

A Life Worthy of the Gospel

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[0:00] Please turn with me in your Bibles now to Philippians chapter 1, Paul's letter to the church at Philippians.

! But what does it matter?

The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this, I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice.

For I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now, as always, Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.

For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose?

[1:17] I do not know. I'm torn between the two. I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far. But it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.

Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, so that through my being with you, again, your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me.

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 one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel, 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. For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him, since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.

Last weekend at the U.S. Air Force Academy, all 4,300 cadets were restricted to the campus for the weekend.

[2:35] Kids, that means they were grounded. They couldn't leave. It seems that some freshmen had been caught cheating on an exam, and other cadets had abused alcohol, and others had downloaded pornography over the Internet.

So no one was allowed off base for the weekend. Instead, they were to meet in small groups and to consider the image of the institution to which they belonged.

Together they were to look into the mirror and ask, is this the kind of institution we want to be, the reputation we want to have, where honor is to be at the heart of all that we do?

You see, evidently, being a cadet at the Air Force Academy carries with it certain expectations of the kind of behavior that is to characterize the life of one who belongs to that institution, and their conduct was totally out of line with the code of honor.

They needed to conduct themselves in a manner worthy of the Air Force Academy. Certainly, its reputation is at stake. And that is precisely what the Apostle Paul is saying to us in verse 27 when he writes to this letter to the saints at Philippi and to the saints at Bremen.

[4:08] Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. The gospel of Christ carries certain expectations for the way that you are to conduct yourself.

You are to live in a manner worthy of the gospel or in a suitable way, in a way that is appropriate for those who believe the gospel.

Your life is to match the gospel, not contradict it. Or as Titus 2.10, you are to adorn the doctrines of God our Savior, to make them beautiful, to make them attractive, not to detract from the glory of the gospel.

So soldiers of Christ, cadets of Jesus, the reputation of the gospel is at stake in the way that you live. Now, this is the very first command that we come to in the letter to the Philippians.

It's taken 27 verses before Paul gets around to giving any exhortations, direct commands to the people. There's lessons in that itself that we don't have time to draw out this morning.

[5:19] But up to this point, he's been talking about himself and the gospel. They want to know what's going on with Paul. He's in prison, 800 miles away. How are you doing, Paul?

And so he writes to tell them how he's doing. And he talks all about his joy in prison. He talks about his love for them. He talks about his prayer, how he's praying for them, and what's happened through his imprisonment.

He speaks of his confident expectation that he will have sufficient courage to magnify Christ, whether he lives or dies. Why? Because of your prayers and the supply of the Spirit that will come from your prayers.

He gives his view on life, Christ. His view on death, gain. He talks of his passion, the advancement of the gospel, Christ being preached, Christ being exalted.

And only now does he shift gears and turn his attention now to exhorting the Philippians. He's going to tell them what's expected of them now as a church.

[6:28] Not just what Paul expects of them. Remember who Paul is, a servant of Christ Jesus. This is what Jesus, the commander-in-chief, expects of you. It's a transition then.

The gospel has brought you innumerable blessings, but it also has brought you a great obligation. Whatever happens, you see to it that you conduct yourself in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.

So there is the rule of conduct stated. The rule of conduct stated. Every now and then we run into these concise summary statements in Scripture.

Where you have the boiling down into a single sentence God's code of conduct. His rule of conduct. We think of the Ten Commandments. There are ten words. A summary of God's moral law. We think of the further summary and boiling that down to two commands.

[7:32] To love God and to love man. We have those kind of summary statements. But we even have more condensed summary statements. Where in one sentence, we have the duty of man set before us.

I think of the golden rule. Remember that Jesus said in Matthew 7 and verse 12. So in everything. Do you see the broad application of these summarized codes or rules of conduct?

So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you. For this sums up the law and the prophets. There's a rule of conduct that applies in every situation.

You say, I'm driving my car. Okay, that's in everything. You drive your car in a way and treat others who are on the road in a way that you would want to be treated by them. If you were in their car and they were in yours.

You say, I'm in the midst of a business transaction. Okay. Well, you treat the buyer the way that you would want to be treated if you were the buyer before a seller.

[8:39] And so on. Whatever you're doing. In everything. Do to others what you would have them do to you. You see, it's a one size fit all rule of conduct. For every situation.

I think of that statement in 1 Corinthians 10:31. So whether you eat. Or drink. Or whatever you do. Do it all for the glory of God.

Whatever you do. Is the glory of God your aim? Your studies. Your athletics. Your love life. Your finances. All for the glory of God.

Whatever you do. You see, it fits into this rule of conduct. So we have one of those concise summary statements set before us here in verse 27.

Whatever happens. Conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. And again, the beauty of this rule is how broad sweeping it is. Whatever happens.

