

**Conducting Ourselves in a Manner Worthy of the Gospel
(Evangelism and the Church)
Philippians 1:27-30
Part One**

I came across an article in “Christianity Today” entitled, “What do Americans Believe?” The article is based on a survey. The article said that “nearly half of all Americans (46%) could be described as born-again Christians.” The article based this conclusion on responses to the following three questions: (1) Do you believe the Bible is the actual word of God? (2) Have you experienced personal conviction? And (3) are you seeking to lead non-Christians to a point of conversion? I found the criteria they used for identifying various so-called born again Christians disturbing. Why would this be so disturbing? Because the data had nothing to do with the various basic tenets of the Gospel or people’s personal response to those tenets.

You might say Dale you should not be so paranoid about everything. I don’t believe I am paranoid about everything but I know that this survey was messed up. A survey that identifies Christians as born again based on these criteria is totally worthless. If you do not believe this then let me read for you that last statement made in this article “Despite such a large percentage of born-again believers (based on their survey which is 46%), three-fourths of Americans think (according to this same survey) that more than one religion offers a true path to God and just one in six (16%) think their religion is the best path to God.” How could anyone that understood the Gospel answer survey questions like this? Even Christianity Today found this disturbing when it concluded the article with the statement that the church appears to be confused about the gospel.

How many other doors are there?..... The answer is 1 (John 14:6). Our faith is not just the best path to God it is the only path to God.

A person is born again and only born again by transferring their trust from themselves to Jesus Christ alone for their salvation believing that he is in fact the Son of the Living God and that through his death, burial and resurrection he opened a door to heaven that whosoever may enter by faith.

The professing church in America is in a mess. The Church has lost it’s way. The gospel is not being given the priority it needs to be given in the life of the church. What are we going to do in light of all this? We may not be able to dramatically impact the entire professing church in America but we can make sure that we are giving the gospel it’s rightful priority. I would hope that the passage that we will begin to study this weekend will help us to do this.

We have finished examining Phil. 1:12-26. This section of Scripture detailed for us various circumstances in Paul’s life. The underlying principle of this section of Scripture is that human circumstances lie in God’s hands and that God will use those circumstances to advance the gospel.

In examining this section of Scripture we discovered that God used Paul's chains to advance the gospel in VV. 12-14. We discovered that God used Paul's Christian opponents to advance the gospel in VV. 15-18. And we discovered that Paul was fully convinced that God would ultimately use his unfolding crisis to advance the gospel in VV. 19-26.

We are now transitioning into another major section in the book of Philippians. Whereas Phil. 1:12-26 focused on the circumstances of the Apostle Paul, this new section of Scripture will turn it's focus on the Philippians and what is required of them in Paul's absence. The underlying principle of Philippians 1:27 - 2:18 is "Those who have embraced the gospel need to walk in a manner worthy of the gospel they have embraced. This is a wonderful principle. In fact, hopefully many, if not all of you here this weekend would embrace this as the overriding guiding principle of your life.

If you were separated from your Christian wife or husband for some reason and believed that this separation might continue what one thought might you want to share with them? If you were separated from your children and believed that this separation might continue what one thought might you want to share with them? If you were separated from a good Christian friend and believed that this separation might continue what one thought might you want to share with them? I would hope that you would consider sharing with them the thought that the Apostle Paul shared with the Philippians in Philippians 1:27.

Let us read the first part of V. 27 "Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ....." This is such a great statement. It should not be limited to being shared just during periods of extended separations. Hopefully it would become the guiding principle of our lives and shared between us frequently under all conditions. In terms of all the things that are seeking to mold and shape our lives hopefully our understanding and appreciation of the gospel of Christ would totally dominate all other forces when it comes influencing us and affecting our conduct.

When Paul calls them to conduct themselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ what is he in effect saying? It begins by understanding the word "conduct." The word "conduct" (POLITEUESTHE) derives from a Greek word (POLIS) meaning "city, city state." The primary meaning of this verb was "to live as a citizen, discharge one's obligations as a citizen." Paul did not choose this word by accident.

The Philippians were citizens of Rome. You might ask how could the Philippians who were a part of Macedonia be considered citizens of Rome? They were considered citizens of Rome because Philippi was a Roman colony. And because Philippi was a Roman colony the residents of Philippi were considered Roman citizens. There were very few Roman colonies throughout the Roman Empire but Philippi was one of these very special places. And the people in Philippi took this special status extremely seriously. And they believed that because they were Roman citizens they needed to conduct themselves in a certain way.

This is made very clear to us when Paul and Silas were seized and drug before the Philippian authorities in Acts 16 by the owners of a slave girl whom Paul had delivered from a spirit of divination. Listen to **Acts 16:19-21**. It says, **“But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the market place before the authorities, (20) and when they had brought them to the chief magistrates, they said, “These men are throwing our city into confusion, being Jews, (21) and are proclaiming customs which it is not lawful for us to accept or to observe, being Romans.”** The Philippians as Roman citizens understood that as Roman citizens that they should act in certain ways and to fail to act properly was disgraceful.

When Paul chose the word translated “conduct” whose primary meaning was “to live as a citizen or to discharge one’s obligations as a citizen” in order to communicate to the Philippian church it was no accident. He was drawing from something that they knew very well in order to make a spiritual point. The Philippians knew how to live in a manner worthy of their Roman citizenship. He is now exhorting them to live in a manner worthy of their heavenly citizenship when he tells them to conduct themselves in a manner worthy of the gospel. All those who are citizens of heaven have placed their faith in the gospel of Christ and all those who have placed their faith in the gospel of Christ are citizens of heaven.

