

**Sermon 6**  
**Joy In Persevering for Christ**  
**Philippians 1:27-30**  
CRCC 2/26/17

**Intro**

James Guthrie was a Scottish Presbyterian minister in the 1600's who was executed because of his stand for the pure gospel. One writer says of him, "James Guthrie ever kept through his busy life his own personal fellowship with Christ in the fresh joyous bosom of his new birth, as if he had been but a young convert."

Waking about 4 am on the day he was to be executed, Guthrie spent time in personal worship before being asked by a friend how he felt. "Very well", replied Guthrie. "This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it."

It is amazing, isn't it, when we think of the bravery and joy men and women who have gone before us have had in the Lord in the midst of death and pain filled lives. It makes us feel guilty when we call in for work or take an "easy day".<sup>1</sup>

The theme of Philippians is joy. We come to the end of chapter one this morning; a chapter we have said contains the subtheme of *Joy in the Practice of Christian Living*. The whole chapter is really a biography on Paul's example of sustaining joy in under very difficult circumstances. We have seen joy in partnering for Christ, joy in praying to Christ, joy in proclaiming Christ, joy in prizing Christ, and today joy in persevering for Christ. In vss 27-30, Paul calls them to persevere as a church in doing all they can to preserve the gospel.

Although Paul does not mention the word *joy* specifically in this passage, he is leading up to it. He will tell them in 2:1-4 to "*complete [his] joy in*

*being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and one mind”* (v2). He knows that the Philippians cannot maintain joy as a church if they are not moving forward together. Therefore, he cannot have joy in the church he planted until they did.

This was not a problem congregation. In fact, it may have been Paul’s healthiest and most mature church. But here he insinuates what he later directly addresses in chapter 4- some signs of division in this church. We don’t know the details, but in 4:2 he calls upon two women, Euodia and Syntyche to “*agree in the Lord*”. I think Paul doesn’t care to address the details of their relationship because it didn’t really matter in the larger scheme of things. The church is to be one, united together under the gospel. so that’s what he talks about in 27-30. A church cannot have lasting joy until they agree what is most important. And for Paul, the gospel was most important. The church’s mission is to exalt Christ, proclaim His gospel, urge others to believe in the gospel, and for its members to grow in the power of the gospel. This must always be the focus.

Notice how Paul begins v27. He says: **Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ.** That, brothers and sisters, is one of the most important phrases in the entire Bible. In fact, the word **Only** (Móvov) indicates that Paul’s singular, most important desire for the church, was that it reflects the power of the gospel in a worthy manner. Later in chapter 2 he will say that members of the church are “*lights in the world*” only as they are found “*holding fast to the word of life*” (2:15-16), which is the gospel.

Understand me carefully beloved, the uniqueness of the church as compared to all else in the world is found in the word of life, the gospel.

If we lose the gospel we have nothing. If we compromise the gospel, we diminish the light. If we ignore the gospel, we are guilty of not holding fast to the word of life. This is why Paul said, “*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek*” (*Rom 1:16*).

But what does Paul mean when he calls the church to **let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ**? Well, he really spends a great deal of the rest of the letter showing us. He just introduces us to what it means in vss 27-30. The phrase **manner of life** (*πολιτεύομαι*) is one word in the Greek and is the main verb to all that is in these verses- one long sentence in the Greek. The word is built off the Greek word for *polis*, which means *city*. Therefore, **manner of life** has to do with fulfilling ones responsibilities as a good citizen<sup>ii</sup>. Philippi, as you well know, was designated by the Roman Empire as a Roman colony. This was a privileged status not placed on every city in the Roman Empire. If you lived in Philippi you enjoyed almost all the privileges of the citizens of Rome, the capital. So there was great pride in dressing like those in Rome, naming your children Roman names, and speaking the Latin of Rome. One’s gifts and vocation were used to honor the state. Roman colonies didn’t have much use for individuals who craved self-glory or brought dishonor to the Emperor by uncouth conduct.

