

INTRODUCTION

1. Today is a historical day in the life of our church as we celebrate 7 years of ministry together—7 years as a church and 7 years as your pastor.
2. Through our 7 years together, we have experienced many things—some good and some bad.
3. The good has consisted of many things like seeing someone changed by God’s marvelous grace.
4. The bad has been things like the loss of members or leaders.
5. There have been both additions and losses but unfortunately we focus only on the loss and lose our focus on *the big picture*.
6. If you’re like me you don’t want to stay focused on the losses but you want to focus on what God is doing in those moments in your life.
7. One thing I think of in these times is what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 10:3.
8. He says, “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh.”
9. That verse is so helpful because it is so easy to think that we are at war with people.

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10. But even as Paul mentions in Ephesians 6:13, “our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.”
11. We are at war but not with each other.
12. The war is against Satan our adversary.
13. And that war began in the Garden of Eden when man fell into sin.
14. God said to the serpent or Satan in Genesis 3:15, “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.”
15. This morning as we celebrate our 7 years together, I want to remind you of *the big picture*.
16. In order to do that, I want to have you to turn in your Bibles to Philippians 1:27-30.
17. In the verses leading up to our text, verses 19-26, Paul states that he was confident of being released from prison because of the prayers of the Philippians and the work of the Holy Spirit, and now in verses 27-30 he wants them to understand that whether he is released or not, they are to conduct themselves in a manner worthy of the Gospel.

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18. In other words, we shouldn't be focused so much on the behavior of others but on ours because how we conduct ourselves is extremely important.
19. We can either bring honor to the gospel we preach or a reproach.
20. Our manner of living is a testimony either to the power of the gospel in changing our lives or it's a confirmation that we've never been changed and are still in our sins.
21. Warren Wierbse said that "the most important weapon against the enemy is not a stirring sermon or a powerful book; it is the consistent life of believers" (The Bible Exposition Commentary).
22. As recipients of the gospel we have experienced a new life and as such we're to walk in that newness of life.
23. That also means that there will be times when things are uncomfortable or even feel like they are unbearable but we must remember that God is at work as he says in verse chapter 2, verse 13.
24. So to help them with this new manner of living, Paul exhorts the Philippians to follow after behavior that is always consistent with the gospel.
25. According to verse 26 he wanted their "rejoicing" for him to be "more abundant in Jesus Christ" when he came to them

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but even more he wanted them to conduct themselves as loyal citizens of heaven.

26. Rejoicing in Jesus Christ includes with it the responsibility of holy living.
27. He says in verses 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 will 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 your 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.”
28. In verse 27, the phrase, “Only conduct yourselves” is one Greek word (*politeuomai*) and it is “the main verb in verses 27-30” (MacArthur).
29. *Politeuomai* comes from the root word *polis* (city) “which in earlier times usually referred to the city-states to which the inhabitants gave their primary allegiance” (MacArthur).
30. James Montgomery Boice says, “In our day it is possible for a person to live in a city and yet feel no attachment to it, and a person can be a citizen of a country without participating in its government or in public life. This was not possible for a citizen of a Greek polis. The polis was his life. Its laws were

part of his being. Its customs were something of which he was proud. He knew all about it, and he knew practically all its inhabitants. The polis demanded his complete loyalty, and he gave it willingly. To him it was the best thing in life” (Philippians, 87).

31. Politeuomai then “carries the basic meaning of being a citizen” (MacArthur). But not just any kind of citizen, “by implication, it means being a good citizen” (MacArthur).
32. The lexicons define this word as “live, behave, conduct oneself” (Friberg), or to “conduct one’s life” (UBS, Louw-Nida) referring to a “way of life” (McGee).
33. The citizenship that Paul has in mind here is not just to Rome or to Philippi which considered itself a “mini Rome” (Keener). Their citizenship was in “heaven” (3:20) which affected their manner of living in Philippi as well as the church.
34. In other words, Paul is saying, “Remember that you have a higher allegiance calling you to faithful conduct” (Moises Silva, Philippians, p.90) and that allegiance is to “the gospel of Christ” (v.27).
35. You are to “behave as citizens” (Vincent) of heaven.
36. The word “worthy” (axios) means “of like value” (Wuest).
37. Kenneth Wuest says, “The saints are to see to it that their

manner of life weighs as much as the gospel they profess to believe, or their words will not have weight. That which gives weight to a Christians words, is the fact that his manner of life befits, is congruous to, corresponds with the gospel he preaches” (Word Studies in the Greek NT).

