

Series: Philippines Series 2024

Title: Adorning the Gospel

Text: Php 1: 27-30

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Philippians 1: 27: Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; 28: 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. 29: For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; 30: Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear *to be* in me.

The word "conversation" means citizenship. The Spirit of Christ is teaching us that as citizens of heavenly Jerusalem we are to let the whole of our life be conducted so as to adorn the gospel of Christ. In this passage, the Holy Spirit gives us two ways we adorn the gospel of Christ. One is by unity--"*stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.*" The other is by fearing only God rather than men--"*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.*"

With this passage, Paul comes to the main theme of this letter. Throughout, Paul speaks of brethren being of one spirit and one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel. There is a reason. Paul had been informed that two women in the church at Philippi were not of the same mind. Either they were at variance with each other or they were not of the same mind with the church. These were Paul's sisters in Christ. They had been a help to him as he preached the gospel of Christ.

Paul was given wisdom from the Lord to use true judgment, true spiritual discernment, in the way he dealt with this problem. It does not appear Paul knew the details or sought to know. Paul told the Corinthians, "I was determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor 2: 2).

But Paul did not have to know all the details because Christ their Master knew. The Spirit of Christ gave Paul the words to write in this letter. Christ gave Paul the words to write which the Lord would bless to make these two women of one mind--as well as the rest of the brethren at Philippi, as well as us today.

The Lord's preachers today are not inspired as Paul was. But he gives us a message from his word. We do not know why. But the Lord always knows the need of his people. The Lord blesses his word to our hearts to meet our need.

Before we get to our text let's read a few verses in chapter 3 and 4. These verses lead up to Paul addressing these two by name. These verses give us some insight into what these two sisters needed to hear. Everything written here is Christ teaching them (and us) to trust that our Master is able to teach and keep his saints. Paul said that he wanted to be conformed to Christ. He said I have not already attained, I am not already perfect.

Philippians 3: 13: Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things that are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14: I press toward the mark of the high calling of God in Christ. 15: Let us therefore, as many as be perfect [mature], be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. 16: Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

Let us walk by the same rule of faith. Let us trust Christ is able to make us stand. Let us be of the same mind to run the race looking to Christ above.

Philippians 3: 20: For our conversation [our citizenship--same word as our text] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: 21: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself. 4: 1: Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, *my* dearly beloved. 2: I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord. 3: And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women

which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and *with* other my fellowlabourers, whose names *are* in the book of life.

Whatever the issue was the next words were important for them to hear. They are important for us as well, especially when we face any kind of trial. The word "moderation" in verse 5 carries the meaning of being calm and patient. The word "careful" in verse 6 means anxious or alarmed. The Spirit declares the reason we are to be patient and calm, rather than being anxious and alarmed is because "The Lord is at hand."

Philippians 4: 4: Rejoice in the Lord: *and* again I say, Rejoice. 5: Let your moderation be known unto all men; the Lord is at hand. 6: Be careful for nothing but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 7: And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

The Spirit of our Lord gave Paul true wisdom, spiritual discernment to "*intreat*" these sisters to be of the same mind in the Lord, to stand fast in the Lord. He reminded them that they were one in Christ. Their names were in the Lamb's book of life, along with every elect chosen of God our Father.

It is so very instructive how the Spirit of God moved Paul to help these brethren. He began the epistle informing them how he thanked God for their fellowship from the first day until now. Then he told them he was confident that the Lord who had begun the work in them would finish it until the day of Jesus Christ. Next, he told them that he prayed for them that their love would abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all true judgment by Christ Jesus. Then in our text, he begins to get to the purpose of the letter. He intreats brethren to be of one mind in the Lord and to fear God rather than men.

Proposition: We adorn the gospel of Christ when we stand fast in the Lord, of one mind and one spirit, striving together for the faith of the gospel, fearing God, rather than being terrified by men.

STAND FAST IN ONE SPIRIT

Philippians 1: 27: Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

Remember, it is the Lord Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, who is giving Paul the words to write. So Paul does not use the law as the motive for unity. He uses the gospel of Christ.

What is the gospel of Christ? It is the good news of how Christ has reconciled his people to God. It is the good news of atonement. At-one-ment! Christ has made all God's elect saints one with God. The gospel is the good news that Christ Jesus is the GodMan Mediator between God and his people. He has made us one with God in himself.

1 Timothy 2: 5: For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

2 Corinthians 5: 18 And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; 19: To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. 20: Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. 21: For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

By our fall in Adam, we were aliens, strangers—separated from God and from one another. But the Son of God took sinless flesh and made all God's elect one. Christ is our Peace.

Ephesians 2: 11: Wherefore remember, that ye *being* in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; 12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: 13: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. 14: For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; 15: Having abolished

in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace; 16: And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: 17: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. 18: For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. 19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but FELLOWCITIZENS WITH THE SAINTS, and of the household of God;

Hebrews 12: 22...ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto THE CITY OF THE LIVING GOD, THE HEAVENLY JERUSALEM...23: To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24: And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

So the Spirit says adorn this gospel by being one. "*Only let your conversation*"--your conduct as a citizen of heavenly Jerusalem—"be as it becometh the gospel of Christ." What is more becoming to the gospel of reconciliation than standing fast in ONE spirit with brethren? What adorns the gospel of atonement (the gospel of being at-one-with-God) more than being of ONE mind striving TOGETHER for the faith of the gospel?