[9:40] Whatever happens. Now, I don't know everything that's happening in your life. Some of you share burdens and prayer requests.

And I know a bit. But I really don't need to know everything about your life to know this. That this rule of conduct has something to say to every one of you this morning.

Whatever your situation. Because it's talking about whatever happens. Whatever is happening right now in your life. This rule has something to say to you. You see to it that in your situation, you are conducting yourself in a manner fitting for the gospel.

Now, that means that we need to spend some time thinking about the gospel. And what conduct is appropriate for the gospel in my specific situation.

And that means it starts by being clear on what the gospel is. The gospel is the good news of what God has done for hell deserving sinners through the work of his son.

[10:47] That's the good news. That's the gospel of Christ. It's not what we do. It's what he has done. It's his accomplishment. His works. His merit. His life.

His death. His resurrection. It's all about what God has done in Christ to save hell deserving sinners. That's the gospel. And we've got to be clear on that at the beginning. And it's that message that is to have a profound effect on the way that I live my life.

That message is to shape my life. It's to give form and direction to my life. Christian behavior. That's the gospel. Christian behavior is to flow from.

It's to flow out of the gospel. Conduct that is in line with the gospel of Christ. And so we see that Paul says once again as he says throughout his epistles that the gospel is not just for lost sinners. It is for Christians as well. Indeed we who are believers in Jesus need the gospel every day of our lives. We need to ever be coming back to the gospel.

[11:54] To have its influence permeate our lives. That there's not a bit of water in that cup.

That there's not a bit of the water in that cup that does not bear the flavoring of that teabag. So there's not to be any aspect of our life that does not bear the flavoring of the gospel of Christ.

Or to change the metaphor. We're to have our lives soaked with the sweet smelling fragrance of the gospel. Your wife has just splashed her neck with perfume in the bathroom.

And the whole bathroom. There's not a square cubicle inch where that fragrance is not filled. And so it is that we are to have the gospel so soaking us that wherever we go we leave behind something of the fragrance of the gospel of Christ.

The gospel is to affect our conduct. Let me show you how this works in a practical way. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation.

[13:07] Romans 1.16. It claims that Christ has the power to break the bonds of sin. To set the prisoner free. Now are you conducting yourself in whatever happens.

Are you conducting yourself in a manner that is worthy of this powerful gospel. Is it obviously setting you free from your sins. Is there more than just a form of godliness.

Godliness about you. Just the outward trappings of religion. Is there anything of the power of godliness. The power of the gospel. Unleashed in your life. That has changed the way you think.

The way you live. It's changed you from the inside out. From top to bottom. The power of the gospel. Evident in your conduct. That's conducting yourself in a manner worthy of the gospel.

Or the gospel tells us that in Jesus Christ all of your sins have been forgiven freely. When you were obnoxious to God's wrath.

[14:14] And had done nothing to earn his favor and forgiveness. He wiped the slate clean. For Jesus sake. That's the gospel that you profess to believe. Well to conduct yourself in a manner worthy of the gospel.

Means that you ought to be ever so quick to forgive others. Who sin against you. You ought to be the last man. To ever hold a grudge. Or to nurse a bitterness.

The gospel is all about God. Who so loved the world. That he gave his one and only son. The gospel is about the kindness and love of God.

That appeared and saved us. Not for righteous things we had done. Because of his own mercy. The love of God. That means there ought to be no one more loving in my family than me.

A believer in this gospel. No one more kind at school than me. The gospel talks about the grace of God. Indeed Paul refers to it as the gospel of the grace of God.

[15:16] Then that means that to conduct myself in a manner worthy of the gospel. I ought to be the most gracious man on earth. Not treating people as they deserve. But showing favor where they don't deserve favor.

The gospel is a gospel that speaks of Jesus Christ dying to make men holy. Well a holy life is conducting yourself in a manner worthy of the gospel.

We ought to be as zealous for holiness as others are for fame and money. The gospel is about the Lord Jesus humbling himself. To become a man. To die in our place.

Shouldn't be any more humble people than believers in the gospel. That's to conduct yourself in a manner worthy of the gospel. You see how intensely practical it is. We could go on and on with

examples.

The gospel is about Jesus Christ making peace between man and God and peace between each other. The gospel teaches that God pulls down walls and barriers between people.

[16 : 18] Than to conduct yourself in a manner worthy of the gospel. Is to be a peacemaker. And is to make every effort. To live at peace with all men. You see whatever happens.

There's always something that is vastly more important. Than my own concerns. Whatever is happening to me. There's always something that is far more important.

Than me having the last word. Or gratification of my desire. Here and now. Or getting out of this painful trial.

No there's something more important. It's the reputation of the gospel of Christ. That's the most important thing. Live for that. Paul says. I want people to go away from me.

