



Season 8 Podcasts

Conduct Worthy of the Gospel

By

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So far in my 8th Season Podcast series I've shared thoughts with you about:

- 8 Rules for Bible Study
- 40 Rules for Ministry
- The Heart of the Gospel
- Defending and Confirming the Gospel
- Your Fellowship in the Gospel
- The Completion of the Gospel
- The Affection of the Gospel
- The Discernment of the Gospel
- The Excellence of the Gospel
- The Sincerity of the Gospel
- The Fruit of the Gospel
- The Advancement of the Gospel
- The Preaching of the Gospel
- Living for the Gospel

The next aspect I'd like to share with you is 'conduct worthy' of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Paul continued his letter to the Christians in Philippi by writing:

"Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, and not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God." Philippians 1:27-28

The Greek word for 'your conduct' is *politeuomai* and means 'live as a citizen, behave as a citizen.' That's interesting in light of Paul's words later in Philippians:

"For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ."
Philippians 3:20

The Philippians were citizens of Philippi, Macedonia, but as Christians they had a higher and longer-lasting citizenship. It is 'in heaven.' Yes, they physically lived in Philippi but they were eagerly waiting for their Savior the Lord Jesus Christ who is in Heaven. Paul wanted the Philippian Christians to behave as good citizens of both earth and Heaven. That's our calling from God as well. Yes, we are citizens of our city and country, but we have an even higher calling as 'citizens of Heaven.'

The Greek word for 'worthy' is *axíós* and means 'worthily, worth that matches actual value, appropriately, after a godly sort.' Paul said the Philippians should behave themselves in a manner that matched the value of being followers of Jesus Christ. What did that mean? Paul had already addressed some of those values previously in this letter:

- fellowship in the gospel
- that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment
- that you may approve the things that are excellent
- that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ
- being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God

Being a follower of Jesus Christ in pagan societies was not easy. That's clear to see from Paul's travels in Acts and his letters to churches and individuals. Paul suffered greatly when he first arrived in Philippi a decade earlier. His preaching of the Gospel there led to his being dragged into the marketplace 'to the authorities.' There he and Silas were beaten with rods by the command of the city's magistrates, arrested by Roman soldiers, and thrown into prison.

“And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.” Acts 16:23-24

To conduct their lives ‘worthy of the gospel of Christ’ in Philippi was not easy for Christians. Paul may have visited the Christians in Philippi during his third missionary journey a few years before his imprisonment in Rome. Acts 20:1-6 records Paul’s visit to Macedonia to encourage Christians there. He stayed in Greece about three months. Paul decided to return through Macedonia when he learned that Jews were plotting against him as he was about to sail to Syria. Acts 20:6 records that Paul ‘sailed away from Philippi after the Days of Unleavened Bread,’ so he may have visited Philippi twice during the third missionary journey. Paul’s imprisonment in Rome is recorded in Acts 28.

Continuing in his letter to the Philippians, Paul told them that whether he came to see them again or was absent, he wanted them to:

“stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, and not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God.”

This is an important part of what it means to ‘conduct’ oneself in a way that is ‘worthy of the Gospel of Christ.’ The Greek word translated ‘stand fast’ is *stékó* and means ‘to be stationary, stand firm, to persevere, persist.’ Paul wanted the Philippians to ‘stand fast in one spirit’ and with ‘one mind.’ The word ‘spirit’ is *pneuma* and speaks to a person’s ‘mental disposition’ in this context. The word ‘mind’ is *psuché* and speaks to a person’s ‘unique personality and heart’s desire’ in this context. Paul asked the Philippians to stand firm in the Gospel of Christ with all their heart and mind ‘striving together for the faith of the gospel.’ The Greek word for ‘striving together’ is *sunathleó* and means ‘to wrestle in company with others, a shared struggle.’ The Philippians

were stronger when they faced life's challenges together. That's an important lesson for Christians today as well.

Paul knew all about opposition to the Gospel of Christ and what the Philippians faced from unbelievers in Macedonia. He told them not to be 'terrified' by their 'adversaries.' The Greek word for 'terrified' is *pturó* and means 'frightened, alarmed.' The Greek words for 'adversaries' are *tōn antikeimenōn* and mean 'those opposing you, those contrary to you, those who are thoroughly unreconcilable to you'). Christians across the world today are facing severe opposition, even to the point of imprisonment and death. Those who are opposed to the Gospel of Christ are growing in number and power. Christians must face this opposition together rather than be divided by disagreements with little merit or importance (that does not include false teachers and preachers, who must be avoided).

Paul wanted Christians in Philippi to see their situation correctly. Opposition to them was ‘proof of perdition’ for the oppressor based on the Christian’s commitment to conducting their lives ‘worthy of the Gospel.’ The Greek words are *endeixis apōleias* and mean ‘a demonstration of destruction, proof of ruin or loss.’ Though it may appear at times that those who oppose the Gospel are winning in this world, they are simply demonstrating their own future destruction (ruin, loss) by the holy response of believers in the face of opposition. However, for God’s people the opposition to the Gospel is a sign of God’s salvation.

That may sound like a contradiction given the way people see opposition and respond to it in our world today, but it is different in how God views life. The Jews thought they were rid of Jesus when they forced the Romans to kill Him, but they did just the opposite because Jesus rose from the dead and ascended to His Throne in Heaven. The Jewish religious leaders actually brought on their own ruin and loss which eventually led to the destruction of Jerusalem and their Temple. Their continual opposition to the Lord’s apostles led to the massive expansion of God’s eternal plan of

salvation throughout the world. The Philippians could place their full trust in God as they faced opposition. So can we.

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In Christ's Love and Grace,

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