

Session 4: Conduct Worthy Of the Gospel

Philippians 1:27-30, “Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel ²⁸ without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God. ²⁹ For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him, ³⁰ since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.”

Up to this point in his epistle, Paul has been informing the church at Philippi concerning his situation.

Paul’s attitude was one of joy and confidence

With verse 27, Paul begins a series of practical exhortations concerning the Christian life

The first exhortation is found in verses 27-30.

It pertains to "Conduct Worthy of the Gospel"

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING OUR "CONDUCT"

1. LOOKING AT THE WORD "CONDUCT" ITSELF...The KJV translates this word as "conversation"

- ✓ **In the Greek, it literally means "behave as citizens"**
- ✓ **To those at Philippi, this word would likely have special meaning...**
 - **Remember...the city at Philippi was a Roman colony**
 - **Most of its citizens were actually transplanted citizens of Rome,**
 - **Retired soldiers who had been encouraged to settle there.**

- ✓ So though they were living in Philippi, they were expected to "behave as citizens" of Rome.
- ✓ Paul applies this term to the life of a Christian...Whose "citizenship" is actually in heaven – *Philippians 3:20*, "But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ..."
- ✓ So though we may live on earth, we are to "behave as citizens of heaven!"

2. OUR "BEHAVIOR AS CITIZENS" IS TO BE "WORTHY" OF THE GOSPEL

- ✓ This implies that there is behavior that is NOT worthy of the Gospel!
- ✓ To act unworthy of the gospel would bring shame upon the Gospel!

Note: An American citizen who misbehaves in a foreign country sheds a bad reflection on his home country.

- ✓ The Christian who misbehaves "misses the mark" and is a bad reflection on the gospel of Christ and the Church (The Bride of Christ).
- ✓ The apostle Peter would have us remember the importance of proper conduct as we "sojourn" here in a country not our own,

1Peter 2:11-12, "Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us."

3. OUR "BEHAVIOR AS CITIZENS" IS TO BE WORTHY "WITH OR WITHOUT" THE PRESENCE OF OTHER CHRISTIANS...

- ✓ Note that Paul said "whether I come and see you or am absent"
- ✓ Paul evidently did not want their faith to be simply an "environmental faith"

✓ **What is an "environmental faith?"**

A faith totally dependent upon the environment

- **For instance, remaining faithful while under the positive influences of one's home, church, or "Christian" college.**
- **Take that person out of such an environment, and his or her faith is lost!**

Some signs of an "environmental" faith

- ❖ **Praying in public, but not in private**
- ❖ **Studying the Bible when at church, but not in private**
- ❖ **A lack of personal closeness and dependence upon God and Jesus Christ**

- ✓ **Paul's hope was that the Philippians' "behavior as citizens" was not dependent upon his presence**
- ✓ **Likewise, our behavior should not be dependent upon the presence of other Christians, but upon the presence of Christ alone!**

SPECIFIC OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING OUR "CONDUCT"

1. IT INVOLVES "STANDING FAST IN ONE SPIRIT" (27)

- **"Behaving as citizens" involves "standing fast" against those things which would beset us:**
 - ✓ **The lure of the world in which we live, with its immorality and materialism**
 - ✓ **The sin of unbelief, which can strike at even the most mature Christians, during crises of doubt**

- ✓ **The deceitfulness of false doctrines, showing great promise, but leading us away from Christ**

All such things we must "stand fast" against!

- **Note also that we must stand fast "in one spirit"**
 - ✓ **We are not to stand strong by ourselves, in isolation from one another, but in UNITY!**
 - ✓ **Unworthy conduct usually begins when we neglect the blessings of fellowship and togetherness**

1. IT INVOLVES "WITH ONE MIND STRIVING TOGETHER FOR THE FAITH OF THE GOSPEL" (27)

- **Behaving as citizens" includes:**
 - ✓ **Aggressively promoting the gospel of Jesus Christ ("striving")**
 - ✓ **Doing this in unity with other Christians ("together with one mind")**
- **Our conduct is unbecoming the gospel if we are:**
 - ✓ **NOT striving for the faith of the gospel**
 - ✓ **NOT doing it in unity with other brethren**

NOTE: Do we not see here the need for "identifying with a congregation" and closely working together with them?

Are those who drift around from church to church, never "placing membership", truly behaving in a conduct worthy of the gospel?

2. IT INVOLVES "NOT BEING TERRIFIED BY YOUR ADVERSARIES" (28-30)

- **Christians walking in a manner worthy of the gospel will not be troubled by those who may ridicule or even persecute them!**

- **For even though the world may consider such "fearlessness" as evidence that we are crazy...Such courage is actually evidence of our salvation!**

Matthew 5:10-12, *"Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."*

- **There may come times when we who have accepted Jesus as the Messiah by faith are also "privileged to suffer for His sake"**

- ✓ **Such was the case with Paul, and evidently the Philippians as well**
- ✓ **Should it ever be that our "lot" is to suffer for Christ...we must remember that it will be a "privilege"**
- ✓ **Our attitude should be like that of the apostles in**

Acts 5:41-42, *"The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah."*

CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY OF PHILIPPIANS 1:27-30

So here are some of the things involved as "behaving as citizens" of the kingdom of heaven, and having a "conduct worthy of the gospel of Christ":

- ✓ **Standing fast in one spirit**
- ✓ **With one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel...not in any way terrified by our adversaries**
- ✓ **No matter what the "environment" might be (moral climate), you stand firm in the faith and make the right decisions!**

Are we behaving as citizens of heaven while sojourning on this earth?

If not...could it be that we have forgotten the privileges we enjoy by "believing in Jesus" and even "suffering or being somewhat persecuted for Jesus"?

There is a story of a veteran soldier, an army sergeant, where in the heat of battle he sees a young recruit trembling as he is curled up in his fox hole not knowing what to do or what to expect. The sergeant puts out his hand and says to the recruit, "Come son, and you and I will do something fine and great for our country."

HE, MY FRIEND, IS BUILDING A BRIDGE TO THE NEXT GENERATION!

BE A BRIDGE BUILDER...AND BRACE YOURSELVES IN UNITY FOR THE CHALLENGES OF LIFE!

"HOLD ON TO EACH OTHER...FOR LIFE TRULY IS A CHALLENGE."

Paul is saying to the church at Philippi (and to us), "For you and for me the battle is on; let us do something fine and great for Christ!"

I ask myself as well as you:

- **Where am I as to my "growth chart" as a Christian and in my dependency on Christ Jesus?"**
- **Will I yield to the cultural temptations or hold fast to the truth and precepts of God's Word?**
- **Am I strong enough in the faith to stand up to ridicule and persecution for my beliefs?**
- **If I was chastised by others for not being tolerant of those not living by our standards, would I give in to peer pressure and not be vocal as to what I believe and why I believe it?**

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