

Philippians: Twin Passions

To Know Christ and to
Make Him Known
Book 2

Vistoso Community Church

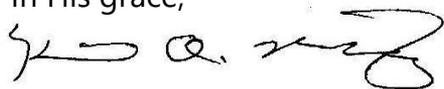
Foreword

I don't know how many times I've read through the Book of Philippians: A dozen times! Two dozen! And yet, I never cease to be amazed at what happens when I return once more to the infinite source, the Word of God, and ask,

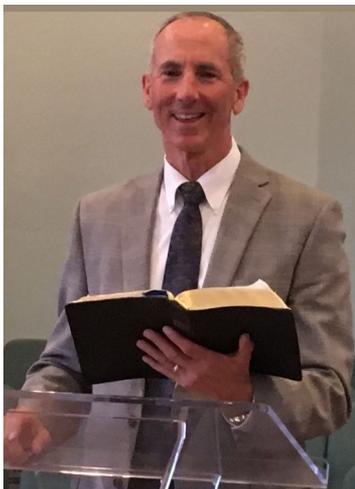
"Lord, what do You have for us today?"

Part of the answer I received in Philippians is in these Philippians booklets, of which this is Book 2. I trust you will be blessed to the same extent as I have been!

In His grace,



Kevin Redig



All Scripture quotes have been taken from either the NIV (1984 edition) or the NKJV (1982 edition).

Vistoso Community Church
Publication: February 2026

Introduction

As we continue our investigation of Philippians, we are going to begin with a personal testimony from Paul that covers choices he has made and how he has chosen to order his life. Not surprisingly, these decisions are in keeping with his twin passions to *know Christ* and to *make Him known!* Here is an example to whet your appetite:

For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

Philippians 1:21

A Challenge

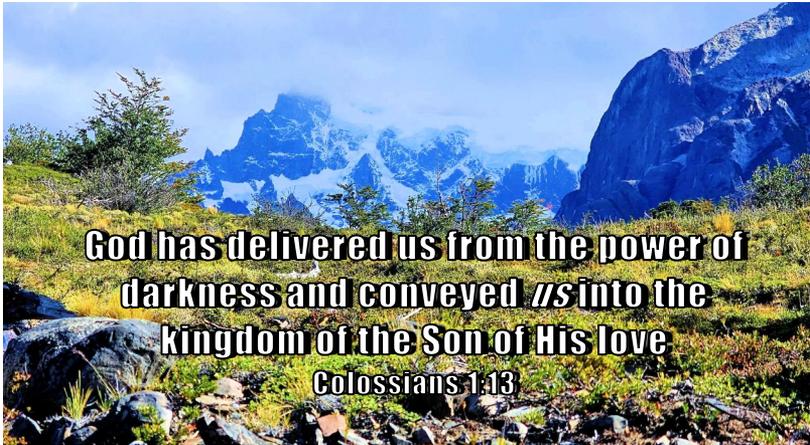
Before we take up Paul's testimony, I want to challenge your own thinking. Allow me to do so with an illustration from my childhood. Growing up, my Dad was a great fan of Sears, Roebuck & Company. We made many a trip to the local Sears store to obtain what was needed in terms of tools, automotive parts, and hardware. Whenever a project was interrupted for a trip to Sears, I would race up to my room to scrounge whatever loose change I could find.

While my Dad was puzzling out what he needed for the current project, I would ask if I could make a trip to the candy counter. I would wait my turn in line and always ordered the same

thing: *"May I have 97 cents worth of roasted cashews please?"* They were piping hot, and the oil used in roasting them soon soaked through the bag. Those cashews never made it home!



What does this have to do with what we are about to learn in Philippians? As the result of placing our faith in the person and work of Christ, you and I were transferred out of Satan's kingdom and into that of Jesus Christ. (Colossians 1:13-14) We have a changed eternal destiny, are clothed with the righteousness of Christ, and have works foreordained by God for us to do. (Ephesians 2)



When I look at the church in America today, I fear we are not living up to God's calling upon us. The church has become like me standing at the candy counter, and asking politely, "May I have 97 cents worth of Christianity please?" For that is all the room we have left in our secularized lives!

The Problem We Face

Let's review how we are doing by reviewing the components of the Church's problem today.

1. *You and I have come to faith in Christ in a secularized culture.* What does that mean? It means God has

been pushed to the periphery. He is still there, but carries no weight. This is easy to prove. Consider any public issue today: Israel, transgenderism, homosexuality, immigration ... Point me to the place in the public discourse where what God has to say in His Word is presented and seriously considered.

God's view is nowhere to be found. That is the mark of a secularized culture. If you will look back at earlier times in our history as a nation, you will find things were much different.

2. *We live in such a time and place of prosperity, that self-indulgence has become its own idol, and we have forced it into Christianity.* We have begun to look at Christianity through the lens of what it can do for us. To be sure, Christianity provides tremendous blessing for those who walk by faith, but is that its sole purpose? Instead, aren't we to be caught up in a grander purpose, one where our lives are lived, not self-centered, but in a sacrificial manner? As we shall see, Philippians provides a very clear, and counter-culture answer to this question.
3. *Philosophical pluralism has become the spirit of our day.* Anything goes. Sincerity is what counts. Don't judge me. There are no real absolutes. The only heresy remaining is that there is any such thing as heresy. The idea of *sin* is a relic from the past. Every bit of this attacks the very idea of *thus sayeth the Lord*. And, if you think the church in America hasn't in a very real way been caught up in this, then you have just not been paying attention!

4. *Because of all this, there is a famine for hearing the Word of God!*

We have reached the condition described by Hosea:

“My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge ...”

Hosea 4:6

“... a people without understanding will come to ruin.”

Hosea 4:14

The impact on Christianity is very clear and quite visible across much of our country, for too often we have very little room left in our secularized lives! Carson describes it this way:

I want just enough Gospel ... “to make me happy, but not so much that I get addicted. I don’t want so much Gospel that I learn to really hate covetousness and lust. I certainly don’t want so much that I start to love my enemies, cherish self-denial ... I would like enough Gospel to make my family secure and my children well behaved, but not so much that I find my ambitions redirected or my giving too greatly enlarged.