Paul by concluding the admonition with the phrase “worthy of the gospel of Christ” is drawing the citizens of heaven, which hopefully is everyone of us, to focus on the very heart of the Christian faith, which is the gospel of Christ and to consider our conduct in light of that gospel.

The underlying principle of Philippians 1:27-2:18 is “Those who have embraced the gospel need to walk in a manner worthy of the gospel they have embraced.” As we begin our study of this passage of Scripture, we will be asking this question, “What is the proper way for the citizens of heaven to act as they focus on the gospel of Christ? How should citizens of heaven conduct themselves in light of the gospel of Christ?”

THE CITIZENS OF HEAVEN SHOULD CONDUCT THEMSELVES IN A MANNER WORTHY OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST BY STANDING FIRM IN ONE SPIRIT AND IN ONE MIND.

First of all the citizens of heaven should conduct themselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ by standing firm in one spirit, with one mind (Philippians 1:27-30). Let us read **Phil. 1:27-30** **“Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ; so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; (28) in no way alarmed by opponents - which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and that too, from God. (29) For to you it has been granted for Christ’s sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, (30) experiencing the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear to be in**

me.” In Phil. 1:27-30 Paul acknowledges that the Philippians are being opposed by various adversaries. Paul acknowledges that they are suffering as a result of this opposition. But he exhorts them as the citizens of heaven to walk in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ in spite of the opposition and in spite of the suffering by standing firm in one spirit and with one mind.

How were they to stand firm? The passage says, “in one spirit and with one mind.” What does this mean? Paul is saying in effect that the Philippians must present a united front against their opposition. If we are all citizens of heaven and if we want to walk in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, then we must present a united front against our adversaries. We must all be responding in the very same way whether the attacks coming us are from the world, the flesh or the devil.

Are we doing this as a church? Are we as a church walking in a manner worthy of the gospel by standing firm with one mind and with one spirit against whatever forces that are opposing us as the citizens of heaven? Are we all responding in the very same way? This is hard to answer unless we can get more specific. To help us visualize more clearly what Paul has in mind he follows this statement with two participles which explain what he means. The two participles that Paul uses to help explain what he means by “standing firm in one spirit and with one mind” are “striving” and “alarmed.”

The first participle is “striving.” What does Paul say? **“Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ; so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit and one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.”** The word translated “strive” (SUNATHLEO) means to contend, struggle along with’. The word does not emphasize an individual struggle but rather a collective struggle. But what is this collective struggle that Paul is talking about that we should be engaged in if we are going to make a claim of walking in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ? The collective struggle it says is **“For the faith of the gospel.”**

How should we understand this statement by Paul? I believe that in light of what we have studied in Phil. 1:12-26 which was all about God using circumstances to advance the gospel that we have to assume the advancement of the gospel is still very much in view here in V. 27. Striving together for the faith of the gospel means that we are striving together to advance the gospel no matter what the forces might be that are opposing us.

Paul was speaking to the church at Philippi nearly 2000 years ago when he wrote this epistle. But he is speaking to us today as well. If we as a church are going to walk in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ as citizens of heaven, it depends on every one of us getting on board with the work of striving to advance the gospel, no matter what might be going on around us.

I truly believe that I am working to advance the gospel. In every conversation and every interaction with the unsaved, I am aware of my desire to prepare the way for the sharing

of the gospel. But I realize it is not enough for me to be committed to this task alone. It requires all of us.

Some people might believe that the work of advancing the gospel is the work of professionally trained men. Some churches believe that the work of the people is to bring people to church in order to hear the gospel from the pulpit. This is not what the Scriptures specifically command us to do. Rather the Scriptures call us to go and to preach the gospel (Matt. 28). For us to think that this work belongs to certain other believers and not ourselves is a lie. This is a lie of Satan! We are all very important in this great work. We have all been called to stand firm in this way striving together to advance the gospel. The church was not designed so that only a few gifted people would have the responsibility of advancing the gospel (Acts 8:1,4).

Listen to **Acts 8:1** “**And Saul (Paul) was in hearty agreement with putting him to death. And on that day a great persecution arose against the church in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.**” What did all these Christians do that were scattered under such difficult circumstances? Listen to **Acts 8:4** “**Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word (gospel).**”

What were these people doing? They were walking in a manner worthy of the gospel. They were standing firm, presenting a united front, seeking to advance the gospel in the midst of terrific difficulties. This is what we need to do! The professing church may be confused about the gospel but hopefully we won't be. Hopefully because we know there is one door to heaven and because we believe it is our responsibility to tell others about that door, we will stand firm in one spirit with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.

Let me ask you a question: If everyone in this church were fully caught up in one spirit, with one mind of striving together for the advancement of the gospel of Christ and the world was able to see striving, what would it say to the world? It would be saying to the world that the church of Jesus Christ believes the gospel is immensely important!

CONCLUSION

There is nothing more important than the gospel. It is through the gospel that people are saved and only through the gospel. This is why we must stand firm, laboring together to advance the gospel in the community of Lancaster, Palmdale, and the Antelope Valley no matter what.

If our church can stand firm in prayerfully seeking to advance the gospel we can with a clear conscience declare that we have taken a major step forward in conducting ourselves in a manner worthy of the Gospel of Christ.