

Church: Live Worthy of the Gospel

Stand Firm in Unity, Strive Fearlessly for Jesus - from Phil. 1:27-30

Today's text may sound especially timely: it was written by a spiritual mentor, while under house arrest, to beloved believers, whom he may or may not see again. As his potential last words, he shares his gospel-commitment – live or die - and urges them to have lives worthy of, and fully dedicated to the gospel.

The Apostle Paul was gospel-driven. After Jesus knocked him off his (high) horse and called him to share the good news of Christ and His Kingdom, the gospel became his life; even if it led to death (see Acts 9). In prison again, Paul writes to the church in Philippi, expressing his contentment and joy in God's gospel. He wants to infect them with gospel-centeredness.

“12 I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, 13 so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. 14 And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

20 as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. 21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” (Phil. 1:12-14, 20-21 – ESV)

Being all About God's Gospel

Well, of course the incomparable Apostle Paul was gospel-driven. He willingly endured hardships and suffered for the Faith; kudos to him. This passage was penned while Paul was under “house arrest” in Rome, circa AD 61 (Acts 28:14-31). *What a spiritual stud!* He was all about living up to the Gospel. *Go, Paul, Go!*

Bad news: he assumed all believers, every church, would have that level of commitment. This was a God-given conviction (hear Jesus in Luke 9:22-24).

But, isn't believing the gospel enough? Paul's letter to the church in Philippi shows how the message of Jesus is intended to shape a church's identity- as a group and as individuals. It should dictate our daily doings, and be the basis of unity (cf. 2:1-11).

God's good news makes us a solid front, striving together fearlessly, ready to suffer for Jesus. Every follower of Jesus is to live worthy of the Good News; be gospel-driven. Hear Paul's plea for how they are to let the gospel guide their lives:

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, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, 28 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. 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, 30 engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.” (Phil. 1:27-30 - ESV)

Live Worthy of the Gospel:

1) **Solid in Unity:** Standing firm in one spirit (vs. 27)

- “24/7” - Not just when spiritual parents are watching
- **One, though Different;** Jew, Greek... (Phil. 2:1-11; Eph. 4:1-16)
- **Guarding** against doctrinal error, moral defilement (1 Tim. 4:15, 16)

2) **Striving Together Fearlessly for the Gospel** (vs. 27-30)

- **Focused!** Single-Minded Soldiers – with “one soul”
- **Forward: On “Offense”**, taking the faith of the gospel (Rom. 10:14, 15; Eph. 6:10-20)
- **Fearless! Not “Skeerd”** of “*nuthin’, nobody... nuthin’ no how*”! (a la, the Lion of Oz)
Courage testifies of their judgement, and our salvation
Ready, Honored to suffer for Jesus, like the Apostles (cf. Acts 5)

Words of Application:

Can this be said of our commitment to the gospel? “So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name.” (Acts 5:41 – NASB)

We do not earn the Gospel’s gifts (Eph. 2:8-10). We are to live worthy of them. As Paul wrote the Ephesians: “I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called...” (4:1 – ESV)

Headlines this week can lead to an obsession only on self-protection. Let this and any challenge cause us to pull together – even in isolation. Beware things, people that cause division, and “fear not”! (Read Psalm 91; 121)

Stay true to our Mission: One people, protecting and sharing Him, God’s Message. “...Christ in you, the hope of glory. We proclaim him, warning and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ. I labor for this, striving with his strength that works powerfully in me.” (Col. 1:27b--29 - CSB)