

Living the Gospel: Its Application into Everyday Life as Citizens of the City of God

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Bible Text: Philippians 1:27-28; 3:20; Hebrews 11:9-11

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I trust you have your Bible or your iPhone app open, one of the two. Josh, is that what you're doing? Let's turn to Philippians 1:27. I've got just a couple of announcements to make. First of all, congratulations to Dan and Jamie R. and the birth of Lydia Joy R. and she is in Room 387 at Womack if any of you can get by maybe afterwards or tomorrow and see her. Obviously you want to make sure she's still in before you make that trip but Lydia Joy R. and the birth of their little baby. Congratulations to them. Then Alicia M. is also in Womack. Roman's wife. Roman is out in the field. She's having surgery, had it this morning, now recovering and she's on the second floor of Womack. Any other announcements I need to make before we get into the text? Any at all?

Alright here we are. Here's our title "Living the Gospel or the Application of the Gospel in Everyday Living." That's what we want to talk about is how does this Gospel, this truth, relate to everyday living so let's look at Philippians 1:27 and 28. So let me remind you that Philippians is one of what we call the prison epistles. That means it was written by Paul when he was in prison. What's an epistle, someone? It's a letter, that's right. An epistle is a letter. How many epistles did Paul write? Thirteen. He wrote 13 letters or 13 epistles. This is one of the last ones. Who is he writing to? Who is Paul writing to? The church where? At Philippi. So he's writing to Christian believers who live in Philippi. Writing to Christians who live in Philippi from where? Where is he writing from? From prison, where? Rome. So that's just the conditions. We all get a sense. New Christians in here, old Christians in here, some know that, some don't so we need to see where we're at.

Now let's look at verse 27, "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ." Here are his instructions to these Christians at Philippi. "You Christians at Philippi, my brothers and sisters in Christ, only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent," he's saying that because he's not sure he's going to be released, "I may hear of your affairs," I want to hear about what you're doing. I want to hear about your receipt of this letter; how it applies to your life; how you're making progress, "that ye," notice please, "stand fast in one spirit, with one mind," notice please, "striving together for," what? "The faith of the gospel. And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God."

Let's pray.

Father, as we do our best to teach your word tonight and as we do our best to honor you and as we do our best to communicate truth, I pray that you would come and be with us in this assembly. Come and fill us with your Holy Spirit. Come and work in ways that only you can. In Jesus' name. Amen.

So it is a real joy to be with you tonight in Duane's absence and I want to take advantage of my time with you and really focus tonight only on this little section right here, "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ." So that's going to be our whole text for the entire night. I just want to unpack that as much as we can. I want to see how much we can unpack that area, "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ." So I remind you by showing you this picture that I like to go to where? Where is this website? blueletterbible.org and I want you as a disciple in this room to go to blueletterbible.org often in your Bible study. I want you to use this free internet source. I want you to recognize what a value it is to your own personal Bible study. If you have a computer at home, you ought to be going to blueletterbible.org on a regular basis when you have questions, thoughts.

You think, "Man, I wonder what this means? This conversation, let your conversation be as becometh?" So that's really the first word I wanted to get a feel for was this word right here, this Greek word *politeuomai*. This word right here you'll notice on the screen is translated with 4 other words. One Greek word translated with 4 English words. One Greek word, 4 English words. I want to get a sense as we're looking at this phrase that I have highlighted for you right here in blue, what does Paul mean when he says, "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel." I want to know is Paul only talking about what comes out of my mouth? Is that the extent of what Paul or does he have a much greater understanding? If I was one of those believers at Philippi, if you were one of those believers at Philippi, and you were a resident of Philippi and read the Greek New Testament, what would you take away from that? What would it mean to you? What would you think when you first read this idea? That's what we want to begin to unpack.