38. “Believers are to have integrity, i.e., live consistent with what they believe, teach and preach” (MacArthur Study Bible).
39. “They must conduct their lives in a manner appropriate to the gospel of Christ” (EBCNT).
40. Paul says it this way in Ephesians 4:1-3: “I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to *walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, 2 with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, 3 endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*”
41. In other words, walk in humility, gentleness, longsuffering, and love—this will be the bond that keeps “the unity of the Spirit.”
22. When he wrote to the Colossians, his prayer for them was that they “*walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God*” (1:10).
23. Walking *worthy* is a call to “fully pleasing” the Lord; it is living your life “of like value” to the gospel of Christ.

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24. Now in the remainder of verse 27 through verse 30, he tells them *how* they are to “let [their] conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ” (v.27).
25. He gives 3 ways they are to do this.
26. The first is to *stand fast*.

I. Stand Fast (v.27b-c)

“Stand fast” Gr.steko, “to persevere” (Strong), refers to “firm and persistent standing” (Vincent). It “emphasizes the firm, dignified attitude of Christ” (Vincent).

“The word was used of a soldier who defended his position at all costs, even to the point of sacrificing his life. *Figuratively, it refers to holding fast to a belief, conviction, or principle without compromise, regardless of personal cost*” (John MacArthur, *Philippians*, p.86).

Therefore it is to “stand firm” (Kittel), “be steadfast” (BAGD) or “stand firm and hold one’s ground” (Wuest) “regardless of danger or opposition” (MacArthur).

John MacArthur says, “Standing firm is both positive and negative. It is to stand for God and against Satan, to stand for truth and against falsehood, to stand for righteousness and against sin...Paul was not afraid of ridicule, hardship, suffering, or death. His convictions were firm and unwavering, so that he did not compromise divine truth. On such matters he was unshakeable. His one fear was that he would be disqualified from ministry” (*Philippians*, pp.86-87).

A. Believers Are to Stand Firm in the Lord

1. Paul uses the imperative form of this verb in 4:1

“Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my

joy and crown, so *stand fast in the Lord*, beloved.”

This is “a command with almost a military ring to it. Like soldiers in the front line, believers are commanded to hold their position while under attack. They are not to collapse under persecution and compromise, to fail under testing and complain, or to yield to temptation and sin” (John MacArthur, *Philippians*, 268).

2. In 1 Thess.3:8 he said to the Thessalonians, “For now we live, if you *stand fast in the Lord*.”

B. Believers Are to Stand Firm in the Faith

1. 1 Cor.16:13 says, “Watch, *stand fast in the faith*, be brave, be strong.”
2. 2 Thess.2:15 says, “Therefore, brethren, *stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught*, whether by word or our epistle.”

C. Believers Are to Stand Firm in Liberty

Gal.5:1 says, “*Stand fast therefore in the liberty* by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.”

D. Believers Are to Stand Firm Against the Devil

1. Eph.6:11 says, “Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to *stand against the wiles of the devil.*”
2. Eph.6:13 says, “Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to *stand.*”

E. Believers Are to Stand Firm in One Spirit (Phil.1:27)

1. “One spirit and one mind” “strongly suggests that both are descriptions of Christian unity of thought and action similar to the expression in Acts 4:32" (EBCNT) which says, “Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common.”

2. This is not a reference to the Holy Spirit

The context “seems to indicate that he is speaking of the believer’s human spirit” since the focus is on “believer’s attitudes” (MacArthur).

