting saved.

And a privilege of suffering. And in Philippians 3.10 he says, I don't want to know him. Don't y'all want to know him? I want to know him like I've never known him before. I want the most close and intimate and personal relationship with God.

[31 : 08] I can personally have. I want to know Jesus. Man, I want to know him in the power. Of his resurrection. I want to know him like he overcomes things. And he wins victories. And he has power.

I want to know him that way. Oh, I want to know him so much. I'd like to even get involved in the fellowship of his suffering. I'd like to get hurt.

They're going to have a fellowship meeting. And when they have a fellowship meeting. And they're all sitting around talking. They're not going to be talking about their hobbies. They're not even going to be talking about their soul winning expeditions. They're going to be talking about this. I got beat.

Paul said, you did? Isn't that great? I did too. They stoned me one time. They stoned you. Wow, that's great. Well, I was alone in a ship. The ship went down. And I was out there for days.

But I was preaching. That's why I was out there. Wow, that's great. Man, that's wonderful. Jesus went through this too. And then Paul said, but that ain't enough. I don't want to just be in a fellowship meeting where we talk about how we suffered.

[32 : 07] I'd like to be made conformable to his death. I'd be willing to die for him. I want to die for him. By the way, guys, for me to live is Christ. And to die is gain.

I can't figure out what's the best thing to do. Honestly, I'd like to build churches. I'd like to disciple people. I'd like to do evangelism. But the truth of the matter is, I think it'd be better if I died. The only reason I'm going to stay here is if I can be useful.

If I'm not useful, I don't even want to stay. I'd rather be gone. And by the way, I know you all see all the stuff that's happened in my life. And you see I've been beat up. And you see all this stuff. And you see me in jail. And you're all feeling sorry for me.

You got an email campaign, a Facebook campaign going. You're Twittering about my suffering. Everything's about how bad I've got it. He said, but guys, just to be honest, people are preaching like they never preached before. I'm having a blast. They got me locked up.

I'm writing Bible. I'm writing Bible. This is pretty good stuff. I'm writing Bible while I'm locked up here. And not only that, there's people out there who don't like me. And they preach and they tweet, Paul, while you're in jail, I'm preaching.

[33 : 06] And Paul tweets back, great. Preach more. I'm glad you finally got up and did something. And somebody else said, I'm preaching, Paul, because if you're that brave, I'll be that brave.

And Paul said, it's all happening to get God's gospel further down the road. So here it is. Philippians 1. Let it be becoming to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Fear and doubt does not become our Lord and his gospel. Hiding and cowardice doesn't become our Lord.

And I know what you're thinking. Easy for you to say, fat boy, you're living in America. I'm just preaching what the Bible said in Philippians. That's what it says in Philippians. Chapter 1.

I didn't say it. The Apostle Paul just said it. The Apostle Paul didn't say it. The Holy Spirit of God said it. This is God's word. And God put that in the book. And he might have put it for some people that are going to Arabic countries.

[34 : 11] And are planning churches. And everybody in every place would do everything possible to make us afraid. Father, I love you. I pray for these missionaries.

I pray, God, you give them strength. Their wives are afraid. Their children are afraid. Everybody else goes to easy countries. Everybody else goes where they got American shopping places.

And they can wear American clothes and look normal and act normal. They don't have to be afraid of what's going to happen to them. But somehow, God, you've appointed these people to go to places that are hard.

Hard. Real hard. God, I'm not sure I would have the ability to stand. I know the Apostle Paul did and would. I know Peter and John did and would. I know James was run through a sword, so I know he would.

I know John the Baptist had his head cut off, so I know he would. I know those Old Testament prophets did. God, I ask you to bless my brothers and bless their churches and bless their wives.

[35 : 13] I pray, God, that you would give us all boldness and help us not to be afraid and help us to share the gospel. And I'll give you praise and honor and glory for all that you do. This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfredo, Georgia.

For more information, log on to www.visionbaptist.com, where you can find our service times, location, contact information, and more audio and video recordings.