But Paul is not telling Christians to be good citizens of the state, although he does in other places. In 3:20 he reminds us Christians that their “*citizenship is in heaven*”. So in vss 27-30, Paul is in essence saying: “You are Roman citizens and proud of it. But you need to remember that you are more importantly citizens of the kingdom of heaven because of the gospel. So you need to conduct yourselves in a way that properly

reflects this before the world.” As citizens of heaven, we are to use our citizenship in a way that is **worthy of the gospel of Christ**. This means there are responsibilities and duties that the gospel imposes. Whether you realize it or not, the church, as imperfect as it is, is God’s earthly representation of the perfect, eternal kingdom of heaven. And you are citizens of it. And the world is watching. And the world is listening. And the world is wondering what is so unique about us. To **let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ** means your life is a living illustration of the gospel’s power. We are citizens of heaven. We look and act different from the world. We are sojourners who belong to a heavenly people.

William Hendriksen says **manner of life** refers to “Christian conduct, a manner of life that befits a citizen-soldier who belongs to the kingdom and army of Jesus Christ.”<sup>iii</sup> Paul uses military language later in v27, and in v28 speaks about the enemies of the gospel, and then in vss 29-30 speaks about the conflict all Christians are engaged in. So the tone of the text seems indicate that Paul pictures the members of the church as citizen-soldiers fighting for the gospel.

**Proposition:** Therefore, this passage reminds us that a life worthy of the gospel (27a) is one that sees the church as God’s army, and its members as citizen-soldiers who persevere in spiritual battle under the banner of the gospel. As the army of God, the church is called to *3 duties* of persevering for the cause of the gospel.

## I. Have Undivided Conviction for Gospel Doctrines (27b)

After stating his desire that the Philippians have a **manner of life worthy of the gospel of Christ**, Paul goes on to say: **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.**

Paul is telling the church here to make sure they have undivided conviction for gospel doctrines! A manner of life that is worthy of the gospel is having integrity in upholding the truth. Paul says this must be true **whether I come and see you or am absent**. Even if the apostle wasn't looking over their shoulder, Christ was present among them. He walks among the golden lampstands, which symbolize the individual churches in the book of Revelation (Rev 1:12). He therefore desires the truth of His gospel to be upheld. That's what that phrase at the end of v27 refers: **the faith of the gospel**.

What is **the faith of the gospel**? It's the truth of the gospel. Paul is urging the church in the same manner Jude did when he said "*to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints*" (Jude 3). Like a soldier who has been entrusted with the honorable duty of guarding a national treasure, so has the Christian been given the responsibility to guard the gospel.

Biblical churches are marked by conviction, not compromise. And the Christians who make them up must guard the truth of the gospel with their lives as its most valuable treasure. The **faith of the gospel** refers to the body of redemptive truth that defines true salvation. Paul urged Timothy "*by the Holy Spirit who dwells with you, guard the good*

*deposit entrusted to you”* (2 Tim 1:14), which refers to the good news of salvation revealed in Scripture.

But Paul is calling for a united conviction for gospel doctrines because a church’s unity (whether an established church or young church plant like ours) begins and ends with gospel conviction. Any true unity always has purpose. Trying to have unity for unity’s sake never works. There must be a common motivation and focus. The church’s focus for unity must be **the faith of the gospel**.

So Paul tells the Philippians that they need to be **standing firm in one spirit**. **Standing firm** (*στήκετε*) is a word that has military overtones. When this letter was read in the public assembly of the church, the Philippians may have thought of the phalanx, which was a military battle formation used to withstand the attacks of the advancing enemy. It only worked when each soldier stayed in his place and did his job. We all must stand firm together working as one unit as the church. In Eph 6, believers are called to “*put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be abled to stand against the schemes of the devil*” so that we are “*able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm*” (Eph 6:11,13). As Christians, we must stand firm together, resisting Satan’s attacks on the truth of the gospel by refusing to break rank and fleeing the battlefield. We are sons in God’s family. We are slaves submitted to our Master. And we are soldier’s tasked with defending the **faith of the gospel**.

I love military history and I read just this week the story of a veteran French soldier who in the midst of a fierce battle found a young recruit trembling with fear. “Come, son”, said the veteran, “and you and I will do something honorable for France.” So Paul says to the Philippians

(and us by way of extension), “We are in a battle. Now let’s make sure we discharge our most the most honorable thing we can for Christ and fight for the gospel.”<sup>iv</sup>

Paul says also that the church must make sure she is **standing firm in one spirit**. Of course, the Holy Spirit empowers our attitudes in the church. But this does not refer to the Holy Spirit, but to the human spirit. Paul is speaking about the proper attitude in the church. Apart from being united in our convictions about what the gospel is, no true unity is attainable.

