

“Worthy of the Gospel”  
Philippians 1:25-27  
(Preached at Trinity, September 4, 2016)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Paul is writing from his confinement in Rome as he awaits the verdict from the emperor. Will he be sentenced to death or will he be given his freedom? Paul knew the verdict could go either way so he pondered his future of life or death. To die would be great gain for him—to finish his labors upon the earth and enter into eternity to be with Christ. But to live would be of great value in his service to Christ. His conclusion is stated in **Verse 21**- "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain."
2. While the verdict could go either way Paul expressed his confidence that God would deliver him and enable him to return to them for their progress in the faith.  
**Philippians 1:25 NAU** - "Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith,"
3. Christ would receive the glory in his release. The NASB translation of **Verse 26** takes our attention from this. It would be better to translate it,  
**Philippians 1:26 NAU** - "so that your glory might abound in Christ Jesus in me through my coming to you again."
4. When Paul and Silas arrived at Philippi some 10 years earlier they quickly faced opposition in this proud city loyal to Rome and its emperor. You can hear their pride in the charge they brought against them.  
**Acts 16:20-21 NAU** - "These men are throwing our city into confusion, being Jews, <sup>21</sup> and are proclaiming customs which it is not lawful for us to accept or to observe, being Romans."
5. They were beaten and imprisoned. This was history the Philippian church knew well. Paul now turns from his own affairs to the matter of encouraging the Philippians in their own situation. It is a sudden change of attention that Paul introduces with the single word, "Only." Many of the members of the Philippian church were suffering the same persecution Paul and Silas had experienced. Paul writes in **Verse 30** that they were "experiencing the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear *to be* in me."
6. In **Verse 27** Paul admonishes them to faithfulness regardless of his future circumstance. Whether he is able to make a personal visit or not he admonishes them to walk worthy of the Gospel.  
**Philippians 1:27 NAU** - "Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ"
7. What does it mean to conduct ourselves worthy of the Gospel? The word for "conduct" is πολιτεύομαι – It literally means to "live as a citizen." In other words, there are certain patterns of behavior that depend on the place of your citizenship. Citizenship has responsibilities and duties. As Christians our citizenship is in a different realm.  
**Philippians 3:20 NAU** - "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;"

9. What does conduct worthy of the Gospel look like? By the Gospel Paul isn't talking about the content of the Gospel – Christ and Him crucified. The good news that Christ has come to save sinners through His righteous life and death upon the cross which we must receive by faith. Paul is referring to the fruit of the Gospel – the demands of the Gospel. Paul expounds on this in the remainder of the verse.
- I. Unwavering resolve
- A. Paul describes it as standing firm
1. It points to stability in the face of opposition
  2. Paul uses this word in 1 Cor. 16  
**1 Corinthians 16:13 NAU** - "Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong."
  3. The picture is of the Roman soldier who refuses to abandon his post no matter how fierce the battle becomes.
- B. The Gospel demands a commitment to follow after Christ  
**Matthew 16:24 NAU** - "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me."  
**John 12:25-26 NAU** - "He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal. <sup>26</sup> "If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him."
1. The one who conducts himself worthy of the Gospel presses on in spite of earthly circumstances
  2. This has been Paul's point thus far. He has lost his freedom. He doesn't know if he will live or die. But one thing consistently drove Paul—his great desire for Christ to be magnified through his life.
    - a. He saw his imprisonment as an opportunity to advance the Gospel  
**Philippians 1:12 NAU** - "my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel,"
    - b. He saw his suffering as an opportunity to encourage the brethren  
**Philippians 1:14 NAU** - "most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear."
    - c. Whether in life or in death he wanted to see Christ glorified  
**Philippians 1:20-21 NAU** - "Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. <sup>21</sup> For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain."
  3. Paul's commitment to Christ enabled him to stand firm through every difficulty.
- C. There are many things that can diminish our resolve
1. For some it is simply the draw of this world. It is an ever present danger.
    - a. The pleasures and riches of this life can appear irresistible. It has caused the faith of some to suffer shipwreck upon the rocks of worldly pleasures.  
**1 Timothy 6:10 NAU** - "For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."