God's city is his people and the Spirit of the Lord has compacted God's people together.

Psalm 122:3: Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together:

Through the gospel, Christ our Head has brought every regenerated saint into "*the unity of the faith*" (Eph 4: 13).

Ephesians 4: 16: From [Christ our Head] the whole body [is] fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to [Christ's] effectual working in the measure of every part, [he] maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

1 Corinthians 6:17: he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:13: For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Brethren, it is becoming to the gospel of Christ--it adorns the gospel of reconciliation--when brethren are one. We strive together for the faith of the gospel, trusting Christ to bless and call out his people, as well as trusting Christ to correct and keep our brethren.

Psalm 133:1: Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is* for brethren to dwell together in unity! 2: *It is* like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, *even* Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; 3: As the dew of Hermon, *and as the dew* that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, *even* life for evermore.

IN NOTHING TERRIFIED OF YOUR ADVERSARIES

Philippians 1: 28: 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. 29: For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; 30: Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.

The Spirit of Christ gave Paul these words, declaring that we adorn the gospel of Christ by not being afraid of our adversaries. We fear God rather than men or devils.

The brethren at Philippi had seen Paul beaten and arrested and bound in prison when he first came there. Now, they heard of Paul's conflict in Rome where he was bound. The brethren at Philippi were experiencing the same from the same adversaries that persecuted Paul.

But the Holy Spirit declares through Paul, “*unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.*” The same as faith is the gift of God, given in the behalf of Christ, so suffering is given to us for his sake. He not only gives us the opportunity to suffer for his sake but Christ also gives us the power to bear it without fear of men.

Our gracious Master told us we would be hated by the world.

John 15: 18: If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before *it hated* you. 19: If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. 20: Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

On one occasion the high priest and the Sadducees were filled with indignation when Peter and the apostles were preaching the gospel of Christ. They beat them and put them in prison. But the Angel of the Lord opened the prison and told them to go preach. The officers came and told the council. Again the Pharisees and Sadducees brought the apostles before the council. The council said,

Acts 5: 28...Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man’s blood upon us. 29: Then Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. 30: The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. 31: Him hath God exalted with his right hand *to be* a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. 32: And we are his witnesses of these things; and *so is* also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

The Pharisee, Gamaliel, told the council that if these men were of God then they would be fighting God if they fought his apostles. The council agreed. So they beat them again and,

Acts 5: 40...they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. 41: And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. 42: And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

How could Peter and the other apostles have such boldness? Paul said up it is by “the supply of Spirit of Jesus Christ” (Php 1: 19). The same as the Spirit of our Lord gives us faith to believe on him, so he gives his saints strength so that “in nothing [are we] terrified by [our] adversaries” Paul said,

2 Corinthians 3:5: Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency *is* of God;

Isaiah 51: 12: I, *even* I, *am* he that comforteth you: who *art* thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man *that* shall die, and of the son of man *which* shall be made *as* grass; 13: And forgettest the LORD thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? and where *is* the fury of the oppressor?

This is why the Spirit of Christ declares “*which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.*” A token is a sign or evidence. By rejecting Christ, his gospel and his messengers the high priest and the council proved they were spiritually dead, lost, sons of perdition--sons of hopeless ruin. But God's grace strengthening Peter and the apostles was a token of their salvation, and that of God.

Brethren, the same as our Lord Jesus saved us from the wrath of God, so he shall save us from the wrath of men.

Romans 5: 10:...if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. 11: And not only *so* [we not only rejoice we are counted worthy to suffer for Christ’s sake], but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

Luke 21: 12 [Christ said]...they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute *you*, delivering *you* up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. 13: And it shall turn to you for a testimony.

That means what our text says. It shall turn to you for an evident token of your salvation, and that of God.

Luke 21: 14: Settle *it* therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: 15: For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. 16: And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and *some* of you shall they cause to be put to death. 17: And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake. 18 But there shall not an hair of your head perish. 19: In your patience possess ye your souls.

That is what Paul wrote in chapter 4 verses 5 and 6, "Let your moderation be known unto all men." "In your patience posses ye your souls." "The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing."

2 Timothy 1:7: For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. 8: Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; 9: Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, 10: But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: 11: Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. 12: For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

Romans 8:35: Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36: As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37: Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

So, brethren, remember, you are a citizen of God's city. Only let your conduct as a citizen of Christ's kingdom be as it becometh the gospel of Christ. Do so by standing fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel. Do so by fearing God rather than men. Let nothing make you terrified by our adversaries. It is a token to you of your salvation, and that of God. And rejoice in the Lord that Christ gave you such a high honor as to be persecuted for his sake.

1 Peter 4: 12: Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: 13: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

Amen!