D. A. Carson

I might restate the Christian mindset that I believe is rebuked by the Book of Philippians as follows:

I would like enough truth to make me feel good and satisfy my religious longings without actually transforming my character or modifying my life!” About \$.97 worth of being a disciple should do it!

5. *As a preview of coming attractions, the Book of Philippians absolutely demolishes this whole viewpoint.*

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,

Philippians 2:5

Paul's Personal Testimony

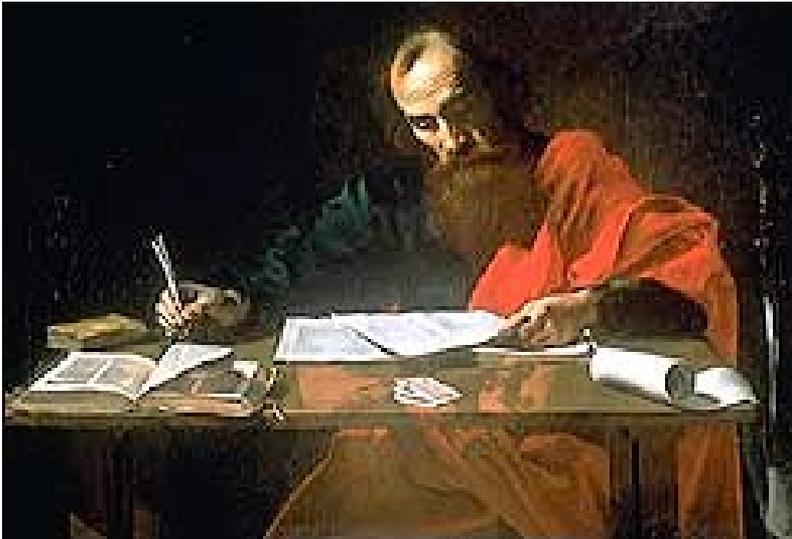
As we continue in Chapter 1, we move from Paul's prayer for the church in Philippi to several expressions of his own personal testimony. Here is our first example:

Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the Gospel.

Philippians 1:12

You see, the church in Philippi is worried about Paul. Their beloved apostle is under house arrest, restricted from ministry, and facing possible execution. In their minds, it would be an absolute catastrophe if Paul were to be martyred in Rome. You know how we all tend to get—circumstances and what-ifs start to loom larger in our thinking than anything else!

If we look at Paul's recent history for a moment, we will learn a simple but important lesson. *Stuff* happens to those in the Lord's service!



Those in the Lord's service are not exempt from the challenges of living in the Devil's world. Paul's three missionary journeys were filled with drama—much by way of persecution, including even being stoned. If you want to see a list of some of the hardships faced by Paul, read II Corinthians 11:23-27. It is amazing that he continues to carry on.

After his third missions trip, he was involved in a riot in Jerusalem and falsely arrested. He has spent two years imprisoned in Caesarea, survived a harrowing sea voyage, and is now under house arrest in Rome. And, what is Paul's testimony? *God has used his circumstances to advance the Gospel!* That's all that matters to Paul.

I find Paul's attitude remarkable. Further, let me suggest that Paul leads us to consider the distinction between two kinds of Christians: those who operate from a mindset of *Divine Viewpoint* and those who operate from a mindset of *Human Viewpoint*.

Two Viewpoints

The idea behind these two terms comes right from the Scriptures:

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts ..." Isaiah 55:8
(Divine Viewpoint) (Human Viewpoint)

Then is developed further as the verse continues in Isaiah 55:8-9.

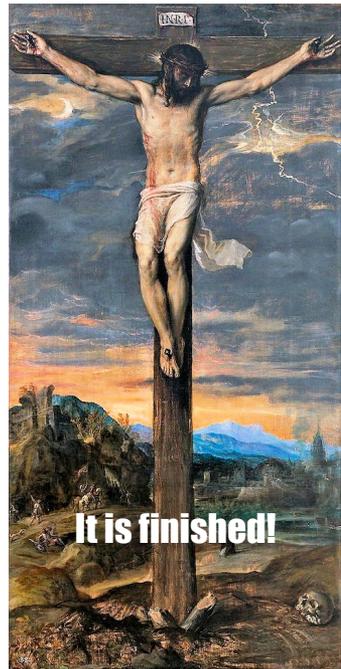
**"... neither are your ways My ways," declares the Lord.
"As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts."**
(Divine Viewpoint)
(Human Viewpoint)

I trust you can see that God has made a very stark distinction between His thoughts and those of man, that is, between *Divine Viewpoint* and *Human Viewpoint*. For example, *Human Viewpoint* would consider trials something to be avoided at all costs or to be wiggled out of as fast as possible. On the other hand, *Divine Viewpoint* would consider the possibility that God is providing an opportunity, in the midst of trial, to advance the cause of the Gospel and/or His plans and purposes.

Would you like an example? I have two in mind. First, the ultimate example is the Jews cooperating with the Romans to put their Messiah to death. From the human perspective, that would appear to be a complete failure of the First Advent of Jesus Christ. Yet, from God's perspective, this seeming disaster was in keeping with *God's set purpose and foreknowledge*. (Acts 2:23)

That act allowed the Lord Jesus to *taste death for everyone and destroy him who holds the power of death!* (Hebrews 2:9, 14) Is it

not as true as it can be that the lost world around us has one attitude toward the cross of Christ, and we have another?