Thinking bigger thoughts of God and his gospel. Rather than smaller. Thinking higher thoughts of Christ. Not lower. And so about the time you're ready to.

[17 : 18] To lose your patience. And give that guy a piece of your mind. Remember the gospel. Think about the gospel. And conduct yourself in a manner. Fitting.

With the gospel. So spend some time thinking. This afternoon. About. Conduct. That's worthy of the gospel. In your present situation.

Whatever it is. Whatever's happening to you right now. And how your conduct. Can illustrate. The power. The love. The grace. The humility. Of God.

In the gospel. Well that's the rule of conduct. Stated there. But the apostle doesn't just leave the. The rule of conduct.

Stated in its general form. We know him better than that. He always descends to particular applications. So we come to the rule of conduct. Applied. He's going to apply this principle.

[18 : 14] This general principle. To the very particular needs. And situations. And faults. In the saints. At Philippi. He's going to spell out.

What it will mean for them. To conduct themselves. In a manner. Fitting of the gospel. And what it will mean for us. Who have come after them. Saints. In Christ Jesus.

Three points. First of all. Conduct worthy of the gospel of Christ. Is to be steadfast. In contending. For the faith of the gospel. The gospel. Verse 27.

The last half. Then. Whether I come and see you. Or only hear about you. In my absence. I will know. That you stand firm. In one spirit.

Contending. As one man. For the faith of the gospel. You stand firm. And you're contending. Now. Contending.

[19 : 10] Contending. Is something that the. That believers are to do. For the faith. Of the gospel. Paul says that here. Jude. In his little epistle. Verse 3. Says. I felt I had to write.

And urge you. To contend. For the faith. That was once for all. Entrusted to the saints. That deposit of truth. That body of doctrine. On which you have placed.

Your trust. And you're leaning on. You need to. Contend for that. What does the word mean?

Contend. Well it means to struggle. To strive.

To fight. Contend. That's the word. Paul says. I want to hear. That you are contending. For the faith. Of the gospel. It's a word.

That's used of soldiers. At war. Contending. It's used of gladiators. Fighting for their lives. Now the very word.

[20 : 05] Implies opposition. You don't have to contend. If no one's against you. Indeed. The later verses. The very next verse. Will talk about. Those who oppose you. And about a struggle. And about suffering.

Yes. There is opposition. And it's implied. And then later stated. So we learn. Here at the end. Of this first chapter. That Paul's not the only one. Suffering. For the gospel.

That the Philippian believers. Themselves. Are suffering. Persecution. They're meeting up. With opposition. Not all greet the gospel. As good news. The good news. That it is.

There are those. Who are defined. As the enemies. Of the gospel. Indeed he'll say. In chapter 3. In verse 18. He'll speak about. The enemies. Of the cross. Of Christ. And we're not surprised.

Are we? That the gospel. Has enemies. We were once one. After all. Weren't we? We remember. The opposition.

[21:03] That Paul met with. At Philippi. When he was there. Is it any surprise. To us. That ten years later. That the church. That's grown up there. Would be suffering. Opposition. And persecution.

Remember Paul was. Cast in prison there. Whipped. Beaten. That was the place. Where the. Earthquake. Set him free. So we're not surprised.

To see this opposition. We remember man's. Rebellious nature. Romans 8. 7. That the mind. The natural man. Is enmity. Against God. It's. It's the very hostility.

Against God. And it will not submit to him. So. We're not surprised. That the gospel. Has enemies. Idolatry. And it's stepchild. Immorality. Never have like.

Christian holiness. Which has ever been. A light in their eyes. Like a man with a flashlight. Shining in their eyes. In the midst of their darkness. They don't like it. It's a point of conviction.

[21:57] To them. To have these Christians. Claiming that they. We ought to clean up our lives. And live unto the glory of God. According to his commandments. And so. We're not surprised.

That idolaters. And immoral men. Hate Christians. Hate the gospel. Because wherever the gospel goes. In this wicked world.

It meets opposition. It meets. With opposition. We heard it last Sunday. The kingdom of God. Only advances forcefully. In this world. Because there are those.

Who oppose it. And they oppose it. It's a sign of. The true faith. Of the gospel. That it attracts. Opposition. You preach a message.

In this wicked world. If it doesn't attract opposition. It's not the real thing. The opposition itself. Proves. The truthfulness. Of the message.

[22:55] It's the true faith. Once delivered. To the saints. And behind it all. Is the devil. And his hellish crew. The hosts of sin. That hate. The gospel.

Of Christ. Well. So it was in Philippi. The faith of the gospel. Was being challenged. By the non-Christian world. On the outside. And being challenged. By heresy.

And false living. And false doctrine. Within. Some of that will come up. Later in the letter. And it calls. For fighting. For the faith. Of the gospel. It's a call. For Christians.

