

“Worthy of the Gospel” Philippians 1:27-30

Grace is absolutely free... free to us, but exceedingly costly to God. In order to give us the gift of reconciliation with Him, God paid the highest price by sacrificing His Son. We cannot repay Him for this gift, but we can live in a manner that is consistent with such a gift. We can live in a manner worthy of the gospel.

“worthy”; The adjective form means, “having the weight of (weighing as much as) another thing.”

Your life on one side of the scale, the gospel of Christ on the other

I. Balance your life with the gospel

You don't earn grace

“Merit” = looks forward; I must earn something

God's act of grace changes our lives

Only one exhortation at this point. Discharge your obligations as citizens.

Shift of focus from Paul's circumstances to EXHORTATION

Whether I come and see you or remain absent. Whether I get released or not. If released if I come or not, **YOU FOCUS ON THIS ONE THING**

Take your eyes off of my circumstances; put them on the gospel

“only” = *mono* = focus, singular

Discharge your obligations as citizens

General Christian conduct, Paul uses Jewish metaphor “walking”; Eph. 4:1; Col. 1:10; 1 Thess 2:12

No accident that here he uses a different word, citizenship; privilege

Benefits of Roman citizenship

- Governed by Roman Law; highest privilege
- No taxes
- No torture or death w/o a fair trial
- Right to own, sell, and transfer land; civil lawsuits
- Civil lawsuits

Not just "live as a free citizen"

"Take an active part in the city as a free citizen"

Benefits of heavenly citizenship far greater; so great they change all of life

Gospel re-orders your life

Mark 3:31-35; Who is my father, mother, brothers?

Specifically, we discharge our obligation as citizens of heaven by standing firm

II. Stand firm for the gospel

Stand firm – 1 Cor. 16:13

Stand firm – soldier remaining at his post

Common image for Paul – 2 Timothy:3-4

A. Stand firm by striving

Athletic imagery; contests provided type of preparation for war

1:30; footrace or fight; "fight the good fight"

1 Cor. 9:24-27; Why? 1 Cor. 9:23

B. Stand firm together; remain unified

Common Commander; One Spirit – Eph. 2:18; 4:4; 1 Cor. 12:13

Spirit is the key to unity in the church; division "grieves" the Spirit
Unity is evidence of the presence of the Spirit

One mind

Common objective; common enemy; common strategy

Next week – unity that comes through humility; example of Christ

C. Stand firm courageously

Not alarmed

Startling a horse

Ex – persecution by Nehemiah's opponents; psychological warfare

Goal – stop the work

Who are these opponents?

Cf. Satan, anti-Christ

Ex – Paul's first visit; Roman authorities

Audience – the jailer, the slave girl; 1 Thess. 2:2

Same struggle in which Paul is now engaged. He is a prisoner of the Empire. Accusation against Paul?

Ex – refusing to worship the Emperor

Holy lifestyle was constant rebuke to pagan neighbors. They could try to be gracious, but it would feel offensive to many. "We no longer go to the temple."

"sign," "evidence," "omen"

Your ability to stand in unity, boldness and strength, along with humility, even when persecuted, gives evidence of the supernatural.

D. Stand firm sacrificially

You have been *graced* not only with faith in Christ, but you also have been *graced* with suffering for Christ.

“Promises” of the Bible that no one wants to claim; singleness

Gospel advances through the sacrifice of God’s people

Greatest advancement of the gospel in last 150 years. More martyrs than previous 1800 years combined

We can’t pay Christ back

Christ expects us to suffer for Him in this life. That is normal. “if they persecuted Me, they will persecute you.” Closer identification, greater persecution.

Cf. Phil. 3:10.

Not suffering in general; this is true, but not the point; Rom. 8:17-30

In what sense are we followers of Christ if there is no cross in our lives? Primary image of Christianity is what?! A CROSS. Not a recliner.

We don’t add to the work of the cross through our sufferings; rather, we proclaim the finished work of the cross through our sufferings.

Why have we not suffered for the gospel? We haven’t been striving for the gospel but for our own comfort. We haven’t been striving together (we have been fighting one another).

Conclusion

How is God calling you to realign your life for the gospel?