Now Paul switches from military language to athletic language to press his point home. Notice he continues in v27 by adding, **with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel**. The church must be **one in spirit and mind** on this matter of fighting for purity of gospel doctrine. The word for **striving** ( $\sigmaυναθλέω$ ) is where we get our English words *athlete* and *athletics*. Those of us who love sport and have competed on teams really like this. We understand that a team can have the greatest athletes in the world, but if they don’t play for one another they don’t achieve greatness. Countless teams less talented than others have won championships by working toward a common objective as a team.

My senior year I was named captain of the soccer team. We had many great games and many great goals. I remember one game when one of our best players who was a year younger than me was sidelined for the first half. I have never been so frustrated. Nothing worked. I passed to that person and it would go out of bounds. I dribbled by another person only to hit a wall because nobody was opened. I was worn out, dejected, and didn’t know what the problem was. But in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half, J.B. was put in the

game. Everything changed. Passes were complete. Goals were scored. What was the difference? I needed my teammate. Any athlete who competes for himself alone is not good for the team. While I was not trying to compete for myself, I realized that day that if I ever chose to do so, I would fail. I needed my teammates to achieve victory.

Striving together in the church means you play as a team to advance the truth of God. The church must have common purpose and chemistry that fights for the purity of gospel conviction. If you've never played sports, then just think of tug of war. We are to pull the gospel together striving as one man. We are to fight for the gospel.

It's no wonder that it seems the church has little influence today. Many believe that there are gospel truths that can't be spoken about with certainty. Many especially in conservative circles are afraid of the word Calvinism as if it is the name of a disease. Under the banner of cooperation, many Christians feel that the doctrines of grace are taught in the Bible, but the church should not be too loud about them because they are too offensive. Some want us to believe that the doctrines of God's sovereign grace aren't important. But if we agree that God's Word teaches them, then who are we to classify them as unhelpful or too offensive to teach and preach?

Those who go to the hospital to have surgery make sure that a qualified doctor operates on them. People don't ask, for instance, the bagger at the grocery store to remove their appendix. When we watch a ball game and the referee blows the whistle we immediately say, "What a horrible call! It just proves this game is rigged if they don't review the play on the monitor!" When you get paid by your employer and the bank shortchanges you a few hundred dollars you switch banks. Why? We

want precision. We naturally want truth. We want things to be right and know that they are right.

We want precision in everything. So why don't we want it with gospel truth? The gospel is the most important thing in the world. It's the most powerful thing in the world. It's the most wonderful thing in the world. What right do we have to remove hard to swallow truths? As Steve Lawson says, "*The Bible is not hard to understand. It's just hard to swallow.*" When will we stop apologizing for what the Bible teaches? And when will Christians begin to stand up and fight for the purity of the gospel? Why do people not want precision with gospel truth? Because it assumes we are sinners who will all meet a holy God someday. That is too much for many to swallow. The gospel declares God's wrath. His insists on His sovereignty. It points to His authority. It requires exclusivity in Jesus Christ alone.

We live in a time where it is common to remove the hard edges of the gospel, things like repentance, sin, hell, and holiness. But without these truths souls are not saved, saints are not sanctified, and Satan ultimately gains a foothold in the church. Later I will list some ways we are to contend for gospel purity, but just know for now that a church finds unity and effectiveness for Christ's kingdom when it fights for the purity of gospel doctrines.

*Trans:* So if you are going to fulfill your duty as a citizen-soldier of Christ's kingdom, you must understand that the church's primary objective is to have undivided conviction for gospel doctrines. But in doing so, the church must also fulfill a 2<sup>nd</sup> duty Paul mentions in v28.

Not only must we have undivided conviction for gospel doctrines, we must also...