- b. Jesus described just how serious this is. We tend to dismiss it in our culture.  
**Matthew 13:22 NAU** - "And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful."
- 2. The danger the Philippians were facing has been largely unknown to us. It is known well among Christians in Islamic states today.
  - a. They were facing threats of physical abuse. They were risking the loss of life and property. Paul was experiencing this and so were they.  
**Philippians 1:30 NAU** - "experiencing the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear *to be* in me."
  - b. How would we respond to such a situation? As we see the moral climate of our nation decline it may not be that far off. Will you stand firm? Paul encourages the Philippians, "Do not fear them!"  
**Phil. 1:28 NAU** - "in no way alarmed by *your* opponents" The word means "to be frightened." KJV: "terrified"
- 3. The Gospel demands that we maintain unwavering resolve. Such opposition may come from within our own home.  
**Matthew 10:33-36 NAS** - "But whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven. <sup>34</sup> "Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. <sup>35</sup> "For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; <sup>36</sup> and a man's enemies will be the members of his household."
- 4. Paul says, "stand firm" – "conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the Gospel."

## II. Conduct worthy of the Gospel demands commitment to the body of Christ

- A. Christianity is about the unity of God's people
  - 1. Notice the words of Paul here:  
"in one spirit, with one mind striving together"
  - 2. This is a major theme in this passage. The Gospel unites us together as the body of Christ. Notice the "therefore" at the beginning of **Chapter 2** where Paul will bring this theme to the great crescendo.  
**Philippians 2:2 NAU** - "make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose."
  - 3. Christianity knows nothing of a Christian apart from other Christians. Conducting yourself in a manner worthy of the Gospel demands connectivity with other Christians. We are in a common battle with a united front.

- B. The New Testament stresses this unity over and over
1. We see it in the infant church described in Acts  
**Acts 2:42-44 NAU** - "They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. <sup>43</sup> Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. <sup>44</sup> And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common;"
  2. Paul described this unity in Ephesians 4  
**Ephesians 4:1-6 NAU** - "Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, <sup>2</sup> with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, <sup>3</sup> being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. <sup>4</sup> *There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; <sup>5</sup> one Lord, one faith, one baptism, <sup>6</sup> one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.*"
- C. This unity is of great importance as we are called upon to stand firm in the Gospel
1. We encourage one another, pray for one another. We love one another.  
**1 Thessalonians 5:11 NAU** - "Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing."
  2. We stir up one another to faithfulness  
**Hebrews 10:24-25 NAU** - "and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, <sup>25</sup> not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*, and all the more as you see the day drawing near."
  3. We stand behind one another during times of suffering

III. Conduct worthy of the Gospel demands striving for the faith of the Gospel  
 "with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel"

- A. There are two ways we can look at the word "faith" in **Verse 27** – either subjectively or objectively and sometimes interchangeably.
1. By subjective we see the word as referring to the Christian experience of faith. It refers to the faith in Christ shared by all believers—the lively trust in the perfect work of Christ.  
 This use would fit well here. The faith of the Gospel is a faith that is unwavering. It is an absolute confidence in Christ that leads us to suffer whatever we are called upon to endure. We can also see it used this way in  
**Colossians 1**  
**Colossians 1:22-23** - "yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach-- <sup>23</sup> if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister."

2. By objective we see the word as referring to the system of beliefs that define Christianity, the Christian Creed—often preceded by the article “the” – The Faith. This also fits the context of the passage.
    - a. Paul also uses it this was in **Verse 25**  
**Phil 1:25 NAU** - "Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith,"
    - b. Paul also uses it this way in his other epistles.
      - 1 Timothy 4:1 NAU** - "But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons"
      - 1 Timothy 3:8-9 NAU** - "Deacons likewise *must be* men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain, <sup>9</sup> *but* holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience."
      - 1 Timothy 5:8 NAU** - "But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."
      - 1 Timothy 6:10 NAU** - "For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."
- B. We can interpret this subjectively or objectively
1. Subjectively, we press on in the faith. We are unwavering in our confidence in Christ.
  2. But we also strive together in the faith of the Gospel. The Gospel has substance. Christianity is fixed upon a body of truth. We must not waver on this truth. We are united by this one faith. The Christian faith was being threatened by their opponents—and it is still being threatened today.
  3. This fits the context well. Paul has been commending them in their participation in the Gospel.
  4. Persecution can lead a Christian to go undercover; to blend in in order to avoid conflict. He can refuse to take a strong stand for the Gospel. In this way he denies the faith.
  5. Persecution or conflict can also lead a Christian to water down the demands of the Gospel. He doesn't speak about sin and the wrath of God. This too is denying the faith.
  6. Paul encourages the Philippian Christians to be “in no way alarmed by your opponents.”

#### Conclusion:

1. We are united by the “one faith.” We share the same belief in Christ. We rest in Him alone.
2. There are not many ways to be saved. There is but one way. We share one faith that looks to the one Lord.
3. We must not waver. We must stand "firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;"