



Philippians 1:27-30 United in the Faith

²⁷Whatever 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 the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel ²⁸without 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. ²⁹For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him, ³⁰since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Back Story

1. Paul is in prison in Rome.
2. The citizens of Philippi were conscious of their status as citizens of Rome and proud of it.
3. In the previous section (1:18b-26), he has described his struggles with hostile outside forces.
4. In the current section, he transitions to concern regarding the struggle of the believers in Philippi.
5. Three cords of the Gospel in Philippians 1.
 - a. Defense of the Gospel (verse 7)
 - b. Proclamation of the Gospel (verses 13-18).
 - c. Adornment of the Gospel through worthy living (this section).

B. Significant Words/Phrases

1. **Conduct yourselves.** The Greek root word is the word from which we get the English word ‘politics’. It means to behave, or conduct oneself as a citizen, or recognize or pledge oneself to some law of life.
2. **One Spirit striving together.** The NIV translation of the Greek text is not a word-for-word translation but is rather a ‘compatible thought’ translation. This occasionally causes translation problems and this phrase is a case in point. The word ‘spirit’ is *pneuma* often translated to mean the Holy Spirit, but which also can refer to the human spirit or soul. ‘Striving together’ clearly refers to joint human effort to accomplish a goal. So in context the phrase is probably better translated as ‘be united together in spirit and soul’.
3. **Frightened.** The word *frightened* has the underlying thought of being confronted by the uncontrollable stampede of startled horses. Of course one would be frightened by such a thing, but Paul commands that the church remain in firm resistance to such opposition.
4. **Sign to them.** The word ‘sign’ has the underlying thought of a ‘declaration’ or ‘proof’, so the idea is that the Philippians should take comfort that sooner or later their opponents will wake up to the fact that God will protect His children and condemn their oppressors.

II. CITIZENSHIP

A. Philippians were citizens of Rome

1. Names listed in rolls of citizenship.
2. Same legal position; same privileges; same responsibilities.
3. Roman homeland in miniature.

B. Philippian Believers also citizens of heavenly city

1. Heavenly homeland in miniature.
2. God's laws are their laws.
3. Privileged to be children of God.
4. Their Savior is representing them in their homeland.

III. UNITED STEADFASTNESS IN THE FACE OF OPPOSITION

A. Considering your citizenship, how do you live?

1. Cloistered or engaged.
 - a. In the light of the three cords of the Gospel cloistered living is not appropriate.
 - b. Defending, or proclaiming, or living the Gospel has no effect if everyone else is in exactly the same position.
2. Worthy living requires engaging with the greater society.

B. Steadfastness must be grounded in unity

1. Unity in Spirit.
 - a. In addition to being committed in spirit and soul to the Gospel, one must remember the blessings of the Holy Spirit.
 - 1) The Holy Spirit is the agent of one's spiritual growth.
 - 2) The Holy Spirit nurtures growth in sanctification.
 - 3) The Holy Spirit indwells the believer in the fullness of divine power.
 - b. The unity of the believer in the Spirit is accomplished by God.
2. Unity in action.
 - a. Drivers only in the Kingdom: no passengers. All are called to work together to further the Gospel.
 - b. Each Believer must be willing to be active in their faith.
 - c. Direct action is required, all Believers must actively further the Gospel.
3. Unity in faith.
 - a. Hold the Gospel to be absolute Truth.
 - b. Do not allow pollution of the Gospel by the world's value systems.
 - c. Eph 4:3 Striving together with other believers for unity of the faith is hard work.
 - d. Each believer should be active in the use of their gifting.

C. Obedience and conviction is the basis of steadfastness

1. World is intent at opposing the Kingdom.
2. A bastion of hope for the lost is that 'all will work out in the end'.
 - a. If Believers are not united in sharing the Gospel in the midst of opposition, those without Christ will become comfortable in their 'lostness'.
3. Secular church accepts sectarianism and separation as normal.
4. A tactic of Satan is to deny that God judges.
5. Believers must work together **across denominations** to bring the Gospel to the lost.
 - a. Fearlessness amid the fires of persecution shows the opposition that Believers will be saved and unbelievers condemned.
 - b. Live for the glory of Yeshua and the honor of the Gospel.
 - c. Demonstrate that what is unseen is much more valuable than what is seen.

IV. APPLICATION

A. What does this mean to us in the here and now?

1. Must be convinced in the depth of our soul of the truth of the Gospel. Faith is not a rational, thought out decision; it is a wholly encompassed engagement with God.

Rom 8:16-17 ¹⁶*The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.* ¹⁷*Now if we are children, then we are heirs— heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*

Rom 8:9-10 ⁹*If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.* ¹⁰*For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.*

2. Must not waiver.

Isaiah 46:4 ⁴*Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you.*
2Cor 4:6-12 ⁶*For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," a made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.* ⁷*But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.* ⁸*We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair;* ⁹*persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.* ¹⁰*We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.*

3. Salvation is available to every single person on the planet.

John 5:24 ²⁴*"Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life.*

Eph 2:8-10 ⁸*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith— and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—* ⁹*not by works, so that no one can boast.* ¹⁰*For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

B. Suffering together in the midst of opposition

1. Lone Rangers are easy for Satan to pick-off.
2. John 17:21-23 it is unity (in the midst of difficulty) that causes the world to know Believers are loved by the Father and that the Father sent Yeshua.
3. United and persevering together to advance the Gospel is a sign to the world that God supports His children.
4. Paul reminds his friends in Philippi that they are experiencing the same opposition that he has been facing. Their struggle is no different than his.
5. Paul is an example of striving for the Gospel in the face of opposition.
6. Paul encourages Believers to view their successful perseverance in the face of persecution as a two-sided token.
 - 1) It is a sign of their opponents destruction because they refused to believe the obvious testimony of the Believers' lives.
 - 2) It is also a confirmation of the Believer's ultimate salvation on the final day.
 - a) Suffering can be seen as a gift.
 - b) When suffering is successfully endured it is a sign of the legitimacy of one's faith.
 - c) As believers suffer for the advance of the Gospel they are united in Christ with His suffering which resulted in resurrection.
 - d) Just as grace abounded to Christ in His suffering so it will to us.

7. Absence of suffering/opposition might be an indication that we are not effectively proclaiming the Gospel together.
 - a. Our response to difficulties shows the condition of our heart.

C. Importance of unity

1. The Bible commands one-on-one resolution of strife to avoid hurtful results in the community (Matthew 5:23-25; 18:15-20; Luke 17:3-4)
2. Unity means caring for one-another when struggles come.
3. Unity means encouraging/praying for one-another during difficult times.
4. Less-than-full unity leaves others exposed to Satan's attacks.

V. REFERENCES

- Motyer, J. A. (1984). *The Message of Philippians*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
Thielman, F. (1995). *Philippians*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.