3. “With one mind” is often translated “with one soul” (psyche) but “mind” seems more appropriate because Paul is speaking of personal attitudes and perspectives.
4. To “stand fast in one spirit, with one mind” is

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referring to unity in the church

- a) According to Prov.6:19, God hates discord
- b) Unity in the church is one of Jesus' great passions
 - (1) He told His disciples in John 13:34-35, “A new commandment I give to you, that *you love one another*; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have *love for one another*.”
 - (2) In His high priestly prayer in John 17:21-22, He prayed that all who would believe in Him “may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. 22 And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are .”

“That amazing request was answered in the spiritual unity that actually does exist in the body of Christ. Believers share the eternal life imparted by God in the new birth, so that they are one with the Lord and with each other” (John MacArthur, *Philippians*, 89).

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- c) Paul desired to see the practical outworking of that true spiritual oneness in the life of the Philippians
 - (1) He told them in 2:1-5 (read)
 - (2) In 4:2 he implored “Euodia and...Syntyche to be of the *same mind in the Lord*” and for the rest of the church to “help these women” also (v.3).

- d) Christian unity is essential in the church for the gospel

If the church is split then the gospel is hindered!

- (1) Paul told the believers at Rome in 12:3 “not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.”
- (2) In verses 16-18 he said, “Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion. 17 Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. 18 If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all

men.”

- (3) To the factious church at Corinth he exhorted them “by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Cor.1:10).

Holding their ground in Christian unity wasn’t all that he desired of the Philippians, he also wanted them to:

II. Strive Together (vv.27c-28)

He says in verse 27, “striving together for the faith of the gospel.”

James Montgomery Boice says, “If believers will conduct themselves in a manner that leads to Christian unity, then they will find that this also leads them to strive together to advance the Christian gospel. The result will be an aggressive Christianity” (Philippians, pp.89-90).

A. We Must Labor Together (v.27c)

“Striving” Gr.sunathleo, “is a compound Greek word, composed of the preposition sun (with) and the noun athleo, which means to compete in a contest, especially in a sport such as wrestling. It is the term from which the

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English words *athlete* and *athletics* are derived” (John MacArthur, *Philippians*, p.91).

Kenneth Wuest says it “refers to an athletic contest in which a group of athletes co-operates as a team against another team, working in perfect co-ordination against a common opposition. Paul is exhorting the members of the Philippian church to work together in perfect co-ordination just like a team of Greek athletes” (Word Studies in the Greek NT).

This term “conveys the need for joint effort” (EBCNT).

We need to be “laborers working together in a common cause” (Friberg).

1. Paul always included others in his labors
 - a) In Rom.16:3-4 he said for the church to “Greet Priscilla and Aquila, *my fellow workers in Christ Jesus*, 4 who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.”
 - b) Euodia and Syntyche who he exhorts in Phil.4:3 “*labored with me in the gospel*, with Clement also, and the rest of *my fellow workers*, whose names are in the Book of Life.”
 - c) In Col.4:7-12 he says, “Tychicus, a beloved

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brother, faithful minister, and *fellow servant in the Lord*, will tell you all the news about me. 8 I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that he may know your circumstances and comfort your hearts, 9 with Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will make known to you all things which are happening here. 10 Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, with Mark the cousin of Barnabas (about whom you received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him), 11 and Jesus who is called Justus. *These are my only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are of the circumcision*; they have proved to be a comfort to me. 12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.”

2. The church must labor together

a) There are no solo's in the body of Christ

Rom.12:4-5 says, “For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and *individually members of one another*.”

- b) We are to collectively minister our gifts to one another

1 Cor.12:7-12 says, “But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one *for the profit of all*: 8 for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, 10 to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. 11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills. 12 For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.”

- c) Just the mention of the “one another’s” in the NT indicates that we are to work together

B. We Must Labor Together in the Same Purpose (v.27c)
“Striving together *for the faith of the gospel*”

1. “The faith of the gospel” refers to the Christian faith (MacArthur)
2. In other places, Paul calls it “the gospel of Christ”

(Gal.1:7), and “the glorious gospel” (1 Tim.1:11).