For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

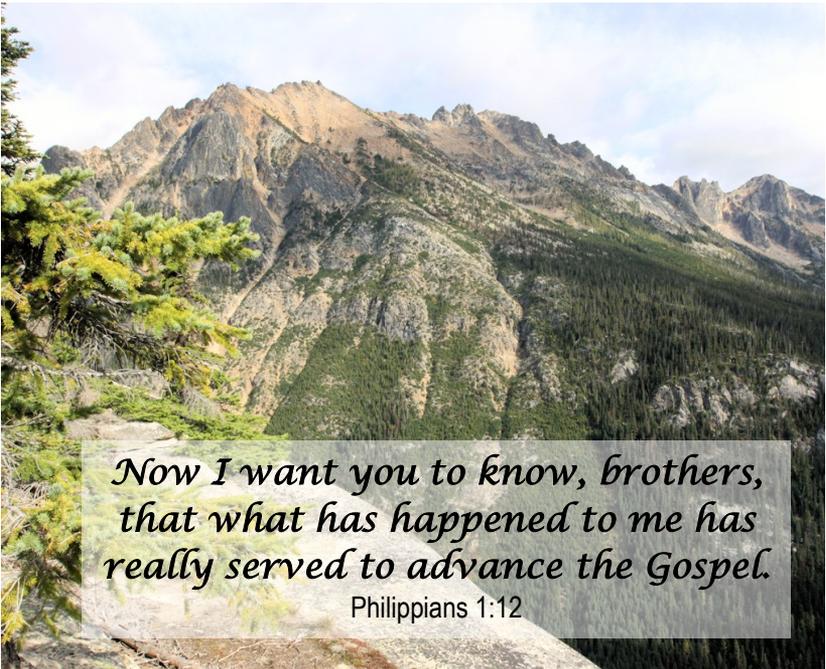
I Corinthians 1:18

That is the difference between *Human Viewpoint* and *Divine Viewpoint* perfectly illustrated for you. Now what does this have to do with Paul? Simple—his testimony is one of *Divine Viewpoint*! Look again at what he has to say:

Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the Gospel.

Philippians 1:12

Is Paul focused on his personal difficulties? Is he even asking for prayer so that he can escape his difficult circumstances? Neither! Instead, he is telling the church in Philippi, "*Don't worry about me, rejoice in what the Lord is doing! Praise God the Gospel is advancing forward and people are getting saved!*"



First Point of Application

Allow me to share a *Point of Application*:

As Christians with a sovereign God, it is very desirable for us to trust God to use the disasters of this life to accomplish His good on the other side of the disaster!

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose. Romans 8:28

Paul's situation in Rome, as described in Philippians, is an example of God working for good! In fact, Philippians 1:12 is an example of a well-known Old Testament lesson in the reunion of Joseph with his brothers:

“ You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.” Genesis 50:20

Perhaps you would like proof. Perhaps you would like to be reminded of the *lives that have been preserved* during Paul's time in jail. Gladly!

... so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ ... Philippians 1:13

The *palace guard* mentioned by Paul is the Praetorian Guard of the Emperor. Paul is chained to one or two of these guards in six hour shifts, 24 hours a day—for two years. This is potentially quite a few soldiers. Further, those chained to Paul have become quite aware that he is not under guard for crimes committed, but for the cause of Christ!

Here is *Divine Viewpoint* for you: Paul's liberty has been severely restricted and his life is difficult, and yet all, he can talk about is how the Gospel of Christ has been advanced! Does Paul see himself as a prisoner or a witness? Again, the answer to that is the difference between *Divine Viewpoint* and *Human Viewpoint*.

But perhaps you are wondering: Has the cause of Christ really been advanced? Consider the closing verses of Paul's letter to the church in Philippi.

Greet all the saints in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me send greetings. All the saints send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household.

Philippians 4:21-22

Who are these believing members of Caesar's household that send their greetings to Philippi? The most reasonable answer to this is that they are members of Nero's Praetorian Guard. After all, they have been chained to Paul 24/7.

These burly guardsmen have heard the message of Christ's death on their behalf and how their sins can be forgiven through belief in His name! Not only have they heard it, but they have had the chance to share it with other members of the Guard, which at times numbered as many as 9000 men! Some of those Guardsmen placed their faith in the person and work of Christ—and got saved for all eternity.

Thus, we have an aspect of *God's ways* that should encourage us beyond measure: The saved members of the Praetorian Guard are sending their greetings to a saved Philippian jailor and a former demon-possessed fortune teller.

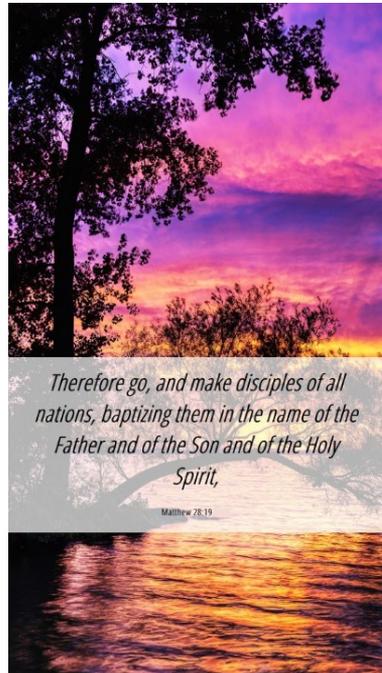
God's ways truly are far above man's ways. Paul has had an absolutely rotten last five years from a human perspective. Yet what does he want to talk about? His focus is that his circumstances have worked out for the advancement of the Gospel. Just think of the teaching ministry he is having with those saved Praetorian Guards who spend six hours chained to him. What comes to mind is that Paul's *light and momentary* troubles are achieving for him an eternal weight of glory that far outweighs them all. (II Corinthians 4:17)

Second Point of Application

Here is another *Point of Application* I think we should consider. *Do you think we should see ourselves as:*

- *A retiree or a witness for Jesus?*
- *A patient or a witness for Jesus?*
- *A family patriarch (matriarch) or a witness for Jesus?*

Now, this is really Paul's story, He is not pressuring us. But I can't help asking, *"Would it please God for us to trust Him and make use of our circumstances to manifest His Name and His so-great salvation?"* How could the answer be anything but a resounding "Yes!"



Continuing Paul's Testimony

As we continue, let me draw your attention to a second, unforgettable, portion of Paul's personal testimony:

For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

Philippians 1:21

This statement is elegant in its simplicity and extremely powerful as an example for Christians over the course of the past 2000 years! Let me begin by reminding you of Paul's circumstances: under house arrest in Rome following almost three years of arrest prior to his arrival at Rome, and he is waiting to come before Nero, who is not a friend of the Church.

