



Striving Together For The Faith

As the world becomes more and more perverse each day, Christians must remain strong and united in the faith. The call to live differently from the unsaved permeates the Bible. God commanded His people, whether it be under the old covenant or the new covenant, to be separate – holy – from the world (cf: [1 Peter 1:15-16](#)). The Apostle Paul reiterated this point many times in his epistles and we find that again here in our passage today.

Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; in no way alarmed by your opponents—which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and that too, from God. [Phil 1:27-28](#)

In [Ephesians 4:1](#) Paul used very similar phrasing: ***“I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called.”*** He then explained what that worthy walk manifests itself as... ***“with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” [Eph 4:2-3](#)***

In our complimentary Philippians passage, Paul omits a few specifics, perhaps because the church was already doing such things. Maybe no detailed reminder was necessary. However, just as he did in [Ephesians 4:4-6](#), he exhorts these believers to unite (or remain united) in ***one spirit and one mind*** in their ***faith of the gospel***. The united body of Christ is a potent, outward example of Christ living and working in believers.

But that unification cannot be at the expense of truth, specifically the true gospel of Christ. There are many deceitful versions of the gospel floating around, all of which have *some* truths, but lack the saving power of Christ’s real gospel. For example, the omission of the requirement for repentance, the addition of man-made traditions, or the obligation to obey Old Testament laws all rob Christ of glory and the acknowledgment of His full propitiation for our sins. These are, as we read throughout Paul’s letters to the Galatians and Corinthians, *false* gospels. Therefore, it is upon believers to carefully test and examine what we are taught and only unite around the one true biblical gospel (cf: [1 Thes 5:21](#), [1 John 4:1](#)).

Paul says that as we stand firm in one spirit we are to ***strive together***. Looking at the Greek [synathleō](#), it reminds me of those laboring in perfect sync. Remember seeing in old films when two men working together used sledgehammers to drive spikes in railroad ties? As one



hammer came up the other was coming down. Their synchronous labor was like clockwork and much more productive than if done alone.

The unity of believers, laboring together for the gospel in a common faith, is impactful and scares the lost world. The true gospel is a fearsome and terrifying thing to those who refuse to repent and believe, as God has clearly revealed Himself in creation and allows no excuses for agnosticism (see [Romans 1:19-21](#)). Therefore, those perishing often oppose and oppress true believers. Paul reminds us ***not to be alarmed*** or frightened by the world's harsh reaction to Christ-like behavior, because when we live our lives in a ***manner worthy*** of our calling, it is ***a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for [us]***.

The Greek word rendered "sign" here ([endeixis](#)) speaks of proof or demonstrative evidence. It is something that is very clear and irrefutable, much like a criminal leaving their DNA at a crime scene. And conversely, this is the irrefutable proof of our ***salvation!*** Standing firm in ***faith of the gospel***, even when it is unpopular, politically incorrect, or even illegal to do so, gives us true assurance of our salvation. There is nothing more comforting than knowing for sure that your soul belongs to Christ forever, and this assurance allows us to be a living testimony to the indisputable proof of God's existence and plan of salvation.

Finally, as we've seen time and time again in our studies, our faith, unity, and salvation are all ***from God***. We cannot do this ourselves or outside submission to the Lord and His perfect will. These three things all come from and are sustained by God. What we need to do is surrender ourselves and our will to Him in humility and obedience, and He'll work out his plan perfectly in and through us (cf: [Rom 8:28](#)).

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