So the first thing I notice is that this word is a verb. It's not a noun. This is a verb. I've got a verb right here: only let your verb, this action, be as what? This word, this idea right here: to be a citizen, to administer civil affairs, to manage the estate, to make citizens, to behave as as a citizen. So obviously right away I realize I'm not talking just about conversation, that this word has got a lot greater depth than just what comes out of my mouth. There is some depth here. Paul wasn't just telling the Philippians, "When you talk, make sure you talk about the Gospel or something that relates to the Gospel." It's got a lot greater depth than that. I notice that I'm dealing with a verb and it's going to have some reference to this idea right here, to behave as a citizen.

So I've got my Greek word on the top here. I'm showing you how we get a greater understanding tonight as I do my best to teach you this idea. The word *polis* was the largest political unit that a Greek person would belong to. Now, what would the largest political unit that you would belong to here? The Republic, right. The United States of

America. Your federal citizenship. So the polis is the largest element that, Doug, you would be a part of as a citizen. The largest element. So now I'm getting this idea that this relates to citizenship. This relates to how I belong to Philippi. As I studied about this, I recognized that these Christians were also very proud of their heritage as being members of Philippi. That was a big deal to them that they were Philippians. Some of you have met folks that are just crazy about being from Texas. It seems like people from Texas are just over-the-top from being from Texas. What was the large, his name is escaping me, Chris, what was Chris's last name? Chris was just crazy about being from Texas. The first day I met Chris coming into this church, he wanted to let me know right off the bat that he was from the great state of Texas. How many of you have met people like that? You have, come on. Texas just seems to breed that. Soldiers from Texas will automatically tell you that they are from Texas on a regular basis. They have a great love for their heritage.

So the noun refers to citizenship but I don't have a noun here, I've got a verb, and so the verb means to conduct myself worthy of this citizenship. The idea here is this citizenship of heaven. Now, let's face it, in our day and age, citizenship doesn't mean as much as it did years ago. It just doesn't. People aren't as patriotic as they used to be. You have people that seldom ever hang a flag and fly a flag. It's just not. What percentage of people don't vote? Half sometimes? Is that true? Is half a reasonable number? So when you start talking to a new believer about citizenship in heaven, they struggle with relating to that idea because they don't have a proud citizenship in the United States. They don't have a proud, "I'm an American citizen." So now here I am, I'm trying to talk to you about a citizenship in heaven and perhaps citizenship in America is really kind of meaningless to you. Then if you're like I am, I moved...from every single year, I was in a different school system in a different city, in a different state: West Virginia, Virginia, Massachusetts, Ohio, Michigan, California. Everywhere, so I don't have some great allegiance to a state. I didn't spend 40 years in a state. How many of you are like me that you have been all over the place? Show your hands if you've been all over the place. Just all over the place? Now, Dick, you spent a long time where? In Iowa, many years. Decades? 62 years so that's a huge part of who you are is being a midwesterner, part of that state and the whole works. So you're going to be able to understand this concept that Paul is saying, "Remember your citizenship of Philippi, now grab that and move it."

Have you met folks like this that are just crazy about being from New York City? I mean, it's really a big deal to them that they are part of New York City. Paul, to us, is trying to get you to recognize and me to recognize that there is a city of God out there. There is a city of God. It's bigger than New York City. It's gigantic and so this verb is presented in a tense. Let's look at our tense. I pulled up the tense button right here so I could figure out what tense is this in. It's in a present tense and the mood is imperative. What do I learn from that? What do I learn from the idea that this is in a present tense? How does that mean anything to me? Why would I even bring that up to tell you that this verb is in the present tense? What would be the point of present tense? It applies now. When would now be? Would now be Wednesday? What about Thursday? Saturday? Sunday? So every time I read this it applies right now. Every time I open it up it applies right now.

The mood is imperative. What do I get from that? What do I learn from the fact that it's imperative? What is the point? Is this some ridiculous idea for me to suggest to you, "Hey, this is imperative"? It's a command. We know what it means, "It is imperative that you do this." That means it's critical that you do this. This is not something that you can choose, this is imperative. This is essential. This is important so to recognize that you've got a citizenship in another location that applies right now is imperative.

