

Monday, March 11th

Read Verses Philippians 1:27-30

Life Worthy of the Gospel

27 Whatever 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 gospel²⁸ without 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.²⁹ For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him,³⁰ since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.

We start this week's reading with Paul's amazing summary statement of the Christian life. The question we all must answer is, are we living lives worthy of the gospel? Above all things, faith and its fruit of love fits the worth of God and the gospel.

The ancient Greek word translated "conduct" means literally, "to live as a citizen." Paul told the Philippians to be good, patriotic citizens of the kingdom of God. He also wanted them to be accountable before him, as he planned to check in on them. He wanted the Philippian church to stay together as one body with unity to be put to a productive purpose, so that an increasing trust and belief in the Good News of Jesus Christ would be promoted among those who already believed and among those who had yet to believe.

Paul goes on to encourage them to not be frightened. When our spiritual enemies fail to make us afraid, they have failed completely because they really have no other weapon than fear and intimidation. The Philippians had the same kind of conflict Paul had when he was with them and the same conflict Paul faced in Rome. The battle was to continue to walk right with the Lord and proclaiming the gospel when persecuted and being under attack.

Paul did not see himself as a victim. He believed he was under the sovereign hand of the living God. Instead of his imprisonment bringing fear and discouragement Paul was modeling contentment in the face of hardship. Paul desired to give the Philippians hope in their pain and hardship and strength to be bold and to choose to look at their circumstances as an opportunity for spiritual growth.

"Handling Difficult Circumstances." In Touch Ministries – Home, 26 Nov. 2018, www.intouch.org/read/magazine/daily-devotions/handling-difficult-circumstances.

Guzik, David. "Enduring Word Bible Commentary Philippians." Enduring Word, David Guzik https://Enduringword.com/Wp-Content/Uploads/2016/04/header_logo.Svg, 23 Aug. 2018, enduringword.com/bible-commentary/philippians-1/.

Tuesday, March 12th

Read Verses Philippians 2:1-4

Imitating Christ's Humility

2 Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. ³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

Therefore – is Paul's way of connecting the thought from yesterday's reading. He reminds his readers how to stand strong for the Lord against *external* conflicts as he now turns to telling them how to act against *internal* conflicts in the body of Christ.

"If there is any", introduces the basis for Paul's exhortation to love be united and have and humility among believers. He asks a series of rhetorical questions knowing full well there was already consolation, comfort and fellowship of Spirit. 2 Corinthians 1:3 says that God is the God of all comfort. There is no circumstance beyond His comfort. However, the idea behind the word comfort in the New Testament is something more than soothing sympathy. It has the meaning of strengthening, of helping and of making strong. The idea behind this word is communicated by the Latin word for comfort (*fortis*), which also means "brave." The love of God in our life makes us strong and makes us brave.

Each of these gifts – consolation in Christ, comfort of love, fellowship of the Spirit, affection and mercy – are communicated to us both in a direct, spiritual way from Jesus, and through Jesus' people through their interaction with others. The Holy Spirit fills, guides and moves in our lives in a powerful and precious way.

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition, is the first step to a unity that is a deep and abiding unity. In the flesh, we are often motivated by selfish ambition or conceit. Much of what we do is not done out of love for others, but out of our own desire for advancement or promotion. Conceit is thinking too highly of one's self, of having an excessive self-interest and self-preoccupation. It could be more literally translated "empty glory".

The next step to the kind of unity described in Philippians 2:2 is completely contradictory to the attitude of the world. As we put away our selfish ambitions, our conceit and our tendencies to be high-minded and self-absorbed will naturally turn to have a greater concern for the interests and needs of others.

If I consider you above me and you consider me above you, then a marvelous thing happens. We have a community where everyone is looked up to and no one is looked down on.

Guzik, David. "Enduring Word Bible Commentary Philippians." Enduring Word, David Guzik
https://Enduringword.com/Wp-Content/Uploads/2016/04/header_logo.Svg, 23 Aug. 2018,
enduringword.com/bible-commentary/philippians-1/.

Wednesday, March 13th

Read Verses Philippians 2:5-11

⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

⁶ Who, being in very nature^l God,

did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

⁷ rather, he made himself nothing

by taking the very nature of a servant,

being made in human likeness.

⁸ And being found in appearance as a man,

he humbled himself

by becoming obedient to death—

even death on a cross!

⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place

and gave him the name that is above every name,

¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,

in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

¹¹ and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,

to the glory of God the Father.

Christianity, of all the worlds' major religions, teaches that God came to earth in Jesus Christ and become subject to suffering and death Himself. It is illogical that God, the "creator of all creation", and that Jesus who was present with God the Father from the very beginning and through whom the universe was created, could have pain inflicted on him by lesser beings. He was God yet He suffered. He experienced weakness. He knew firsthand rejection and betrayal, poverty and abuse, disappointment and despair, bereavement, torture and death.