To fight. For the faith. To contend. For the faith. For that truth. That has been handed down. To us. And that fight. Will require.

Steadfastness. So Paul says. Stand firm. I want to hear. That you are standing. Firm. That means. That you. You plant your feet. Stand firm. It has to do.

[23:49] With a broad stance. So you are not easily. Shoved around. It's a word used. Of wrestlers. And we think of. The sumo wrestler. And there is the circle. And he is standing inside. He has got these legs.

Like tree trunks. And he has planted them. And he is not going to be moved. That's how you are to be standing. For the gospel. The faith. The truth of God's word.

The inference is. Is that there are forces out there. To move you. To move you. From the faith. Of the gospel. To get you to budge.

And to fudge. On the truth. That's been handed down. You don't believe that silly story. About God creating the. The heavens and the earth. In three. In six days. Do you? You don't believe.

That Jesus of Nazareth. Was really God. Do you? You can't surely believe. That everybody will go to hell. If they don't. Come to that Jesus.

[24:45] Do you? Do you? Do you? You can't be. Serious. To tell me that. All sex outside of marriage. Is wickedness. And God will judge the immoral.

And the adulterer. You can't tell me. With a straight face. That God hates divorce. When. When I don't have a happy marriage. Forces to move us.

From the truth. That has been handed down to us. You can't tell me that. Salvation. Is earned. 100%.

By the doings of another. For me. You mean to tell me. There's nothing that I need to do. To earn salvation. Come on. You'll need to plant your feet wide.

And take a firm stand. And contend. For the truth. The faith of the gospel. Not giving up. One shred of truth. Not compromising.

[25:43] Your obedience. To one of the commands. Not cutting. Any corners. With the truth of God. Not being moved. Because that's what they try to do. That's what the opponents.

Are trying. They're trying to move you. They're trying to get you. To back off a bit. Don't stress holiness so much. Come on. Be like us. Conform to us. That's the push. And you've got to stand firm against it.

Don't give up. And take the easy road. To avoid conflict. After all. Is not the faith of the gospel. Worth contending for.

It's the most precious thing on the earth. The faith of the gospel. It's changed my destiny. Forever and ever. My address for eternity. Is changed. Because of this gospel.

This is something worth. Contending for. This is something worth standing firm for. And to contend for it steadfastly. Is to conduct yourself.

[26 : 40] In a manner worthy of it. Is it this valuable thing? Then it deserves to have its believers. Contend steadfastly for it. After all.

The Lord Jesus stood firm. To give us this gospel. Think of. Think of the steadfastness. Of Jesus Christ. In order for there to be any good word.

From God for us poor sinners. What did he have to do? He had to plant his feet. And not be moved. Indeed he talks about. Setting his face like flint. And not being moved.

I did not. Hide my back. From those who beat me. Or my faith. From those who plucked out my beard. He stood as a pillar. Unmoved. By all the opposition.

That came. At him. Did not hide his face. From mocking and spitting. He took all that they could dish out. He did not draw back.

[27 : 37] He didn't shrink back. But he stood firm. In order that we might have. A gospel. From heaven. And those who believe. In that gospel of Christ.

Ought to. Conduct themselves in. A manner. Worthy of that gospel. Number one. Steadfastly. Contend for that gospel. Where it's being challenged.

But in the second place. Be united. In this task. Be united. In this task. Of contending. For the faith. Of the gospel. Now the apostle.

Has a lot to say to us. In this letter. About unity. It seems that tensions. Within the church. Were threatening. To mar their witness. To the world. And so he says.

In verse 27. Stand firm. In one spirit. I want to hear. That you are standing firm. In one spirit. And one spirit. Speaks of a combined.

[28 : 34] Aim. Here we are. A couple hundred of us. But if we're of one spirit. That means we have one aim. We have a single purpose. We have a single passion. And we're pursuing it together.

You know. It's hard to move us. When we're all standing. Firm. Together. Isn't it? That's what Paul says. He wants to hear. That you are standing firm.

In one spirit. There at Philippi. Contending. As one man. There it is again. Twice in this. Last half of the verse. Contending.

As one man. For the faith. Of the gospel. Now again. It's not contending. Against one another. It's not striving. Against one another. But it's striving together. For the faith.

Of the gospel. There's a huge difference. Isn't there? Striving against one another. Striving together. For. The faith of the gospel. Contending.

[29 : 33] As one man. Commentators think. That the picture. Drawn here. Is. Is drawn from the. Greek phalanx. Under. Alexander the great.

And even. Before him. Different. Generals. In war. Used this. Battle formation. It was a group. Of highly trained. Spearmen.

Who fought together. In the closest. Formation. Often there would be. Ten. Ten men. Across the front. And four. Five. Or six. Or ten men. Deep. This was a unit.