So if you're not really big in being from a state and you're not really big about being from a particular country, proud to be a German, proud to be a Mexican, whatever the case may be, proud to be an American, and then I begin to make a big deal to you about a citizenship in heaven, it's going to be hard for you to relate to that. I'm going to have to work even harder to get you to get excited about a citizenship somewhere else. Paul is calling these Philippians to recognize that they are citizens of the city of God.

Turn to Hebrews 11, please. Hopefully you're already there ahead of me, that you're familiar with this text and you go, "Oh, I know where he's going with that. I know exactly why he's taking us to that reference, Hebrews 11:9." Hebrews 11:9, "By faith," referring back to Abraham, look at verse 8, "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went." He didn't even know where he was going. "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is," who? "God." You and I have got to recognize we're just passing through. This home is not my home. I am a stranger. There is a city whose foundation is not the typical foundation, whose maker is God and I am already part of that city. I don't have to fret. I can be a little concerned about who gets into the next office but I don't have to. Why? Why? Folks, come on, talk to me tonight. Why? Because God is in control. I'm a citizen of a city whose not located anywhere in the United States, not located in Africa, not located in Russia. How many languages are spoken in this city? There's just an incredible amount of languages spoken in this city. How many colors are in this city? There's an innumerable color to the city. How many tribes are members of the city? Oh, you can't even number the number of tribes that are in this city. How many different cultures come together in this city? Oh, my goodness, it's incredible how many cultures come together in this city. There are cultures from Africa. There are cultures from Asia. There are cultures from China. There are cultures coming from all over the world and, folks, we're not going to bring our red, white and blue flag waving, Texas T-shirt on. We're not. We're not. This is, "Hey, you Philippians, take your feelings toward your Philippian culture and recognize, whoa, move it forward. Move it larger. Expand it."

Here's the word "conversation" in your English dictionary. The word "conversation." I cut and pasted it. The first thing we recognize that conversation is a noun but I'm talking about a verb here and the absolute rendering is "conduct and behavior." So when they picked "conversation" it was a great word because it was understood as behavior. It was understood as conduct. But now conversation means one thing: you and I talking. We

don't really think of conversation as your weekly conversation so I've got to recognize he's talking about my conduct. He's talking about my behavior.

So this idea right here, going now to Philippians 3:20, go ahead and turn over, also rendered "conversation" so I want to show you the difference. Nearly the same Greek word with a slight modification is a noun. It's a noun. Look at verse 20, "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." So Paul picks up the same idea one more time only this time "conversation" is a noun so your membership in the polis, the largest political unit, the city of God, this is it, your membership, your citizenship is in heaven. It's in the city of God. You've got a citizenship in heaven, where? From where we look for our Savior. That's where he's coming from. When he comes again, that's where he's going to be before. He's coming from the city of God to where? To here. To do what? To redeem all those back to the city of God.

So now grab this idea. In your mind, grab Philippians 3:20, citizenship in heaven, and move it back to Philippians 1:27, the verb. So the noun "conversation, citizenship, membership," is now supposed to impact the way I act. The way I act. The way I act. We understand this idea. We understand this. We would say to somebody, "It is your duty as a citizen of the United States to vote." Yes or no? We would say, "Your citizenship obligates you to vote." That noun, "citizenship," is supposed to impact your conduct. It's supposed to impact your behavior. There is supposed to be a relationship between the noun, "citizenship," and the action behind it. Does that make sense or not? Are you getting this idea? So I'm supposed to recognize from Paul's perspective, "Only let your conversation, only let your citizenship, only let your conduct or behavior, be becoming."

Now, let me ask this question: does anyone know what Article 133 is in the Military Code of Military Justice? Article 133, does that ring a bell to you? I don't want to put anybody on the spot but Article 133, because I'm grabbing this word "becometh." Let me show it to you. "Any commissioned officer, candidate or midshipmen who is convicted of conduct unbecoming." So he says "conduct becoming," so this is conduct unbecoming. Paul says, "Only let your conduct or your citizenship, be becoming of the gospel." Becometh, becoming. We know what conduct unbecoming, that means you're not acting the way we would expect an officer to act. You know, doing ridiculous stuff: breakdancing on a table in the middle of a hail and farewell, that would be conduct unbecoming of an officer. Carrying on multiple inappropriate relationships would be conduct unbecoming of an officer. Lying would be conduct unbecoming of an officer. Cheating would be conduct unbecoming of an officer. Okay, you get that idea? Paul is saying, "Take that same concept. As a citizenship of heaven, make sure that your conduct becometh or is becoming of something."

