

“SIDE BY SIDE”

Philippians 1:27–30

In view of opposition from enemies of the gospel,
the church must walk worthy of the gospel—
being unified and fearless.

What kind of opposition did the church face?

1. The church in Philippi lived “in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation” (2:15). *We do, too.*
2. The church in Philippi lived in a religious culture that was dominated by false teaching and legalism (3:2–3). *We do, too.*
3. The church in Philippi was opposed by former believers who had abandoned their commitment to Jesus (3:18–19). *We are, too.*
4. The church in Philippi was surrounded by anti-Christian businesses, public opinion, and politicians (Acts 16:12–24). *We are, too.*

What does “live worthy of the gospel” mean?

1. It can't mean “make yourself worthy” to receive God's blessings. We can't earn a relationship with God or rewards from God. We “put no confidence in human effort,” count all our goodness and obedience “as garbage,” and rely entirely on Jesus to make us right with God and give us eternal life (3:2, 8–10, 20–21).
2. It means that God has given all who trust Jesus a new identity to live up to. If you've committed your life to Jesus, God has made you a citizen of heaven. So, live like it—in a manner that's worthy of it.

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2. In view of the constant opposition to the gospel, be fearless (verses 28–30).

C O N C L U S I O N

A pastor's advice for “side by side” relationships

1. Standing “side by side” as a church requires a solid foundation of unity—covenanting together in church membership.
2. Striving “side by side” for the gospel involves not only commitment but consistent teamwork.
3. The goal of “side by side” relationships is not the relationships themselves but the gospel’s advance—in both evangelism and discipleship.

“Lovers are always talking to one another about their love; friends hardly ever about their friendship. Lovers are normally face to face, absorbed in each other; friends, side by side, absorbed in some common interest.”

— C. S. Lewis, *The Four Loves*