## II. Have Unwavering Courage Before Gospel Detractors (28)

I mentioned last week that Satan likes nothing more than to distort the gospel through false teaching. When that fails he tries to divide Christians. If that fails he will then try to distract Christians from the gospel. Verse 28 is evidence of just this. To detract is to draw something away, or distract. Detractors, therefore, are those who take something away. What is it that Satan and his workers most desire to take away? They desire to make it appear as if the gospel is powerless. They of course cannot take power away from the gospel, but they can make it appear powerless.

Paul mentions such detractors of the gospel in v28 telling the church to **not** [be] **frightened in anything by your opponents**. The word **frightened** ( $\pi\tau\omega\mu\epsilon\nu\sigma$ ) is used here for the only time in the entire NT. But it was used to describe a horse who was startled into a panic.

The first time I went horseback riding I was given a horse that was easily startled. It can be quite a terrifying thing for the person riding on the horse. If the horse is startled over something that is harmless, it doesn't matter because the rider of the horse could easily be thrown off. Satan appears really harmful to the gospel, but ultimately he can't do anything to remove its power. So Paul is saying that we are not to be **frightened** by those who oppose the gospel.

Now Paul spends the rest of the verse telling us why Christians don't need to be **frightened** by opposition to the gospel because: a) attacks on the gospel are a sign that those who do the attacking are not really believers,

and b) those attacks received by God's people serve as a sign of their salvation. But first we need to ask who the **opponents** are that Paul speaks about.

There is actually quite a bit of opinions on this. One commentator spent several pages explaining that Paul is referring to non-believing pagans in the Roman Empire who persecuted Christians.<sup>v</sup> Another commentator was pretty adamant that its not pagans, but Jewish false teachers that had infiltrated the church.<sup>vi</sup> Another commentator saw them as pagans, but wasn't as adamant.<sup>vii</sup> And finally, another saw the **opponents** as a reference to both the pagans in the Roman Empire who persecuted Christians, as well as the Jewish false teachers who infiltrated the church.

It's hard to tell who is right. But I agree with the last commentator I mentioned who sees the **opponents** as those inside the church, as well as those outside the church. This really has always been the case throughout history. There have always been tares among the wheat and goats among the sheep within the church. And there have always been enemies outside who attack it.

On the one hand, Paul does mention false teachers in 3:2, calling them "dogs" and also refers to professing brothers in the church who Paul writes with tears in his eyes informing the church that they are "enemies of the cross" whose "*end is destruction*" (3:18-19). So it seems reasonable to conclude that these are included as the **opponents**. On the other hand, the Roman Empire was known for its persecution of Christians accusing them of being atheists because they refused to offer so much as a symbolic pinch of salt on a pagan altar. Paul himself writes from prison. And you remember that when he planted the Philippian

congregation, he was arrested, stripped, beaten and imprisoned by the city magistrates.

Perhaps Paul had the gladiators in mind who fought together against a common foe, say lions and other wild beasts since he just used athletic imagery in v27. Scripture describes Satan as roaring lion, but though we are to resist him, we are never told to fear him. We are called to put God's armor on and stand against him. All the demons that encountered our Lord feared Him (Mt 8:28-30)!

Why should we not fear opponents of the gospel but stand with unwavering courage before them be they governments, neighbors, or fellow family and friends who profess to be Christians themselves? There are two reasons.

#### A. Sign of Destruction for Them, 28a

First, those who oppose the pure gospel reveal that God's judgment is on them. Notice Paul says in v28: **This is a clear sign of their destruction.** This refers to eternal punishment in hell, not annihilation. It's described in 2 Thess 1:4-8 (turn there with me). Paul says:

"Therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecution and in the afflictions that you are enduring. This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering- since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know god and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord" (2 Thess 1:4-9).

It therefore shouldn't surprise us that Jesus Himself described hell as "outer darkness" where there is "weeping and gnashing of teeth" and an "eternal fire" (Mt 25:30,41). The opposition of those to the gospel will result in their final **destruction**. The **destruction** that Paul speaks about has to be hell because it's the opposite of the **salvation** mentioned next.

## B. Sign of Salvation for You, 28b

Why should we not fear opponents of the gospel but stand with unwavering courage before them because their attacks on us are: a) a sign of destruction for them, but also, b) a sign of salvation for you. This is amazing. Look at what Paul says next. He says: **This is a clear sign of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God.**

You know what this means? If you have been opposed because of your gospel purity, it is a sign of the assurance of your salvation. When you are persecuted for the truth, it's a sign that you believe the truth and know the truth. More importantly, it's a sign that you belong to God!