So now let's ask ourselves: what do I use as my guide for my conduct? All right, somebody said Scripture. All right, so let's all go to the passage that my wife shared with me this morning from our devotions as a conduct. Deuteronomy 25. If we're going to use Scripture, let's pick this one. Pam called me up and said, "Listen to this," and so I listened and I thought, "That is perfect. That is exactly what I'm going to use tonight."

Deuteronomy 25. So if I'm going to use Scripture, if that's the standard for my conduct, let's grab Deuteronomy 25 and let's see if that has any application to our lives. All right, we'll start with verse 5. Are you there? I want you to see this in your own Bible. This is the Scripture that we'll use. "If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her. And it shall be, that the firstborn which she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel. And if the man like not to take his brother's wife, then let his brother's wife go up to the gate unto the elders, and say, My husband's brother refuseth to raise up unto his brother a name in Israel, he will not perform the duty of my husband's brother. Then the elders of his city shall call him, and speak unto him: and if he stand to it, and say, I like not to take her; Then shall his brother's wife come unto him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face, and shall answer and say, So shall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother's house." Did you get that? All right, that's what's supposed to happen so my brother's name is Scott and that means that if he was to die and she had not had any children, then according to the Mosaic law, it was my responsibility to take her into my household and provide for her seed such that she could have a child. And if I refused to do my duty, then she had all the authority in the world to reach down and take off my shoe and spit in my face in front of the elders and I was to take that as my just punishment for my refusal to do something.

So sometimes it's not as easy as just saying the Bible. Agreed or not? Let your conduct becometh the Bible. Where? What part? How about Sunday night? What did JR share with me that we are to do with brat children? No, in the Mosaic law? Grab your teenager, bring your teenager by the neck, present him to the elders, let the elders know, "We have done everything we could do in our power. There is nothing more we can do. He is a rebellious teenager." And what would they do? They would stone him. But Paul doesn't say to this section, he doesn't say to us, "As becometh the law." He doesn't say to us, "As becometh the law." We have a new law. We have a new law. What's our new law? It's the Gospel. It's the Gospel which is, in fact, you're right, it's grace. The Gospel is grace. We have a new law. We're going to make sure that our conduct becometh, not the Mosaic law. Will we read the Mosaic law? Yes. Will we study the Mosaic law? Yes. Will we look for principles of application? Yes. But we will not conduct ourselves as becometh the Mosaic law. When was the last time you brought a pigeon to church? When was the last time you brought a goat to church? When was the last time you brought a lamb to church? When was the last time you brought a grain offering to church? So we're not going to say, "Make sure that our conduct is becoming as the Mosaic law." It's one of the problems that I have with these Messianic churches. These Messianic churches in which Christians go back and try to live under the law. Paul doesn't say to the Philippian Christians, "Live under the law. Live under the Gospel. Live under the Gospel." That's what he says so what will I use as my guide for conduct? Well, look, I've got 2 prepositions there: of, of. These prepositions are possessive prepositions. I'm going to make sure that my conduct is becoming as citizens of the Gospel of Christ. Of the Gospel. What Gospel? Of Christ. So what will be the standard by which I examine my conduct? It will be the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Please look at verse 28, 1:28, as I begin to wrap it up here. Philippians 1:28. So 1:27 and then 1:28. I'm sorry, the end of 27, not 28. My mistake. The end of 27. He says in the beginning, "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ." Now notice the end of verse 27, "for the faith of the gospel." The faith of the Gospel. Now, most of the time when you hear the word "faith," you think about saving faith. That's not how he's using the word "faith" here. You know in Jude it says "to earnestly contend for the faith." The body of truth. So there is a body of truth associated with the Gospel. Yes? Bill made a great statement in the sermon that he delivered yesterday which if you get a chance to go online and watch the sermon, Bill did an incredible job preaching the Gospel yesterday at the funeral. It was just spot on. Twenty minutes of just solid Gospel presentation and it was just great. So if you get a chance to listen to that. But Bill said that we need to think about the Gospel in the same way that we think about George Washington Crossing the Delaware. That's how solid it is. It is an historical event. No one would ever doubt whether George Washington crossed the Delaware. We need to think of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the death, burial and resurrection, the historical event with the same level. It was there. There is a place. There is a time. There is a location. There were people involved and it happened. The same idea.