But He is so committed to our ultimate happiness that He willingly plunged to the greatest depths of suffering Himself. He understands us. He has been there, and He assures us that He has a plan to eventually wipe away every tear. Here we see the ultimate strength – a God who is strong enough to voluntarily become weak and submerge himself into vulnerability and darkness out of love for us. Here we see the greatest possible glory – the willingness to lay aside all His glory out of love for us. God is the King who came to earth and went not to a throne but to a cross.

These verses, often called the Christ Hymn, affirms God raised Jesus from the dead and has given Him the place of highest honor and the name above all other names. The entire creation, including spiritual powers and angels, humans on the earth and those who have died, will one day acknowledge the supreme authority and power of Jesus Christ as Lord.

Keller, Timothy. *Walking with God through Pain and Suffering*. Penguin Books, 2016.

NLT Study Bible. Carol Stream, IL, Tyndale House Pub., 2008.

Thursday, March 14th

Read Verses Philippians 2:12-18

Do Everything Without Grumbling

¹² Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

¹⁴ Do everything without grumbling or arguing, ¹⁵ so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.” Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky ¹⁶ as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain. ¹⁷ But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. ¹⁸ So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.

Paul starts his exhortation with “therefore”. This is meant to highlight the connection between the obedience Jesus showed in yesterday’s passage and the obedience Paul expected the Philippians to emulate as followers of Jesus.

When Paul instructs his audience to continue to work out their salvation, we know he did not mean “work so as to earn your own salvation.” Such a statement would contradict the whole of Paul’s gospel. What Paul did mean is to call the Philippians to put forth real effort into their Christian lives. This is not to work their salvation in the sense of accomplishing it, but to see it evident in every area of their lives. When we work out our salvation with fear and trembling it is not meant to be the fear of hell or damnation, but instead the righteous and awe-filled reverence of God every believer should have.

Paul’s teaching of why Christians must work out their salvation with fear and trembling is because God is working in them. There is a living well within us, we are to keep drawing from this inexhaustible resource. God’s work in us extends to transform our will and should impact our desires and actions.

Because Paul specifically used terms that were used to describe Israel’s complaining towards God during the Exodus, this section is probably meant to call out the Philippians’ attitude towards God. Perhaps they resented God because of their present hardships. However, Christians should not be like rebellious Israel. Through the display of a non-complaining spirit, we show ourselves to be true followers of God.

Paul looked forward to what might be his imminent martyrdom and expected the Philippians to be glad and rejoice with him. Paul wasn’t being morbid by asking the Philippians to take joy in something as depressing as his death. Yet he did ask the Philippians to see his death as something that would bring glory to God. This is a theme repeated from the first chapter in his letter to the Philippians.

Guzik, David. “Enduring Word Bible Commentary Philippians.” Enduring Word, David Guzik
https://Enduringword.com/Wp-Content/Uploads/2016/04/header_logo.Svg, 23 Aug. 2018,
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Friday, March 15th

Read Verses Philippians 2:19-24

Timothy and Epaphroditus

¹⁹ I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. ²⁰ I have no one else like him, who will show genuine concern for your welfare. ²¹ For everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. ²² But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. ²³ I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how things go with me. ²⁴ And I am confident in the Lord that I myself will come soon.

“I hope in the Lord” is Paul’s way of showing his heart of true reliance upon the Lord. He wanted to see Timothy among the Philippians but recognized that it would happen God’s way and in God’s timing.

When Paul sent Timothy, he sent his best. A man who showed a pastor’s heart and had great concern for his sheep. He recognized just how rare this kind of heart was when he observed how most seek their own, not the things which are of Christ. Paul wasn’t expecting to hear problems from the Philippians, instead, he expected that he would be encouraged when he heard Timothy’s positive report of how they were doing. Paul was being careful to help the Philippians realize it wasn’t that he did not want to visit in person, but rather explain clearly how qualified Timothy was and that he also hoped to come himself.

We don’t know if Paul made it back to visit Philippi. He may have had a proposed forth missionary journey that ended in a second Roman imprisonment, and ultimately his Martyrdom. The route and timing of this fourth journey is quite tentative, but if he did return to Philippi it may have been around AD 65-68.

Guzik, David. “Enduring Word Bible Commentary Philippians.” Enduring Word, David Guzik
https://enduringword.com/Wp-Content/Uploads/2016/04/header_logo.Svg, 23 Aug. 2018,
enduringword.com/bible-commentary/philippians-1/.

Smit, Galen. “When Did Paul Go to Phillipi?” *EBible*, 2015, ebible.com/questions/11670-when-did-paul-go-to-phillipi.