"Conduct Worthy of Heaven's Citizens"

PHILIPPIANS 1:27-30

12-4-2024

*** LIVE LIKE A CITIZEN OF HEAVEN!**

HOW? BY STANDING FIRM (PERSEVERING) IN 2 DUTIES THAT OUR HEAVENLY COMMANDER HAS GIVEN US.

LIVE LIKE A CITIZEN OF HEAVEN!

Two things that will not be in heaven = 1) disunity, 2) fear

As citizen of Heaven God will exhort us toward unity (v.27), and fearlessness (v.28-30)

I. Live like a citizen of Heaven and stand firm in being UNITED FOR THE FAITH (v.27)

A. CHRIST'S CHURCH MUST HAVE **HARMONY**

B. CHRIST'S CHURCH MUST HAVE **TEAMWORK**

II. Live like a citizen of Heaven and stand firm in being UNAFRAID OF THE FOE (v.28-30)

We can take courage in 3 facts:

A. SUFFERING IS A **PROOF** OF YOUR SALVATION (v.28)

B. SUFFERING IS A **PRIVILEGE** FOR YOUR SAVIOR (v.29)

C. SUFFERING IS **PARTICIPATED** IN BY OTHER SAINTS (v.30)

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Intro. illust. of the embarrassment caused by "Christian" Americans who have visited foreign countries (ex. Israel) and do not represent true Christianity. When I was in Israel I had to make it clear that I was not like most American Christian tourists who don't live like true Christians or even like true Americans for that matter.

We as believers (while living in this world) are foreigners in a strange land. We only have temporary visas here.
Ex. song: "This world is not our home were just passing through..."

Read verse 27.

"Only" = that is "no matter what happens to me <u>be sure that</u>..."
"in any event <u>your responsibility is</u>..."

"Conversation" in 1611 referred to a "persons manner of life"
3 greek words convey this idea:
1) anastrophe [ ]- lifestyle, behavior.
2) peripatep [ ]- walk, conduct.
3) politeuma [ ]- citizenship (from which we get our Eng. word politics).

Paul in this verse uses the more rarely used word "politeuma" which means "to be a citizen"

"Paul was writing from the very center of the Roman empire, from Rome itself; it was the fact that he was a roman citizen that had brought him there. Philippi was a Roman colony; and Roman colonies were little bits of Rome planted throughout the world, where the citizens never forgot that they were Romans, spoke the Roman (latin) language, wore the Romans dress, called their magistrates by Roman names, however far they might be from Rome.

So what Paul is saying is, "you and I know full well the privileges and the responsibilities of being a Roman citizen. You know full well how even in Philippi, so many miles from Rome, you must still live and act as a Roman does. Well then, remember that you have an even higher duty than that. Wherever you are you must live as befits (suits, matches) a citizen of the Kingdom of God" (Barclay, p.30).
"as it becometh" = axios [ ] which means bringing up the beam of the scales; bringing into equilibrium. To make equal, or equivalent. To be **<u>worthy</u>**.

So what God is saying is: "exercise your (heavenly) citizenship in a manner worthy of the gospel" "Conduct your life (as a citizen of heaven) in harmony with 1) the responsibilities, 2) blessings, and 3) privileges of being a citizen of God's Heaven.
Read Phil. 3:20 - Paul again picks up on the idea of our heavenly citizenship.

We are to walk (conduct our lives) in such a way that truly represent our Country **which is Heaven!** and our Emperor **which is Christ!** (Be a worthy citizen! not a worldly citizen!)

"Worthy":"Walk worthy of the vocation (our heavenly calling) Eph.4:1
"Walk worthy of the Lord" (Col.1:10)
"Walk worthy of the kingdom of God (II Th.1:5).

Jesus said: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me"

Because our citizenship is in paradise, our behavior upon this planet should be that which "becometh the gospel of Christ" In other words "our lives should match the good news we profess"

You see the Gospel is something to be lived not just known.
" Life service not lip service
" deeds not creeds.

The gospel should have changed your life! We learn truth to live it! Not admire it, worship it etc.
Ill. of a plow that was donated and sent to Africa. A primitive tribe did not know it's purpose, so they set it up on a pedestal and worshipped it. They perverted it from its original design & purpose.

*** LIVE LIKE A CITIZEN OF HEAVEN!**

HOW? BY STANDING FIRM (PERSEVERING) IN 2 DUTIES THAT OUR HEAVENLY COMMANDER HAS GIVEN US.

"standing firm" - was used of the determination of a soldier who does not budge one inch from his post.

The world is full of Christians on the retreat. When difficulties come some down play their Christianity, while others deny it (ex. Peter).

A test of a man's character is what it will take to move him.
Ex. King Josiah of Judah stood his ground. "He did that which was right in the sight of the

Lord, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left."

Stay loyal to Jesus; We need men with backbone who won't deviate from the instructions our Lord has given us.

LIVE LIKE A CITIZEN OF HEAVEN!
Two things that will not be in heaven = 1) disunity, 2) fear
As citizen of Heaven God will exhort us toward unity (v.27), and fearlessness (v.28-30)

I. Live like a citizen of Heaven and stand firm in being UNITED FOR THE FAITH (v.27)

A. CHRIST'S CHURCH MUST HAVE **HARMONY**

"One spirit, and one mind (soul)" = The immaterial part of man that relates to God (spirit) and man (soul).

What God is saying to our Church is "in a spiritual sense you are to be like one person"

ill. of the harmony of notes. How 2 different notes blend together to form one pleasing sound.