Because of these signs - that of destruction for the enemies of the gospel and salvation for the believers of the gospel - we are to not fear those who oppose the gospel but rather stand with unwavering courage before them. We are to proclaim gospel truth unashamedly and unwaveringly.

I read Psalm 73 earlier in the service because it chronicles the struggles of Asaph who writes the Psalm. He saw the wicked who opposed God as prospering. They seemed to escape trials and enjoy life while growing rich. So he enters God's temple in despair. And there in the presence of God's infinite glory, the Righteous Judge of heaven and earth gave him a glimpse of their final state. He saw that they were marked out for destruction and that their feet were on a slippery slope into hell. When

he realized this, he was no longer panicked. He realized that their plight was not one to lust after, but one to pity. Philippians 1:27-30 is the “Psalm 73” of the NT. Christian, don’t you dare walk away from Christ and the church thinking that the world will give you what you want and need. Don’t be deceived in thinking that God doesn’t love you because it seems the gospel and church is powerless. It’s not. Satan wants nothing more than to sift you like wheat. He roams around seeking whom he may devour. Don’t be alarmed in the battle. Have courage. Our commander and Lord is returning soon. It will end in destruction for those who oppose His truth, but salvation for you who believe and love His truth!

*Trans:* If you are going to fulfill your duty as a citizen-soldier of Christ’s kingdom, you must understand that the church’s primary objective is to have undivided conviction for gospel doctrines. Second she must have unwavering courage before gospel detractors. And finally, note with me a 3<sup>rd</sup> duty. We must also...

### **III. Have Unashamed Comfort In Gospel Difficulties (29-30)**

Paul says in v29: 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. Of course, you truly believed in Christ. But we rejoiced as reformed Christians in God’s sovereign grace because He **granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should believe in Him.** You were brought to faith through the sovereign ministry of the Spirit. It has been ordained by God as to who will be saved “*even as He chose us in Him before the*

*foundation of the world” and “predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will” (Eph 1:4,5).*

But we don’t always view suffering for the gospel as a gift do we? And yet Paul tells us that not only salvation, but also our suffering is the result of God’s providence: **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.** Here’s the beauty in this. The fact that the opponents of the gospel cause us experience the second gift (namely that of suffering) actually indicates that we have truly received the first gift (namely that of salvation)<sup>viii</sup>. I Pet 4:14 reminds us: “If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.”

Suffering is a gift. That’s what Paul is saying here. Do you have comfort in that? Sinclair Ferguson says that God is willing “*to go to any lengths to make us more like His Son. The cross proves that. We can be sure that He will stop at nothing to change us. Suffering is but one of His instruments...Suffering is the friction which polishes our graces. Without it we would be all the poorer as reflectors of the image of His Son*”<sup>ix</sup>. There was the cross before the resurrection for Christ. There is a cross before a crown for us. We must deny ourself, take up the cross and follow after Jesus (Mk 8:34).

If you are suffering because of your belief in the pure gospel know today that your heavenly reward will be greater than any earthly suffering you have. Jesus said, “*Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on My account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward*

*is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets before you” (Mt 5:10-12).*

This is why the apostles viewed their persecution for the sake of the gospel a privilege in Acts 5:41, “rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for His name.” Last week we spoke about not bringing dishonor to Christ’s name. But this week we’re talking about willingly suffering dishonor for His name. Bring dishonor to His name must be avoided, but suffering dishonor for His namesake must be accepted. Whenever you suffer wrong for Christ you experience a closeness and fellowship with Christ who suffered for you on the cross. That’s why Paul will say in chapter 3 that he shares in His sufferings (3:10).

So Paul concludes in v30 by saying that our suffering is no different than his. He tells the Philippians that their suffering is the result of being **engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.** He was opposed by those within the church and imprisoned by those outside the church because Jesus promised that he was a chosen instrument to preach to the Gentiles, kings, and sons of Israel and that “*he must also suffer for My name’s sake*” (Acts 9:15-16). But as he said in v29, suffering for the gospel has been ordained for all Christians, not just Paul.