3. Jude refers to it as “the faith which was one for all handed down to the saints” (Jude 3, NASB).

“Striving together not only advances the faith of the gospel but also halts the advance of whatever opposes it” (MacArthur).

C. We Must Not Be Terrified By Our Adversaries (v.28)

“Terrified” Gr.pturo, “to frighten (Robertson), “to startle. The metaphor is from a timid [or scared] horse” (Rienecker). “It refers to serious , fearful concern” (MacArthur).

John Gill says, “Not by Satan, though a roaring lion, for Christ is greater than he; nor by the world which Christ has overcome; nor by false teachers, though men of art and cunning; nor by violent persecutors, who can do no more than kill, the body; let not the power, the rage, the cunning, or the violence of one or the other, move, discourage, or affright from a close attachment to the Gospel and the truths of it.”

1. Our *adversaries* is a sign from God of their *perdition*

“Proof” Gr.endeixis, “refers to proving, or giving evidence, that something is true” (MacArthur).

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In the footnotes of the Geneva Study Bible, it says:
“We ought not to be discouraged but rather encouraged by the persecutions which the enemies of the Gospel imagine and practise against us: seeing that the persecutions are certain witnesses from God himself both of our salvation, and of the destruction of the wicked.”

2 Thess.1:8-9 says when Jesus comes with His angels, He will come in “flaming fire *taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.* 9 These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.”

2. Our *adversaries* is also a sign from God of our *salvation*

“The opponents of the gospel give twofold evidence that testifies against them and for believers”
(MacArthur).

So Paul says do “not in any way [be] terrified by your adversaries” as you “strive together for the faith of the gospel” because it has been given to you, on behalf of Christ to:

III. Suffer for Christ’s Sake (vv.29-30)

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He says, “For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, 30 having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear is in me.”

A. We Are Not to Be Terrified or Surprised by Suffering
(v.29)

1. Because it “has been granted” to us “on behalf of Christ”

“Granted” Gr.charizo, “to give, render or grant graciously” (MacArthur)

- a) We have been graciously granted salvation

Eph.2:4-8 says, “But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is the gift of God.*”

- b) We have also be graciously granted suffering

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Jesus said in Matthew 10:22, 24-25:

“And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved...A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more will they call those of his household!”

2. When you live a godly life you will suffer

2 Tim.3:12 says, “Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus *will suffer persecution.*”

B. We Are Going to Experience the Same Kind of Conflict Paul Experienced (v.30)

1. Mat.5:11 says you will be “reviled...[they will] say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.”
2. Lk.6:22 says men will “hate you...exclude you, and revile you, and cast out your name as evil.”
3. Jn.16:2 says they will “put you out of the synagogues [and kill you].”
4. Heb.11:36-39 sums it up when it says, “Still others had trial of *mockings and scourgings, yes, and of*

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chains and imprisonment. 37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented; 38 of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. 39 And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise.”

CONCLUSION

1. James Boice writes, “It may be that God will call you to bear a testimony like that. It may not be as dramatic as Micaiah’s, but it may result in persecution. You may do it in a quiet way, and no one may ever hear of your witness. No one will know of your courage. But God knows. And your witness will go down in the books of eternity as evidence that you were a Christian who lived as God called you to live and who bore the testimony God called you to bear. History will bear out that the things spoken by you were true, and your conduct will be vindicated. If you will see persecution in this light, then you will see it for what it really is, a gift from the hand of God” (Philippians, pp.96-97).
2. Are you standing firm, striving together and suffering for the gospel?
3. If the answer is no then you’re not living consistently with the gospel that you proclaim.

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4. Repent and embrace the gospel of Jesus Christ because “it is the mandate of the church to stand...strive, and to suffer for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is for this ‘that we have been destined’ (1 Thess.3:3) (John MacArthur, *Philippians*, 97).

5. Let’s pray.