You see. One unit. And they. Were shoulder. To shoulder. So close. That some of them. Even fastened. Their shields. One. To the next.

So that. What you had. Was not just. One soldier. And one shield. And one spear. But you had a whole. Wall. Of shield. And spears. Coming at you.

[30 : 27] And the fellows in back. Were pushing. You see. This is a ramrod. And it's a wall. And there's long spears. And it's just a wall. Of spears. And shield. Coming at you.

They're not contending. As forty individual men. They are contending. As one man. And the whole success. Of the phalanx. Was. That they work.

In unity. Together. Every part. Doing its work. And when they need. To move right. Everybody needs. To move right. Together. When they need. To advance. They all need. To advance together.

It's unity. Was. What was required. For its success. In battle. And that's the picture. Of the unity. Needed in the church.

For our striving. For the faith. Of the gospel. There's to be great unity. In our gospel endeavors. We're to strive together. Not all by ourselves. You're witnessing.

[31 : 23] To somebody at work. Don't just go off. By yourself. Get your brother. And say. Pray for me this week. Here. I've got an opportunity. Let's strive together. For the faith. Of the gospel. It's not just David.

And Nicky Vaughan. Going off to France. There. To strive. For the gospel. It's us. Joining. At the throne of grace. Calling down. Help from above. Striving together.

For the gospel. In France. Can you imagine. The catastrophe. Of having the members. Of the phalanx. Begin to turn. On one another. And fight each other.

During the charge. In battle. It was one Saturday afternoon. Last fall. That I was watching. College football. I remember the scene. Well. A fight broke out.

And it wasn't on the field. Between two opposing teams. We've seen that too. On TV. By the way. But this was on. The sideline. Between members.

[32 : 19] Of the same team. And the camera. Zoomed up on it. First. The exchange of words. The war of words. Followed by blows. And going at each other.

Such that the team members. Had to pull them. Off of each other. And the announcer said. That's the death knell. Of that football program. They'll not win. That's a program.

Going under. When they fight. Against each other. Indeed. They lost big time. That day. I don't know. If they ever recovered. But the folly.

Of it's almost humorous. In a way. They're forgetting. Who the opponent is. Aren't they? The opponent's over. On the other sideline. And they're doing. The work of the. The opponent. Doesn't need to do anything.

They're just. Destroying themselves. But there's nothing humorous. About it. When it's the church. Of Jesus Christ. And the members of the church.

[33 : 14] Begin to bite. And devour one another. And they turn their. Spears. And their weapons. And their sharp knife. Tongues. At each other. And they go to work. On each other.

And they're forgetting. Who the real enemy is. And while we're fighting each other. The real enemy is going unfought. And he's laughing. And he's winning.

And yet. And yet. It's too. Common. In the ranks.

Of Jesus Christ. We have witnessed. Reformed Baptist churches. Sad to say. Where members. Fight against. Other members. To the point.

Where the gospel chariot. Has ground. To a halt. And the gospel. Is not advancing. Anymore. In those places. They've lost credibility.

[34 : 09] If that's the gospel. I don't need it. That's the view. Of the watching world. And so the church. Loses credibility.

Before the watching world. And grace fellowship. We're just one issue. Away from that. You know that. We're just one wagging tongue. Away from that. One week. Of carnal minded.

Thinking. Of selfish ambition. We're not far away. From that. The devil knows. How to stop the gospel. From advancing.

From grace fellowship church. And he'll do the utmost. That he can. To stir us up. To break rank. And to get caught up. In intramural. Spats. Among ourselves.

And to forget. Who the real enemy is. Out there. And to shut down. All of this. Striving together. For the faith. Of the gospel. Oh may the Lord. Protect us.

[35 : 03] And keep us. The world is right. To expect something more. From the church. Of Jesus Christ. The world is right. To expect. To see love.

And unity. In the soldiers. Of Jesus Christ. This is conduct. Worthy of the gospel. Isn't it? The gospel claims. To tear down walls. Reconcile enemies.

To bring us all into one big family. With the same father. The same savior. The one spirit. To drink. Same promises. One hope. One aim. One faith.

One battle. One. One. One. And yet. When it sees. Division. That is not conduct. In a manner.

Worthy of the gospel. Rather. We're to stand firm. In one spirit. Contending. As one man. That's conduct. Worthy.

[35:58] Befitting. The gospel. Of Jesus Christ. If you care. A whit. About the reputation. Of the gospel. Of Christ. You must make. Every effort. To maintain. The unity of the spirit.

And the bond. Of peace. That's the second. Particular. Application. Of the general rule. Of conduct. United. In spirit. Third.

Conduct. Worthy. Of the gospel. Of Christ. Is to be. Unafraid. Of opposition. Verse 28. Without being. Frightened. In any way. By those. Who oppose you.