Note context: "one spirit & mind (soul)" points to a single mindedness like Paul had. (cp.1:21 - "For to me to live is Christ"
Note context: of 2 women who were not getting along with each other (Phil.4:2)

Unity - see Acts 4:32; Rom.12:12; I Cor.1:10, 10:17; II Cor. 13:11, Gal. 3:28; Eph.4:3,13. *Read Psalm 133*

We can shout our religion from the housetops, "earnestly contend for the faith" (Jude 3), defend it against its critics & enemies, but people will not take us seriously unless they see it produce unity! The world is like the man who is a pragmatist. What he wants to know is "Does it work?"

B. CHRIST'S CHURCH MUST HAVE **TEAMWORK**

"striving together" = gk. "athleo" from which we get our word "athletics"

Paul pictures the Church as a team, reminding them that it is teamwork that wins victories.
-We don't want "glory hounds" in our church.
-We don't want Diotrephes in our church.

We need to be like a band of brothers; Like a football team; like a school of fish -bands together.

"united we stand, divided we fall"

Let the world quarrel, fight amongst themselves etc. We must stand together.

Striving together involves:
1) Forgiveness
2) Cooperation
3) Unprejudiced spirit
4) Humility

Ill. Aesop's fable - A father gave one stick to each of his 7 sons. They could break that stick easily. Then he tied 7 sticks together & they could not break it no matter how hard they tried.

II. Live like a citizen of Heaven and stand firm in being <u>UNAFRAID OF THE FOE</u> (v.28-30)

Paul who is facing opposition (1:12,13), now encourages the Philippians to face it properly.

"terrified" = to startle. Ex. When a rickety old truck or some animal such as an armadillo or a black cat runs in front of a <u>horse</u> with a result that the horse loses control and shakes with fear.

Suffering (to some degree) is <u>inevitable</u>.
Jesus said: "The servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you" (Jn.15:20).
Paul, in his final imprisonment in Rome, wrote: "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ shall suffer persecution" (II tim. 3:2).

Suffering (opposition) can be a blessing in disguise:

1) for example it makes you <u>appreciate</u> what Christ, Paul etc. went through (ill. My opposition in Israel) (Read: Heb.13:12-14 - note context "for here we have no continuing city" cp.Phil.1:27)

2) Suffering can be a means of <u>winning</u> unbelievers, and <u>encouraging</u> fellow-believers (Phil.1:12-14)

We can take courage in 3 facts:

A. SUFFERING IS A **<u>PROOF</u>** OF YOUR SALVATION (v.28)

Many new believers have the idea that trusting Christ means the end of battles. It does end many; but it also is the beginning of new ones.

"evident token" = a sign, or indication, a proof.

The fact that some oppose you for your faith is a proof that:

1) they are lost and headed for Hell.
   "perdition" = destruction; Both Judas (Jn.17:12) & the Antichrist (II Th.2:3) are called the "son of perdition"
2) you are saved and headed for Heaven.
   Suffering for righteousness sake is an indication that you are saved. Jesus said "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in Heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before

you." Mt.5:12

Suffering brings assurance of salv. Read I Pet. 4:12-14; Rom.8:16-18.

B. SUFFERING IS A **PRIVILEGE** FOR YOUR SAVIOR (v.29)

"It is given" = a gift of grace

The idea is - it is an honor, a privilege to suffer in behalf of Christ. **Read Acts 5:41** Peter's attitude of joy.

Note: suffering is not a privilege in itself. The privilege is that it is for his sake (on behalf of Christ)

"for his sake" - When someone opposes you, they are really opposing Christ. Acts 9:4 "Why persecutest thou me?"

Mt. 25:42-46 " inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me"

C. SUFFERING IS **PARTICIPATED** IN BY OTHER SAINTS (v.30)

Satan wants us to think we are alone in the battle; that our difficulties are unique. THIS IS NOT TRUE!

"conflict" = From which we get our English word "agony"

They saw & heard that Paul did not buckle under the pressure. He stood fast; Just as he is commanding them to (v.27)

"You saw in me" = Acts 16:19 - they saw when Paul was beaten & thrown into prison.

"Now hearing" = Paul's imprisonment & trial in Rome.

Paul said; "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus" (Gal.6:17).

Ill. of early believers who were willing to be martyred: Stephen was stoned, James (our Lord's half brother), was stoned, Philip was scourged, imprisoned & crucified, Matthew was axed, Matthias was stoned, Jude, Simon, Peter, Andrew were crucified, Mark was dragged to pieces, Paul was beheaded, Thomas was thrust through with a spear, Luke was hung. The only apostle that wasn't martyred (as far as we know) was John who was

boiled in oil yet he survived by a miracle.
Cp. Hebrews chapter 11.

CONCLUSION:

We as believers have received some amazing privileges & benefits as children of God. But remember that with privileges & benefits comes responsibility. "To whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required" (Lk.12:48).

Your conduct should reflect what the Gospel and its riches did for you. Your life should match your citizenship.

The gospel is worthy of your:

1) being unified - after all we will be united in Heaven
2) being unafraid - there will be no fear in Heaven

Ill. Alexander the Great said to one of his men who was acting shamefully "what is your name. He replied Alexander. Then Alexander said: "change you life or Change your name"

We are citizens of heaven and bear Christ's name - we must live like it!

"You are writing a gospel,
A chapter each day,
by the deeds that you do
and the words that you say.
Men read what you write,
whether faithful or true;
Just what is the Gospel
according to you?" (source unknown)