Now scan Chapter 1 of his letter to the church in Philippi for any hint of complaining or feeling sorry for himself. Do you find even the slightest hint? Instead, his interests seem to be on getting out the Gospel message, praying for the church in Philippi, and passing on wisdom to them. Do you realize we would never actually know the difficulties Paul is facing if we didn't piece them together from other portions of the Bible? I feel compelled to ask: *How in the world has Paul gotten to the point where he sums up his approach to life as, to live is Christ?*

Before answering the above question, let's consider the language of Philippians 1:21 above.

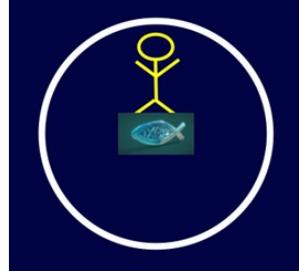
- The verse begins with the conjunction *for*. This word is used to explain what has come before. Paul has told us how he can see God's hand at work in continuing to advance the cause of the Gospel, despite the less than desirable circumstances.

- The verb *to live* is in the present tense, while *to die* is in the aorist. What Paul is saying is this: Moment by moment my earthly life is Christ until I reach the point of physical death, then that will be great gain. For:

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.

Psalm 116:15

Paul has this unusual and compelling testimony because, with regard to his daily life, Christ is its center and circumference, as depicted in the graphic. As its center, Christ is his life's singular focus. As its circumference, He is caught up in the plans and purposes of Christ to the exclusion of everything else.



Now, I can tell you, that having this approach isn't going to be an issue for any of us in eternity. The great challenge is to make it *standard operating procedure* right now! The question for us: Is this type of life perhaps just for super-apostles like Paul?

(By the way, I have put the little fish symbol at the center of the circle because this symbol was used for Jesus in the early church. The Greek word for fish is *ichthus*. In the Greek language, this can be used as an acrostic for the following phrase: *Jesus Christ, God's Son and Savior.*)

Now we know the answer to a question we posed earlier: *How could you exist in the middle of circumstances like Paul's and continue on without a word of complaint?* You can do so if your life is centered in Christ, and you are caught up in the things He is doing and the things He cares about!

Back to Application

Who can actually approach life from the standpoint of:

... to live is Christ and to die is gain ...?

First, *only one who has the Son and thereby has a share in His life can approach life from this standpoint!*

And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life ... I write these things to you who believe in the Name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

I John 5:11-13

If we have the Son, we have life—His life! But can we know for sure? Upon the authority of God’s Word it is true for all those who have *believed in the Name of the Son of God!* To have believed in His name is to have believed in who He is and what He has done—the eternal Son of God who came in the flesh who provided our salvation through the finished work of the cross!

Second, *we must extend the concept! To manage all of life from this perspective requires Christ to be the center and circumference of our lives.*

Let’s drill down more deeply on what it means to live with Christ as the center and circumference of our lives. Let me suggest that it can be understood as a life lived:

*From the perspective of **DIVINE VIEWPOINT**
in **DEPENDENT TRUST**
and steadfastly **ABIDING IN CHRIST.***

Divine viewpoint requires us to know the Word of God and allow it to guide our thinking. Dependent trust is simply to walk by faith every moment of every day.

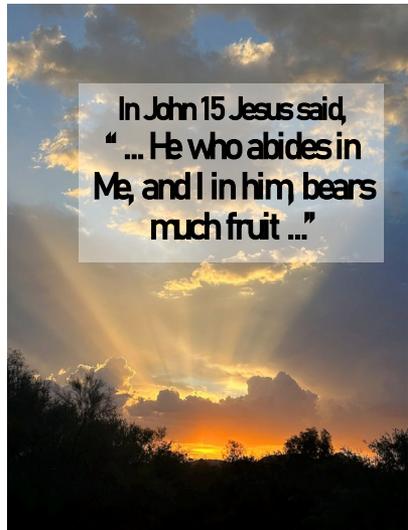
Look at how perfectly the following definition of a moment-by-moment faith fits the life of Paul.

... faith means obeying God in spite of the circumstances around us, the feeling within us, or the consequences ahead of us. Warren Wiersbe

Having recently studied what it means to *abide in Christ*, allow me to remind you of our working definition.

To Abide in Christ is to:

- *By faith, see myself in Him where He is and by faith know He is in me where I am.*
- *Think His thoughts, share His affections, and engage in His purposes by means of knowing "His mind"—the Word of God.*
- *Reckon upon my participation in both the death and resurrection of Christ my Savior that I, too, might be dead to sin's power and alive unto God in newness of life.*
- *By faith trust the Spirit of Christ to put to death the misdeeds of the flesh while at the same time manifesting the fruit of the Savior's life in me.*
- *To stand firm, unwavering in the One and only source of life as a new creation, such that every failure is a reminder that I need more of Jesus and less of self!*



**In John 15 Jesus said,
“... He who abides in
Me, and I in him bears
much fruit ...”**

Perhaps you are wondering why I brought the idea of *Abiding in Christ* from John's Gospel into this discussion? Because Paul does:

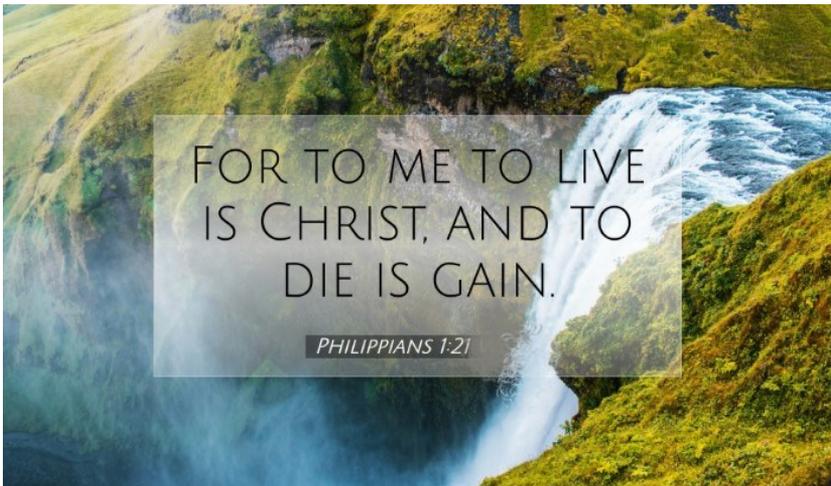
If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Philippians 1:22

"... If a man abides in Me and I in him, he will bear much fruit: apart from Me you can do nothing."
John 15:5

There is no fruitful labor for Christ apart from abiding in Him! Do you see how essential it is for us to put together these truths that we learn week after week? It is not John's approach to the Christian life, and Paul's approach to the Christian life that we are learning. It is God trying to build a structure of Divine Viewpoint in our souls!