Some of you. Horse lovers. Will. Appreciate this. Phrase. Better than others. The word here. For frightened. Is not used. Anywhere else. In the new. Testament. But it's used.

In other literature. Of the shrinking. Back. Of a startled. Horse. Ever been on a horse. And. It's startled. By something. That it sees. And it shrinks. Back.

[36:56] That's what. Paul says. I. I don't want you. To be afraid. Of the opposition. Without being. Frightened. Without shrinking. Back in fear. Fear. And isn't it.

The opposition. That we face. That does cause us. To shrink back. And we don't open our mouth. And contend for the gospel. The faith of the gospel. Why? Because we're afraid. We're afraid. We're afraid. We're afraid of what they might think of us. Or what they might do to us. And fear causes us. Not to stand firm. But to turn and run. To shrink back. To give way. But if we would conduct ourselves.

In a manner worthy. The gospel. We would not be intimidated. In any way. By our opponents. Or as J.B. Phillips paraphrases. We would not care. Two straws for our enemies. Whatever they're doing. Not moved. An inch. Making no concessions. That's conduct. Worthy. The gospel. Because the gospel. Claims to take away. The fear of man. The gospel.

[38:01] The gospel. Claims to take away. The fear of death. The gospel. Claims to make death. To be better. By far. To be gained. For the Christian. Conduct.

In line. With that gospel. Would be. To be. Unafraid. Before your opponents. Oh. But they have spears. They have a sword. They have gallows.

They have stocks. I want to see you. Unafraid. Before your opponents. Why? Because that's. Conduct. That's. Befitting. The gospel. Of Christ. He's the one.

Who says. Do not fear him. Who can kill the body. And can do no more. That's the worst. They can do to us. Is kill us. And remember. Death is gain. To the Christian. For it brings us to Christ. Well. Those are easy words. For us to say. The Philippians. Were. Were experiencing. That real threat. And this word. Was sent to them. To encourage them. In the midst.

[38:57] To their persecution. To not. Be afraid. Paul's applying. The general rule. Of conduct. To their situation. If you're going to conduct yourself. In a manner. Worthy of this gospel.

Then you need to look. Into the teeth. Of your persecutors. And not tremble. You need to be able. To stand firm. And not cower. And shrink back. In fear. The gospel.

Demands. Such. Boldness. The gospel. Deserves. Such. Courage. And it is the very word. That enables us. To stand.

Unafraid. Against our enemies. Well. He gives three further reasons. Not to fear the opposition. First. A double sign. The end of verse 28. Paul says.

This steadfast courage. This stand for the gospel. In the face of persecution. Unafraid. Is a sign. Of two facts. Number one. That they will be destroyed. Utterly ruined.

[39:52] In hell. And number two. That you. Will be saved. Ultimate salvation. You see. When you stand firm. In the face of persecution. And they see. You're not trembling. You're ready to go.

And meet your maker. You're not shutting your mouth. You've got the strength. Of the Holy Spirit. Giving you boldness. That's a sign.

That they're fighting. Against more than man. They're fighting. Against God. And to fight against God. Is to lose. Forever. It's a sign. That they will be destroyed. But it's also a sign.

That you will be saved. God has begun. A good work in you. It's seen in you. Your courage. In the face of persecution. God has begun. A good work. He's going to continue. Carry it on to completion. Until the day of Christ Jesus.

So your boldness. And lack of fear. Before your enemies. Is a sign. Of two great certainties. Is the salvation of the church. And the destruction.

[40:50] Of her enemies. And both are brought about by God. You see that at the end of verse 28. And that by God. How is it that.

That we will be saved in the end. By God. How is it that. The enemies of Christ's people. Will be destroyed in the end. By God. Paul always sees the sovereign hand. The invisible hand. Bringing about these two things. The salvation of his people. The destruction of his enemies. So Paul is saying. Don't be afraid of your opponents. They're going to be lost.

Ruined. You're going to be saved. And then he sets before them. Not only a double sign. But a double blessing. Verse 29. For it has been granted to you.

On behalf of Christ. Not only to believe on him. But also to suffer for him. You see the double blessing. It has been granted. That means. Given.

[41 : 47] Graciously given. By God. What has been given to us by God. Two things. To believe. And to suffer. And both are. Given by God.

And both go together. So do you believe in him. Have you put the weight of your trust. On Jesus Christ. That has been given.

By God. People want to argue sometimes. That Ephesians. Two. Eight. And nine. Does not prove. That faith is the gift of God. It just says that salvation. Is the gift of God. Well. We have more than. One weapon. In the arsenal. It's not just Ephesians. Two. Eight. Nine. That teaches. Faith is a gift of God. Philippians. One. Twenty. Nine. It teaches that faith is the gift of God. To you. It has been granted. Dear Christian.