## Con

We have yet to define the gospel. We’ve talked about unifying around it, but what is it? “The gospel is the good news of the precise details of what God has done in the redeeming work of Jesus Christ.”<sup>x</sup> It’s the message of the holy God providing Christ’s righteousness that sinners must have in order to be accepted in His presence. It’s the message of

God appeasing God's wrath against sinners by pouring out said wrath on Jesus Christ the Son.

The gospel includes precise details like things we've mentioned today: repentance, salvation from hell, God's wrath, the importance of a holy life, etc. Basically, all the things many Christians are unwilling to answer and in so doing don't stand for the gospel. We must contend for gospel purity in the details such as the power of the gospel (the doctrine of election), the penalty of the gospel (a real hell), the penitence of the gospel (repentance, turning from sin is necessary for salvation), the praise of the gospel (the glory of God not man's faith or contribution), and many, many more details are vital.

The question this morning revolves around whether you are engaged in the battle. Do you understand the duty you have to be part of a church that has undivided conviction in gospel doctrine? Do you see the importance of that? Do you see the honor in that? Do you understand your duty to have unwavering courage before gospel detractors? What relationship are you not willing to give up? What aspect of your reputation is so important that you can't be bold for Jesus? And do you understand its your privilege to have unashamed comfort in gospel difficulties. You are blessed, not cursed!

One of my favorite stories of bravery in battle took place during the Battle of Kernstown in Stonewall Jackson's famous Shenandoah Valley Campaign during the Civil War. The intensity of the battle resulted in the bravery of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Virginia Regiment. The soldiers who carried the flags were targets of the enemy not only because it's hard to defend yourself with a weapon and carry a flag at the same time, but also because flags were important markers in battle to help the soldiers know

where the rest of the soldier in the regiment was and where they were heading. But on this day nobody would let the flag lie on the ground. Soldier after soldier carried the flag and was shot down, only for the flag to be picked up by another soldier. It began when Sergeant Ephraim Crist was shot in the head and killed instantly. That's when Lieutenant J. B. Davis picked up the flag and was knocked down by a bullet. Though not dead, he could not carry the flag. So Lieutenant Richard Lee took up the flag and with reckless bravery jumped over a waist high wall separating him from the enemy and began waving it ferociously. The enemy refused to shoot him out of respect for his bravery saying, "Don't shoot that man, he is too brave to die." He was ordered back over the wall where he hurt his leg and could no longer carry the flag. That's when a fourth unknown man grabbed the flag only to be killed almost instantly. Finally, a full colonel, James W. Allen, leaned down from his horse, picked up the flag, and rode to the wall where his 250 surviving troops rallied around him. By the time he got it the flag had fourteen bullet holes and the flagstaff was shot in two. But they still had the flag and the troops bravely and proudly fought for her colors.

My dear brothers and sisters, where is this bravery in the church? Why are Christians so fearful to tell the truth of the gospel? Why are we frightened like startled horses? The gospel is powerful. The gospel is wonderful. The gospel is precious. Let us fight bravely for the gospel. Let us have joy in persevering for Christ as we wave the flag of the gospel before the world! Let us have a church of brave flag bearers of the gospel of Jesus Christ! Let this be what we unify around. Let this be the cause we champion. There is no cost too great for us to suffer on behalf of Christ because He paid the ultimate cost for the church on the

cross in order to redeem us! Therefore, have joy in preserving for Christ, dear Christian.<sup>xi</sup>

Let our prayer be Psalm 27:1-3: “*The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh, my adversaries and foes, it is they who stumble and fall. Though an army encamp against me yet I will be confident.*”

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<sup>i</sup> Nelson’s Complete Book of Illustrations, 498.

<sup>ii</sup> Melick, 89.

<sup>iii</sup> Hendriksen, 81.

<sup>iv</sup> Barclay, 36.

<sup>v</sup> See O’Brien.

<sup>vi</sup> See Silva.

<sup>vii</sup> See Melick.

<sup>viii</sup> Ellsworth Comm, 34.

<sup>ix</sup> Ferguson Comm, 36.

<sup>x</sup> Ellsworth, 32.

<sup>xi</sup> Gwynne, S.C. *Rebel Yell*.