So here's the Gospel. Here is the essence of the Gospel and I want to use my dry erase board for us to spend the next 20 minutes together unpacking the idea of what does it mean to draw application to the Gospel in citizenship. So let's look at my chart together and then we'll unpack this. This is my Gospel presentation chart. I've shown you this lots of times but this is the way I like to explain the Gospel. I like to get a blank piece of paper out and I like to teach the Gospel from this blank piece of paper and I'm a visual learner and I think sometimes others are visual learners and so I like to draw it out. So, first of all, someone tell me what does my letter "A" and my backwards arrow represent? The beginning of time or the eternality of God, that this goes back as far back as you can go. That this begins with God. That the Gospel begins with God. That this was God's idea. The Gospel is God's idea. Okay? There has always been a God.

So now let's write down that first point. Conduct as becometh that there is a God. Now, what about that God? Genesis 1:1, that he is a creating God, right? So I want to stay with this. Now just stay with me for just a minute. A Christian who says they believe in evolution is not conduct as becoming the Gospel. Do you understand what I mean by that? Because the Gospel implies there is a God. Not only that there is a God, there is a God who creates. Who creates. A Creator God. This is a foundational truth. This is a critical truth. "You Philippians, make sure the way you conduct yourself in your conduct and your behavior, in your citizenship, reflects the fact that you believe you were made by God."

Number 2: what do we know about all human beings and how they are created by God? They are created in what? In God's image. So now this means in the image of God. This means that any time a Christian is showing prejudice toward another person because of skin color, that is not conduct as becometh the Gospel. Do you see where I'm going with this? You see, I don't think we recognize how deep this is when we say conduct as

becometh the Gospel. Because we think in terms of the Gospel as this death, burial and resurrection and that's the core of it, we go, "That doesn't have application to my life." What I want us to understand tonight in this time of hopefully teaching, is that the Gospel has all kinds of application into your life. That the Gospel just keeps on applying itself and just keeps on applying itself and keeps on applying itself. That God made male and female in his image. So now get this: anything related to sexism would be conduct unbecoming of the Gospel. Anything relating to sexual harassment would be conduct unbecoming of the Gospel. You see, so I don't need a list of rules. I don't need a list of rules. I don't need a Uniform Code of Military Justice. I don't need a Mosaic law anymore. Why? You've got the Gospel, Dick. Just take the Gospel and apply it. Take the Gospel and apply it. Take the Gospel and apply it.

So anything that relates to the denial of God as a Creator, anything that relates to denying people are made in the image of God, anything that shows gender bias, sexism, denies the Gospel. But wait a minute, I'm not done. This sovereign God. The sovereign God. So now take this, now, this is hard. This is really hard. Any time I am worrying, worrying, that's conduct unbecoming of the Gospel because worrying denies God's sovereignty. It denies God's sovereignty. When we are worrying, what are we saying? "I'm not sure you're in charge. I'm not sure you've got a handle on this, God. I'm not sure it's going to work out okay. I'm not sure this is according to your plan, God." We are when we are worrying, we are in fact saying, "God, are you sure you've got this one, God? Because it doesn't look like you have it."