To believe in God. Where'd you get that faith? Who opened your heart. And enabled you. To receive Christ. Well. God did. It's been given to you.

[42 : 45] Graciously. Undeservedly. Given to you. By God. To believe on Christ. Is the first blessing. What's the second blessing? Don't miss it.

You wouldn't put it in the category of blessing. But Paul does. To suffer. For him. To suffer. For him. So are you suffering for Christ?

Maybe just a glance of. A sneer. For the Philippians. Maybe the threat of losing money and life. Whatever. This too has been given to you by God.

It's not happening randomly. By chance. The world's not out of God's control. Do you realize that all of your suffering. For the gospel of Christ. Is given by God.

He's ordering it all. So don't be afraid of those who are opposing you. They couldn't touch you. If it wasn't for God. Sovereignly giving you.

[43 : 41] The privilege of suffering. For his son. Don't be intimidated by your enemies. This too is a sign of God's saving favor. It's a badge of authentic discipleship.

To Jesus. To Jesus. You're the real thing. God's given you both faith. To believe on him. And to suffer for him. And the suffering doesn't put out the faith.

It goes on together. Hand in hand. Indeed. Everyone who lives a godly life in Christ. Jesus will suffer persecution. If they persecuted me. They will persecute you also.

Jesus says. Now that's a blessing. To be given to suffer for Jesus. Our flesh would not like this blessing. We'll take the first. But not the second.

But they go together. They're twin blessings. And they're found together. For it's been granted to you on behalf of Christ. Not only to believe on him. You say. Oh I just want to believe. Not only to believe on him.

[44 : 40] But also to suffer for him. And some suffer more than others. Because it's given to them. To suffer more than others. For the sake of the gospel. But we need to see that it is.

A blessing. It's been graciously granted. By God. Indeed what could be more honorable. Than being counted worthy to suffer for Christ.

Is that not what caused the disciples to rejoice. As they went out from the Sanhedrin. With bleeding backs. Yet they were rejoicing. That they had been counted worthy. To suffer shame for the name. This is a great honor.

They said. It's a blessing. So we're at the 4th of July parade. And here comes a town son. A marine. Who's lost a leg. In Iraq. And we instinctively stand. And the sidewalks erupt with applause.

[45 : 39] There's a man. Who has suffered on our behalf. And we honor him. And we honor him. And we honor him. But what is that.

Compared to the final day. When the Lord Jesus Christ himself. Is handing out the medals of honor. To his soldiers wounded in battle. What will the honor then be. Of one who suffered for the sake of Christ. To have the commander in chief.

Reward them. And say. Well done. Thou good and faithful servant. It's an honor. It's a blessing. To suffer for Christ's sake. So don't be afraid of your opponents. They're going to be damned. You're going to be saved. Eternally. To you. It's been given. God is shining his favor upon you. This persecution you're undergoing. Isn't a sign of his punishment. Or his disfavor.
[46 : 34] It's a sign that he loves you. He's given you to believe. And to suffer for him. And then the chapter ends. With Paul's encouragement. That we're all in the same boat together. A shared struggle.

A shared struggle. Verse 30. Since you are going through the same struggle. The same struggle. That you saw I had. And now hear that I still have. The same struggle I had. When I was in Philippi. Ten years ago. And the mob. Rushed upon me. And falsely accused me. And had me. Flogged. And thrown into prison. Hands in the stocks. And now you have the same struggle. That you saw. I once had. And now hear that I still have. Where's he now? He's in another prison. Over in Rome. And he says. Your struggle. Is my struggle. One of the things that the devil likes to make us think. Is that we're going through this trouble.

[47 : 36] All by ourselves. And so Paul comes to the Corinthians. And says. No temptation has taken you. But such as is common to man. Don't think this is something.

That just. You're all by yourself. No. This is common temptation. Many others are going through it. And if you're in a caring community. There are many others who are. Suffering right along with you. And bearing you up. It's a shared struggle. And so Paul speaks of his own struggles. In order that they might be comforted.

We're all in this thing together. He says. And though the Philippians were 800 miles away. The struggle they were going through. Was the very same struggle. That's going on in Rome. Where Paul's in prison. And though we are 2,000 years removed. From these struggles. Because their struggle. Is exactly the same struggle. That we are going through. In any opposition that we're meeting.

[48 : 32] From the opponents of the gospel. It's the same cosmic struggle. For the truth of the gospel. It's the same enemy. For we struggle not with. Flesh and blood.

With principalities and powers. With forces of evil. Spiritual realms. And the enemy is not called a truce. With the gospel. He's still out to frighten.

He's still out to intimidate you. He's still out to zip your lip. And cause you to withdraw. And not speak. For the gospel. So the same battle.