Now consider the dilemma that Divine Viewpoint created in Paul's soul:

Yet what shall I choose ... I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. Philippians 1:22-24



Paul is not saying that he gets to choose, but rather is sharing with us the *tug of war* between what he feels to be his responsibility and what he most deeply desires. In essence, his dilemma is this:

Do I want to stay and bear fruit—which means my imprisonment will continue; or do I want to go home to be with the Lord, which is better by far.

Don't for a moment think that this dilemma is Paul's alone. I have known those Christian brothers and sisters who wrestle with:

My spouse needs me, but I would rather be free of the chains of this body and be with the Lord.

As Paul makes clear, it is best to simply leave this situation in the hands of the Lord.

Yet Further Application

I have been asked by more than one person: *"Why hasn't the Lord just taken me home? I am ready to go!"* Here is the answer: *If God is leaving you here, it is because He has fruit He yet wants to produce in your life. Someone needs you to minister to them!*

Ponder deeply the following definition of ministry:

Ministry occurs when divine resources meet the needs of others through loving channels to the glory of God.

Warren Wiersbe

Would this be reason enough to carry on in what God has called you to do? I believe so! And, it would seem that Paul came to this very same conclusion:

Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith

Philippians 1:25

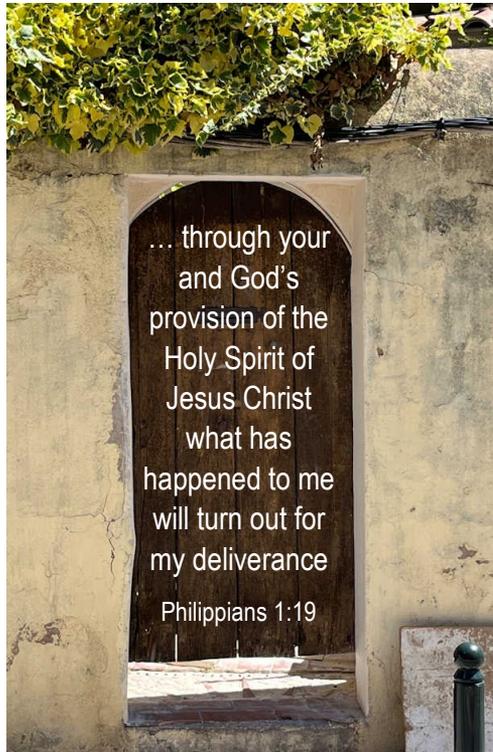
This discussion of Paul's ministry allows us to see very clearly that the concept of *Divine Viewpoint* versus *Human Viewpoint* is not a theory with marginal significance. Instead, it is a doctrine that makes all the difference in the world with respect to the kind of life we live.

As we have seen, Paul is willing to continue in the midst of the most trying of circumstances because:

... I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith.

This is a life lived sacrificially in the service of others. So, what does *Human Viewpoint* look like? The short answer is: It is a life lived with self at the center. As we must all

admit, selfishness can manifest itself in so many different ways. I trust you are beginning to realize the wonder and beauty of God's ways. However, there is a cost involved. We see that cost in the life of our Lord, in the life of Paul, and it will be required in our lives as well if we are going to align ourselves with the *Divine Viewpoint* regarding service



that we are learning from our text in Philippians.

Paul's Divine Viewpoint Mindset

So let's narrow our focus to the *Divine Viewpoint* that governed Paul's thoughts and actions.

First, Paul is facing one of three options for the future: continued imprisonment, execution, or release.

Second, Paul has worked this out in his own mind in keeping with *Divine Viewpoint*, such that he is at peace because no matter what happens, he considers it a *win-win* situation. Put yourself in Paul's shoes for a moment. He is under house arrest, chained to an often uncouth and unsympathetic guard 24 hours a day, and the threat of execution is a daily concern! Would you conclude that you are facing a *win-win* situation? Would you be fully engaged in ministry?

Third, who could actually do something like what Paul is doing? The answer is that only someone who looks at life from the Divine perspective! Let me show you what Paul is thinking:

- If I remain alive, then the Holy Spirit is going to produce fruit in my life that I will bear as Jesus promised:

"If a man abides in Me and I in him, he will bear much fruit, apart from Me you can do nothing." John 15:5

That's a win!

- If I am executed, my soul and spirit will leave this body and I will immediately be in the presence of the Lord, which is better by far.

... to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. II Corinthians 5:8

That's a really big win!

Fourth, circumstances simply can't threaten the Christian with *Divine Viewpoint*! I am not saying it is easy to maintain this kind of mindset. I am saying it makes a huge difference when it is a way of life:

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me!
Philippians 4:13

... **Christ in [me] the hope of glory.** Colossians 1:27

... **heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ ...** Romans 8:17

Fifth, does this explain how Paul is able to sustain effective ministry and a fruitful life despite over four years of unjust confinement? I think it does! Here is where the text of Philippians is going to take us—could this approach to life, a *Divine Viewpoint* mindset, do the same for us no matter what circumstances come our way? I have no doubt of it!

Sixth, here is the challenge presented to us by the Book of Philippians: Is our way of looking at the future compatible with *Divine Viewpoint* or *Human Viewpoint*? Is our focus one of fruitful ministry in the midst of circumstances or is it exclusively centered on next year's travel plans or ongoing recreational activities? Ouch! Why would I offend you like this? I am not trying to offend. I am trying to shift your thinking to align with God's Word!

Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that."
James 4:13-15

Paul's Intent

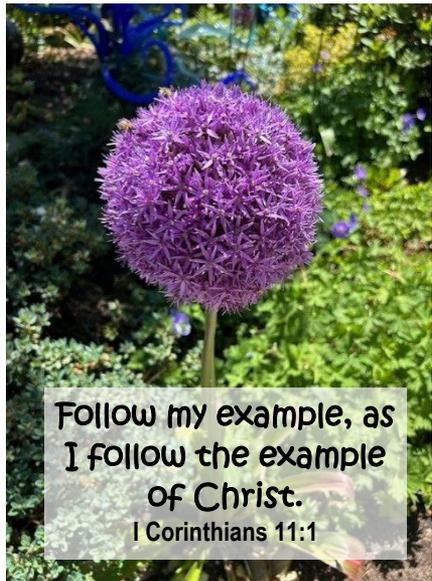
In Philippians 1:12 and 1:21 Paul has shared intimate details of what he is thinking. What do you suppose his motive was in doing so? Let me suggest that in sharing his *Divine Viewpoint* with us, he hoped to be a model for the church in Philippi, and, by virtue of its inclusion in the Word of God, become a model for the Church down through the centuries! How could I possibly know this? Paul has told us:

Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ. I Corinthians 11:1

To complete the concept, the Lord Jesus has told us what is on His mind as well!

...“Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of His own accord, but only what He sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.”

John 5:19 ESV



Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.
I Corinthians 11:1

Perhaps you are thinking, *“But I am not imprisoned, how do I follow Paul’s example?”* Good question! Let me ask it this way: *If Paul was in a hospital bed with a serious medical condition, what might he be thinking?* Let me suggest he wouldn’t be focused on his personal circumstances, but rather, Christ would be his center and

circumference. He would be thinking about spouse, children, and how he might minister to others. Because for him: *to live is Christ and to die is gain!*

A Serious Question

Paul seems to know that he is going to remain. But how are we to know if we are going to remain or be called home into the presence of the Lord? Would you be surprised to learn that I have been asked this question quite a few times? Can you also see how it might impact our prayer life? By that I mean, how can we know exactly what to pray for?

For my answer to this question, let's start here:

God is too wise to make a mistake and too loving to be unkind.

Arthur Pink

We must make sure that this is very clear in our thinking and then go right ahead and ask the Lord to do that which is naturally on our heart. Usually, that is a request to heal a loved one. In some cases, it might be to bring to an end their physical suffering and call them home. Here is how I understand that Scripturally:

I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. Psalm 27:13 ESV

Until I am ... **away from the body and at home with the Lord.** II Corinthians 5:8

Do you see what I am suggesting? We simply trust the Lord to be able to deliver in any and all circumstances until our work is done—and then *to depart is better by far!* We can't, and don't have to, know the specifics, but this we can know:

All my days were written in Your book and ordained for me before one of them came to be. Psalm 139:16 BSB

My times are in Your hands; deliver me from my enemies and from those who pursue me. Psalm 31:15

Again, I remind you of why it is a *win-win*:

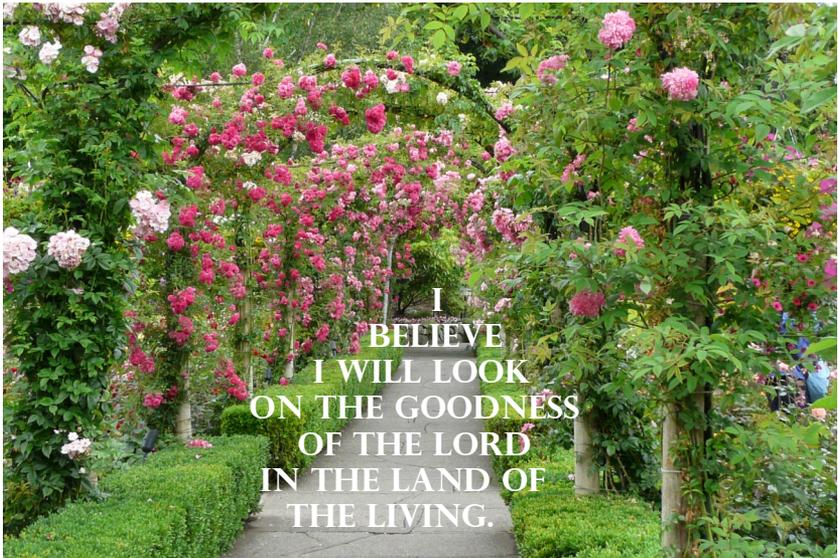
*When all my labors and trials are o'er,
And I am safe on that beautiful shore,
Just to be near the dear Lord I adore,
Will through the ages be glory for me.*

Charles Hutchison Gabriel

I trust we might always be able to keep Paul's example in the back of our minds:

Father, use this trial to further Your purposes ... use it for good! And Father, enable me to complete the work that You have given me to do, that I might glorify You before the glory to come!

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day ... II Timothy 4:7-8



Paul's statements—*To complete the work God has given us to do ... To fight the good fight and finish the race ...* includes 101 things. It is a gift to the poor, caring for a spouse, faithfulness in prayer. These things are the fruit God wishes to produce in our lives, the fruit that we would bear, and, as a result, give glory to Him. Furthermore, these are the kinds of things that are going to be evaluated at the *Judgment Seat of Christ* and rewarded by our Savior!

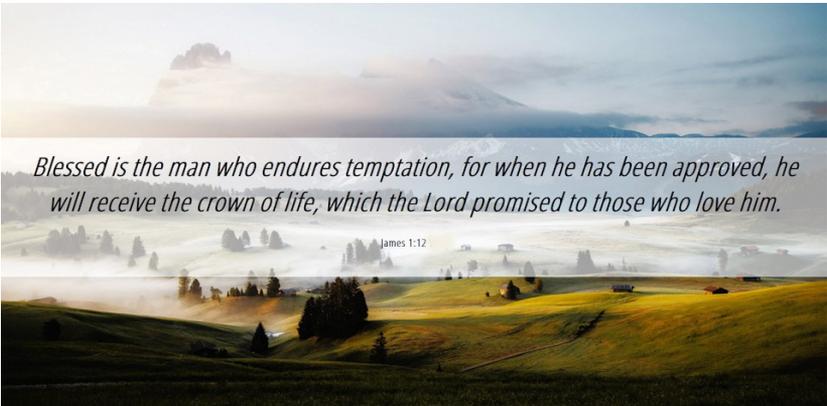
For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body ... II Corinthians 5:10

If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward.
I Corinthians 3:14

The idea of Christ as the center and circumference of our lives, exalting Him in life or death, and finishing well is most certainly a shift from *Human Viewpoint* to *Divine Viewpoint*. What a change it will make in how we spend our remaining days! So, I ask, when shall we start?