So here we are, just in God, and we've got all kinds of application into our lives. Yes or no? And do you know what? I haven't handed anybody a rulebook. I haven't handed anybody a list of rules. I haven't handed anybody, "Here we go, check this one, check this one, check this one, check this one, check this one." No, I just said, "Live, Josh, like the Gospel. Just live out the Gospel." Live out the Gospel at work. Live out the Gospel with your wife. Live out the Gospel with your children. Live out the Gospel with your coworkers. Just live out the Gospel. Make sure that your Gospel is in your life, in your heart.

Now, let's continue. Why did God send his only begotten Son? Here we are, this is going down to letter "B." Why did he send him? Because of sin. So this tells me that there is something called sin. There is something called sin. There are moral rights and wrongs. Every man cannot do what is right in their own eyes. That there are standards by which we must live. Why else did God send his Son? Because God is just. So while you did say, Jeff, you did say grace, that doesn't mean that in every situation there is grace. There are consequences. If you are a parent in this room and you are raising your children according to the Gospel, that doesn't mean every situation they get mercy and mercy and mercy and mercy and mercy and mercy and there is never any justice because the Gospel is about justice. God's justice is satisfied through the Gospel. Yes or no? Are you all following me?

So now what I find when I'm thinking about the Gospel is I've got this incredible balance of grace and justice that are constantly to be held at tension. So now as a citizen in this

city of God, I'm constantly going, "Is this the time that I should be gracious or is this the time that justice needs to be applied? Is this the time where I need to be gracious or is this the time when I'm going to be just? Is this the time when I'm going to be merciful or is this the time where I have to hold the line?" Do you do that as a parent, yes or no? All the time, don't you? All the time. I think JR did a great job Sunday night. For those of you that weren't here, please go online and listen to it. He talked about the fact that if we discipline our children without teaching them, we're going to provoke them to anger and he's exactly right. If your children never, ever see mercy from you, how will they know about the mercy of God? However, if they always see mercy from you, how will they know about the justice of God? Because in the Gospel, both are there. If God wasn't just then he wouldn't have sent his Son. There was no need for him to send his Son.

Let's go to John 3:16, please. Certainly John 3:16, I know you are familiar with the verse and perhaps you don't need to turn there but sometimes it's nice to look at a verse even though we are familiar with it. John 3:16, a very familiar verse but I could argue with you that perhaps it has the Gospel in it better than any single verse in the entire Bible, that it is the most Gospel centered verse of one single verse. Obviously probably the best passage for the Gospel is 1 Corinthians 15. That's probably the best, 3, 4 and 5, but let's look at this one. You're familiar with it but let's read it together anyway, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." What are the 2 things that you grab away right away? I look at that and I see "For God so," 2 ideas: loved and what else? Gave. Loved and gave. So in the city of God, love and giving is going to be a premium. In the city of God, being a loving person and being a giving person is going to be a premium so that tells me right away that if there's hatred in my life I've got to put that in check. I've got to figure why am I hating something. Where is this coming from? Because for God so loved the world that he gave.

So in the Gospel if I'm living my conduct, I'm being selfish, then that's unbecoming of the Gospel. Anything related to being selfish. Now all of a sudden I don't need a list of rules because you're going to take the Gospel and apply it. How does this Gospel truth apply? So I've got love. I've got gave. I've got mercy. Do you follow me? I'm trying to show you how we've been delivered from the law and put under the Gospel. I could say it like this: in the city of God, Christ is our King and the Gospel is our law. Is that a summary for you? In the city of God, Christ is our King and the Gospel is our law. Not the Mosaic law, the Gospel is our law. All we've got to do is look at how does the Gospel fit to this situation? How does the Gospel apply to this situation? How does the Gospel lead us to make decisions? How does the Gospel lead us to make choices in this?

We saw from Sunday morning when we were in Mark 2 that the Gospel is all about f-o-r-g-i-v-e-n-e-s-s. It's all about forgiveness. My sins are forgiven. So now Christians, if I'm harboring in my life unforgiveness, that's conduct unbecoming of the Gospel. Any kind of unforgiveness. Any kind. It doesn't matter what it's for. It doesn't matter. Now, Deb, you shared with us probably one of the most difficult things that a person could be expected to forgive. Doesn't everyone agree? How many of you have daughters in this room? Raise your hand if you've got daughters. That will get you to wake up. Daughters?

