

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

PASTORAL COUNSEL ON HOLINESS, PHILIPPIANS 1:27-30

A. On holiness (27-30)

1. Make it your priority to pursue a life worthy of the Gospel (27), *Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel,*
 - a. Paul encouraged the Philippians to live for Christ regardless of what would happen to him.
 - 1) The command is to live what you believe.
 - 2) *let your manner of life be worthy*
 - a) The emphasis is to *behave as worthy citizens*.
 - b) Louw-Nida, *to conduct oneself with proper reference to one's obligations in relationship to others, as part of some community*.
 - c) The Philippians were used to the call to proper citizenship in the Roman Empire. Now, Paul is exhorting them to live as proper citizens in the Kingdom of God.
 - d) Max Anders, *Such a life would not just be legalistic, obeying moral laws. It would show forth the spirit and love of Christ in every human relationship*.
 - b. He declared that a holy church would be known by certain characteristics.
 - 1) *standing firm*
 - a) The emphasis is on perseverance, to continue what you began, Galatians 5:1, *For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery*.
 - b) Thomas Constable, *It conveys the idea of firmness or steadfastness, or unflinching courage like that possessed by soldiers who determinedly refuse to leave their posts irrespective of how severely the battle rages*.
 - c) Paul will emphasize that such effort is not to be done for the sake of Paul but for the sake of the Gospel.
 - 2) *in one spirit*
 - a) The emphasis is on a like attitude in the way persons think or deal with life.
 - b) Christians are like-minded as we allow the Holy Spirit to guide us.
 - c) Max Anders, *The world must see a united front defending and proclaiming the gospel. No longer would divided motives of love and selfishness do. The church must face the world in one spirit. A fearless, unified church will astound the world. They will see the truth of the gospel*.
 - 3) *with one mind*
 - a) This force of this word may be *unit of purpose* or *desire*, as if it were one man.
 - b) It appears that Paul is emphasizing Christian unity which is enabled by the Holy Spirit and by a unified purpose from believers.
 - c) I believe the single purpose is expressed in the following statement.
 - 4) *striving side by side for the faith of the gospel*
 - a) Paul used a term that carries the thought of working as a team for a common goal against opposition.
 - b) Christian unity means that believers are not to compete against each other but compete together for the common goal.
 - c) The common goal is *the faith of the gospel*
 - 1] Jude 3, *Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints*.
 - 2] The Gospel is at the center of our faith and testimony. It is not our personal preferences and not our culture but our Savior Who died for our sins and rose from the dead and draws people to Himself through the Gospel message.
 - d) Christian unity demands participation, not participants and spectators.

2. Be courageous and demonstrate that your salvation is from God (28), **and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God.**
 - a. A holy life in Christ is not frightened by opposition.
 - 1) The word for frightened is only used here in the New Testament.
 - 2) Classical Greek usage emphasizes *intimidation*.
 - 3) Gerald Hawthorne, *Perhaps by the choice of this unusual word Paul shows himself anxious that his friends should not 'break loose in disarray' or lose control of themselves as a result of the attacks of their adversaries.*
 - 4) Intimidation is reduced by unity and participation in the common goal.
 - b. Boldness in Christ condemns those opposed to the Gospel but confirms the salvation of the believer.
 - 1) Opponents of the Gospel are proven wrong by the boldness of believers.
 - 2) Christians are vindicated by boldness that comes from God.
 - a) Boldness does not prove one is saved but shows the message to be true.
 - b) *that from God* refers to the fact that God is the giver of courage to stand firm when opposed.
 - c) H. D. M. Spence, *The courage of God's saints in the midst of dangers is a proof of his presence and favor, a token of final victory.*
 - 3) Max Anders, *A fearless, unified church will astound the world. They will see the truth of the gospel. Opposing the gospel, the world faces God's destruction. Proclaiming the gospel, the church waits for God's salvation.*
3. Every Christian is called to suffer for his faith in Christ (29-30), **For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.**
 - a. Christians are granted the privilege of suffering for the sake of Christ.
 - 1) Believers are given the privilege of believing in Jesus Christ as well as the privilege of suffering for Him
 - 2) The word for *granted* means *to give graciously and generously with the implication of good will on the part of the giver* (Louw-Nida Greek Lexicon).
 - 3) The source of a Christian's suffering is not Satan but our Heavenly Father.
 - 4) Thomas Constable, *Suffering is one of the tools God uses to mold his children into vessels that bring glory to His Son.*
 - 5) James 1:2-4, *Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*
 - 6) William Lane Craig, *We just don't know how the sufferings we endure might be used of God in our lives, or, if not in ours, in the lives of those around us. Yes, they often look pointless, but we are simply not in a position to judge...God's purpose for man is not happiness but holiness.*
 - 7) Several excellent books on suffering,
 - a) C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*
 - b) William Lane Craig, *No Easy Answers*
 - b. The life of Paul is an example of holiness evidenced by suffering.
 - 1) The Philippians had seen Paul's struggles as he planted the church in Philippi.
 - 2) They had heard of his suffering through Paul's correspondence and surely word from other believers.
 - 3) Paul urged the Philippians to follow his example of faithful service despite suffering and persecution, 2 Corinthians 4:17, *For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison,*
 - 4) Thomas Constable, *In calling his readers to unite in steadfastly enduring the antagonism of unbelievers in their area, Paul was not asking them to do something he himself had not done. He was urging them to unite with one another, and with him, and to view suffering for their faith as a privilege that would glorify Jesus Christ.*

CONCLUSION

- A. A holy life demonstrates the truth of the Gospel.
- B. Unity among Christians is not an option but a priority.
- C. Humility is a platform on which unity is built.