Be very careful, then, how you live ... making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.

Ephesians 5:15-16



There is your answer. You should start right now!
Redeem each and every day for the Lord, and don't expect any help from this world in doing so.

Those Who Resist

There are always those who resist this idea of rewards, as if they are problematic motivation. They could be, but give me a chance to provide a different perspective. In the military, when an individual receives a personal commendation, the entire unit is gathered, family is invited, and there is a pause in routine to celebrate individual accomplishment. This accomplishment is then memorialized with a ribbon that becomes part of the military member's daily uniform.



Because this is part of my background, I think about this attitude in relationship to the Christian Life. Is what I am doing today worthy of a *Prevailing Christian* citation? Is it worthy of a *Divine Good Service Medal*? Could you imagine how encouraging it would be if these awards showed up in the moment? Upon the authority of the Word of God, we must believe they are coming!

But what is the ultimate reason for accumulating reward? I can tell you what it is for me: To one day be able to do what the elders in Revelation 4 are doing, laying whatever rewards I might have earned in this life at the feet of Jesus as an act of worship. Let me pause for just a minute in order to give a bit of my own testimony.

It is the kinds of things that we are studying in Philippians that are the reason I love being a Christian! Not because it is an easy calling; it is anything but! Rather,

I love being a Christian because: I am a child of God with His life and an eternal home in His heaven; God has placed such a treasure inside me, a jar of clay, that He can cause even bad things to work for good. He has given me all the divine resources necessary for life and godliness, and He has given me a focus in this life that you will never find in the world:

... to live is Christ and to die is gain!

I love being a Christian because it is compelling, it is winsome, and it is true!

And Now, to Verse 27

Everything Paul has taught us thus far has been leading up to Verse 27:

Only let your conduct be worthy of the Gospel of Christ

...

Philippians 1:27

Paul is telling the church in Philippi (and us): *Here are your marching orders! Enough about me, here is where your focus needs to be!*

First, the Greek. We can greatly improve our understanding of this passage if we focus a bit on the Greek language in which it was originally written.

- The word *only* is used when drawing attention to just one thing. Paul is saying let what comes next govern your behavior.
- The word translated *conduct* has lost something in the translation. It is related to one's conduct in the context of one's responsibilities as a citizen.
- Finally, the word *worthy* speaks of that which is of an equivalent weight. Paul wants the life we live to be of an equivalent weight to the Gospel of Christ.

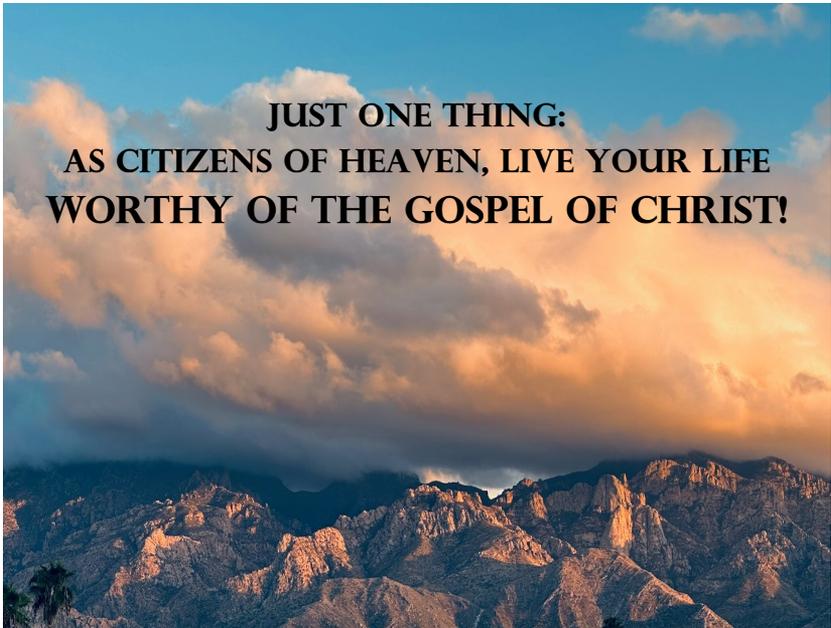
Second, Two Translations. So let's take a moment to compare two different translations of this same portion of Scripture:

Only let your conduct be worthy of the Gospel of Christ
... Philippians 1:27, NKJV

Just one thing: As citizens of heaven, live your life worthy of the Gospel of Christ. Philipian 1:27, CSB

In this case, I think the Christian Standard Bible (CSB) is very helpful in aiding us to grasp Paul's intent. It is essential that we get this right, because this single verse is going to govern the content of Paul's epistle, all of the way down to Chapter 2, Verse 18.

As we seek to comply with Paul's guidance, I want you to realize that we face a predicament—a very challenging one! Ponder the verse on the next page carefully. See if you can determine what is going to make this different?



Just one thing: As citizens of heaven, live your life worthy of the Gospel of Christ. ... Philippians 1:27 CSB

This is the challenge the verse presents:

As believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we are called to live as "worthy citizens" of a place that we have never seen (heaven) while, at the same time, understanding that we are living in a land ruled by the arch enemy of our Sovereign (this world). This complicates things for us, because it is the only land we have ever known!

