

An Exposition of Philippians

Lesson #05 1:27-30

Preceding Context: Paul has just explained that his purpose in life is to serve Christ. His life is at this time at some risk due to this imprisonment and there are yet to be declared charges against himself. He is uncertain of how God will use him at this current time. He explains that he would prefer to go home and be with Christ in heaven, but knows that what is probably more necessary, is that he serve the churches he has established, and in particular to serve these Philippian saints.

Scripture Text NASU	Commentary
<p>1:27a <i>Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ,</i></p>	<p>Key Words: None</p> <p>Exposition: We who are in Christ have been bought by God at a precious and immeasurable price. We have been adopted into the family of God, a holy and righteous God, a just and sovereign God, a God who is our former enemy in the wickedness of our depraved hearts and minds, but now we have been redeemed by the infinitely precious blood of Jesus, our Savior, who died for each one of us in particular based on the Father’s choice of us in eternity past. Therefore we must strive to be worthy of this glorious good news provided to us without charge and fully secured by the Holy Spirit of this God of ours.</p>
<p>Cross Reference(s):</p> <p>1 Cor 6:18-20 <i>Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. ¹⁹Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? ²⁰For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.</i></p> <p>Eph 4:1-7 <i>Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, ²with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, ³being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. ⁷But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.</i></p>	
<p>27b <i>so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are <u>standing firm</u> in one spirit, with one <u>mind</u> striving together for the faith of the gospel;</i></p>	<p>Key Words: <u>standing firm</u> <i>στηκετε stekete</i> (Str. 4739) 9x To stand, to be approved in faithfulness, to stand firm, to be approved.</p> <p><u>mind</u> <i>ψυχη psyche (sukay)</i> (Str. 5590) 103x noun meaning life, soul, person, or mind.</p> <p>Note: I would have preferred it had been translated as “soul” meaning the full inner man of mind, personality, emotions, etc.</p> <p>Exposition: Paul wants these Philippian Christians to understand the vital importance of standing firm in the faith. He is here emphasizing the essential importance that we stand firm in unity of Spirit, with a unity of understanding of the nature of this faith regarding our salvation, and that we work together to strengthen this faith amongst each other and that we proclaim this gospel to the lost and dying world that confronts us each and every day in our Christian life.</p>
<p>Cross Reference(s):</p> <p>Php 2:1-2 <i>Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, then ²make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.</i></p> <p>Note: Verse 1 is a rhetorical question whose answer is surely “yes, there is” to each of these 4 questions. Verse 2 is a command based on the “yes” answers to the 4 questions of vs. 1.</p>	

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28 *in no way alarmed by your opponents — which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and that too, from God.*

Key Words: *alarmed* πτυρω *ptyro* (Str. 4426) 1x verb to scare, to terrify, to be terrified, to be in consternation.

Exposition: Paul is commending these Philippian saints for not being alarmed by their opponents to the gospel. We do not know what kind of persecution they are suffering, but Paul here is addressing generically the fact that they do suffer for the gospel of Christ. Paul comforts these saints regarding their received persecution by pointing out two things, namely that:

1. Suffering received from the persecution by the world identifies them with Christ's sufferings. and that
2. Their lack of alarm regarding such suffering indicates that they are mature in their faith and understand that since the world hated Christ, such hatred is a sign of their own Christlikeness.

Note: In maturity of faith, we should rejoice in such suffering directed towards our faith since it is proof that we have become to some degree Christ-like in our walk with Him whom we adore and model our lives after.

Cross Reference(s):

1 Thess 1:4-8 - *knowing, brethren beloved by God, His choice of you; ⁵for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. ⁶You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit, ⁷so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. ⁸For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything.*

1 Pet 2:20-25 *For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God. ²¹For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, ²²WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH; ^{Is 53:9b} ²³and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; ²⁴and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. ²⁵For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.*

29 *For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,*

Key Words: *suffer* πασχω *pascho* (3958) 42x Verb meaning to suffer. Here implying that in suffering we identify with Christ in His suffering, in His passion in willingly going to the cross as a substitute for us.

Note: It is in this suffering that we celebrate the “substitutionary blood atonement of Christ” for our redemption and the forgiveness of our own sin. We will develop this idea further in this winter/spring series on “The Gospel Wars”.

Exposition: We must know and understand that our faith in Christ was granted to us. It is not a work of our own. God made us alive from our death of Adam's sin. In death we could not have chosen Him. He chose us. Once made alive in Christ, we now could and did freely choose Him as we for the first time saw our sin as God saw it, enmity between me and this holy, transcendent, all powerful God. Because of this great choosing of myself despicable self, dead in my own sins and without hope, I am forever indebted to God for His great grace towards me in my unworthiness. **Therefore, I suffer in joy!**

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Cross Reference(s):

Eph 2:4-10a But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; ⁹not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰For we are His workmanship, - - -

30 experiencing the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear to be in me.

Key Words: conflict *ἀγώνα* agona (Str. 73) 6x Place of contest, race-course, stadium, strife, contention, peril, toil.

Exposition: There is a history with the Philippians here. They are aware that when Paul and Silas were unjustly thrown into prison in Philippi and were miraculously released by God's intervention. (Acts 16:16-34) These Philippians are well aware of God's absolute sovereignty in accomplishing His own purpose as He had done at Philippi. Now imprisoned in Rome, God is using this imprisonment of Paul to continue accomplishing His own purpose. Paul is comforting the Philippians saints with his own confidence and certainty that God is proceeding according to His plan in order to accomplish His own purpose, using the wicked men in power to participate in His own purpose.

Cross Reference(s):

Prov 16:3-4 Commit your works to the Lord and your plans will be established. ⁴The Lord has made everything for its own purpose, even the wicked for the day of evil.

Col 1:25-29 Of this church I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God, ²⁶that is, the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints, ²⁷to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. ²⁸We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. ²⁹For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.

Some Important Quotes

Ultimately, a thing is good because God calls it good. But He can call a thing good because He is Himself the source of all goodness. He defines the good. Although we may have a conscience that tells us some basics about what is good, there are times when what God says may be counterintuitive to us. This is true of our suffering. It may not seem appropriate for Christians to be called to suffer. But that is indeed our high calling in Christ (Phil 1:29).

William Edgar; from *TableTalk* of 9/10; p. 12

Sir Norman Anderson, former Professor and Director of the Advanced Legal Institute at London University, supported International Fellowship of Evangelical Students for sixty years. He had lost all three of his children in their early adulthood and his wife was so senile she could not recognize him. At one of the last public events where he spoke he was asked, "When you look back over your life and reflect on the fact that you have lost all your three children, and how your wife of sixty years no longer recognizes you, do you ever ask the question, 'Why Me?' . . ." "No, I've never asked that question, 'Why me?' but I have asked the question, 'Why not me?' I am not promised as a Christian that I will escape the problems encountered by others; we all live in a fallen world . . . I am however, promised that in the midst of difficulties, God through Christ will be present with me, and will give His grace to help me cope with the difficulties and bear witness to Him."

John Piper; *Proclaiming a Cross-Centered Theology*; p.177