The same struggle is raging. For the faith of the gospel. Well it's our turn. To enter the field. Here at the end of the 21st century. Let us be steadfast.

In contending for the faith of the gospel. Let us be united in spirit. Letting nothing divide us. And let us be unafraid of the enemy. That's conduct worthy.

[49 : 29] Of this precious gospel. That we have put our faith in. The gospel of Christ. And if it's the same struggle that Paul was going through.

That means that we have the same captain. Our Lord Jesus. And the same victory. And the same resources. That we can be strong in the strength of the Lord.

And in his mighty power. And through Christ. Can be more than conquerors. Through him who loved us. The cause is worthy. The triumph of Christ's gospel.

The outcome is sure. We will overcome. The gates of hell will not prevail against us. So whatever happens. Whatever happens. You conduct yourself.

In a manner worthy. Of the gospel. Of Jesus Christ. Christ. I want to have a word. A frank word.

[50 : 23] With any unconverted friends with us this morning. There's nothing more challenging to us. Who have put our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And have embraced his gospel. Than this word that's before us this morning.

Because we want. To conduct our lives in a way. That's worthy of this gospel. That has enriched us eternally. And it is one of the greatest griefs.

That we have in life. That we can conduct ourselves. In a way. That gives a bad reputation. To the gospel of Christ.

And if you could hear our prayers. You would hear more than once a week. That we are. Asking the Lord to forgive us. Because we. We did not conduct ourselves. In a manner worthy.

Of the gospel. Of Jesus Christ. And I assure you. That it does sadden us. To think that. Our conduct. Could be hindering you.

[51 : 22] From receiving. The gospel of Jesus Christ. Forgive us. Forgive us. That we are no better ambassadors of Christ. That we do not give a better reputation.

To our Savior. That we're not a better brother. Or sister in the family with you. And that you would not see more of. The power of the gospel. In our lives.

Forgive us. That we let sin. Just linger so long in our life. And you're beginning to wonder. Is there power in the gospel. To save from sin or not. And you see us with our spats.

And you wonder. Does the gospel unite us in Christ. Or doesn't it? It's that gospel.

That we keep coming to. We keep coming back to that Savior. For washing and cleansing. But I want you to know. That that bothers us. But I also want to assure you. That it would be far worse with us.

[52 : 23] If it had not been for the gospel. If it had not been for the power of the gospel. To save us from our envy.

And selfish ambition. Our families would be unrecognizable. There would be no love there. Our relationships would be shattered.

We'd be all together. A different people. Sunk in sin. Chained to our sins. And loving them. Had it not been for the gospel. Of Jesus Christ. And so I tell you.

On behalf of the saints. In Christ Jesus here. Gathered here this morning. Yes we're not what we want to be. But we praise God. We're not what we were. We praise God. That we're not what we would be.

We know there's enough fire. And brimstone in us yet. To erupt. And to cause all sorts of. Discord. But oh that you wouldn't miss. The reality of the gospel.

[53 : 20] Jesus does save sinners. And he has saved us from our sin. We're not the same people we once were. And he's to be praised. As weak and fallible. And sinful as we still are.

Surely you can see something in your brother. There at home. Surely you can see something in that wife. That husband. That loved one. That fellow across the church row.

Surely you can see something of the reality. Of a power that is outside of ourselves. That Jesus Christ has come to us. And given us a new heart. A new passion in life.

To love him. To serve people. And bring glory to his name. Oh then may he be praised. May he be magnified today. As we go on. Falteringly yes.

But by the grace of God. Conducting ourselves in a manner worthy of this gospel. May the Lord help us. Let's pray and have dealings with him. If this gospel means nothing to you this morning.

[54 : 18] Oh that you would see your great sin before God. That he would not spare his own son. And that you would yet yawn at such good news for sinners.

Confess your sin. Come to this Christ. And ask him to cleanse you. And to save you. Let's all pray together silently. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Oh our Father we thank you for the gospel. We thank you for the day when these ears first heard the good tidings.

That there's salvation for sinners. For us who could not save ourselves. That one has come to do all the work for us. And that we can be accepted as righteous in your sight through faith in him.

Amen. Oh we thank you for what a difference the gospel has made. Not only in our eternity. But in our present life. Our families. Our church. Our jobs.

[55 : 23] Our community. Thank you for the gospel of Christ. Oh make us better representatives. It deserves a higher reputation than what we're giving it. Father forgive us.

Fill us with your spirit. Enable us to stand firm. Contending for the faith in an age that wants nothing of your gospel. Enable us to stand united in spirit.

When there's everything in our flesh yet to divide us. Enable us not to be afraid of man. But to fear you.

And do not fear man. And do it all to make much of yourself. And to demonstrate the power of the gospel. That even some here in our midst might yet this day. Put their trust in the Lord Jesus and live.

We ask in his name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.