Can you imagine? Mike, you probably don't even want to think about it, it's so terrifying. How old is your daughter? Right, so a year away. Can you imagine sending your daughter out and then she's murdered? And then in the city of God, according to the Gospel, I am obligated to forgive the very man that murdered my daughter? Hello? Wow, that's beyond comprehension. Can I be under the law for just a moment? Who would like to stone him to death? Right? Right, but just in this situation because if it's reversed and you were stoning me, then I'd rather be under grace. So I'd like for my citizenship to be temporally moved to the Old Testament community, stone the guy and immediately move it back to the New Testament community. You weren't here but Deb Smith shared that a young couple in South Carolina, Georgia, sent their daughter out to go for a walk with somebody and the man, the stranger took her out for a walk and he murdered her. It was the Wilkes family and we want to pray for the Wilkes family. So being under the Gospel is not a break. It's not a free ticket. It's even harder. That's even harder.

Turn to Romans. I'll wrap it up with this one. Romans 1. Conduct, behavior worthy of the Gospel. Becoming of the Gospel. Verse 16, please. Perhaps you have it underlined in your Bible. It's a great verse to memorize. This is what Paul says. Paul says, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation." So if I was to say, "I can't do that." If I was to say, "I could never forgive." If I was to say, "No way. I can't forgive." That's not conduct becoming the Gospel because the Gospel is the power of God to forgive. The Gospel is the power of God to overcome the temptation. The Gospel is the power of God to get the victory. So under the new covenant, if you will, under the Gospel, I don't have any excuses, Josh. I can't say, "I'm just flesh." I can't say, "Sorry, I can't do that," because when I'm a citizen of the city of God, of the kingdom of God, and I'm living under the umbrella of the Gospel, with that Gospel comes power. Power to win the victory. Power to overcome. Power to forgive. Power to be kind. Power not to be rude. Power to be forgiving. Power to be merciful. Power to be gracious. Power to live in a way that shows the Gospel has made me a new creature in Christ. Do you follow me?

So sometimes we've got to be careful that we don't think about the Gospel as that which gets us saved and it does, but not just gets us saved. The Gospel becomes the central truth that guides the way I am a husband, the way I am a father, the way I am a worker, the way I am a grandparent, the way I am a teacher, the way I am, just pick whatever you want. The way I am a squad leader, the way I am a manager, the way I am a bus driver. It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter. The Gospel has implications to every single aspect of your life because you look at what did Christ do and you say, "Now, how does that relate to this situation? And then what should I do?"

Let's pray.

As we close our time out together, would you just pause on this Wednesday night and ask the Holy Spirit to show you any areas of your life where your conduct, your behavior, your choices, your decisions, your thought process, your thinking, your reasoning, your worldview is not becoming the Gospel. You have allowed yourself to have a worldview, to have a course of action, to have a behavior that is not becoming the Gospel. You know

it's not. You know that this action, this conduct, this behavior, this choice, this decision, this way of managing your life is not reflective of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. You don't need a legalistic law. You don't need a rule. You don't need to go under the Mosaic law. Because of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, because of your understanding of what Christ did for you, the Holy Spirit has revealed to you an area of your life where you have got to let something go or make a change or apply this truth in a different way. Perhaps you're not forgiving someone. Perhaps there's an area of selfishness. Perhaps there's an area where you are not being gracious, you're not being merciful. Perhaps you have been too gracious. Perhaps you do not hold the justice of God. I don't know. Only the Holy Spirit knows, but Paul would have us tonight, Paul would have us to ask ourselves, "Is there some way that we're living that we have forgotten that our citizenship first and foremost is in a city whose maker and builder is God?"

Lord, in this your church, do the work that only you can do in the hearts and minds of your people. In Jesus' name. Amen.