Read the above statement carefully in order to see the challenge faced by every Christian. This is not something we can gloss over, for it is not something we will ever be able to manage from the source of our own wisdom and our own strength. If we are ever to live in obedience to Verse 27, it will only be because we recognize the scope of the challenge and take up the *tools* that God has provided to *live worthy of the Gospel of Christ!*

Citizens Worthy of Heaven

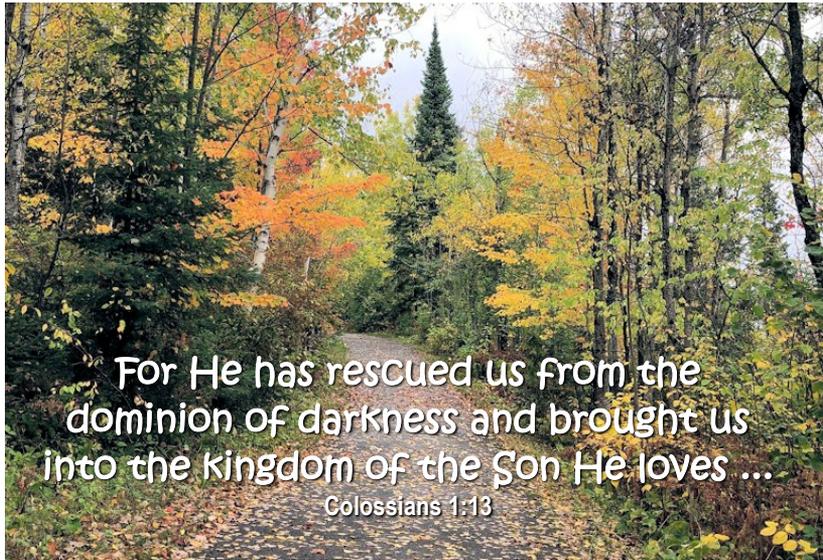
First, *let's reinforce the truth of our heavenly citizenship, and how we are to see ourselves in relationship to this world.*

But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there ... Philippians 3:20

When we are born-again children of God and are positionally *in Christ*, we are no longer to identify with our earthly citizenship, but instead, that of heaven for we have been transferred into the kingdom of our Lord and Savior. (Colossians 1:13)

... they admitted they were aliens and strangers on earth ... Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

Hebrews 11:13, 16



Second, we need to know right up front that there are natural consequences for our change of citizenship from the earthly to the heavenly.

If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

John 15:18-19 ESV

The chief adversary of God's plans and purposes, Satan, is behind the machinations of this world. So, it should be no surprise that the world will come against the thinking and actions of the Christian. That raises the question: "Should we allow the hatred of the world to effect our mindset or impact our actions?" Not if we see our citizenship and future firmly anchored in the heavenlies! But in order for it to truly make a difference in our mental attitude and daily life, we are going to have to walk by faith in the reality of a place we have not yet seen apart from the testimony of the Scriptures.

Third, *how are we to actually do this—live as a citizen of heaven—given it is a place we have never seen or visited?*

God has a very direct answer:

“... My righteous ones will walk by faith—” Habakkuk 2:4

We simply take God at His Word and believe what He says. There is no pleasing Him apart from doing so:

... without faith, it is impossible to please God ...

Hebrews 11:6

And now you know why I am working through this so carefully—because:

... faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.

Romans 10:17

I think it is very helpful to see the nature of our struggle as made clear in the following Scriptures:

So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

II Corinthians 4:18

For we walk by faith, not by sight.

II Corinthians 5:7

The Scriptures teach us:

- The things of this world are: seen, temporary, and lead to a life lived by sight.
- The things associated with our heavenly citizenship are: unseen, eternal, and, therefore, require a life lived by faith.

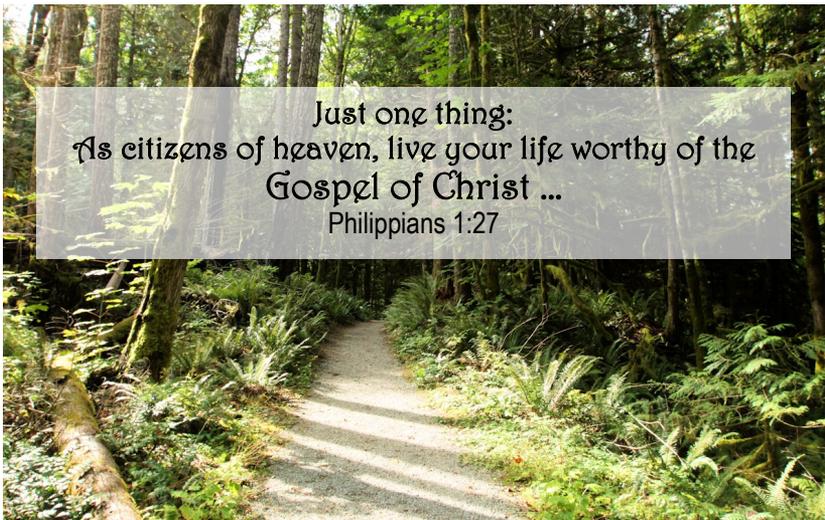
This distinction is subtle yet imperative. If we observe our lives closely, I am quite certain we think and act far more often by what is seen, than what is unseen. That means we are living by sight and not by faith. This is not pleasing to our God, nor is it the way of a citizen of heaven. Part of maturing spiritually is to make the shift from a walk by sight to a walk by faith!

The Hand of Providence

Let me pause for a moment to share the providential hand of God, such that I both stand in awe and am greatly encouraged! As it has turned out, I spent two weeks preaching on the content of Philippians 1:27.

The path to those two Sundays started a year earlier as I felt led of the Lord to follow our study in Romans with one in Philippians. Given the nature of our church calendar, summer series, vacation plans, I could never have predicted when we would arrive at this verse that so clearly speaks of our heavenly focus.

As it turned out, the two weeks I spent on this passage "just happened to be" the two weeks prior to our 2024 national elections. What a coincidence! And what a blessing! While the rest of the world was going absolutely bonkers with the unfolding drama of the "worldly" elections, I was blessed to be thinking about my heavenly citizenship, and how I might please my true Sovereign. I hope I never forget that lesson.



An Old Testament Example

I love Old Testament illustrations of New Testament truth. Let me share one with you.

And when the servant of the man of God arose early and went out, there was an army, surrounding the city with horses and chariots. ... "Alas, my master! What shall we do?"

II Kings 6:15

Here is the backstory. The king of Aram has had enough of the prophet Elisha, and so he sends a strong force of horses and chariots to capture him. Elisha's servant awakens to being surrounded by this force and in despair alerts his master. So what is the answer to his question: "*What shall we do?*"

For the people of God the answer is: *Stop living by sight and instead walk by faith!* This New Testament principle we have just learned is perfectly illustrated in the Old Testament account of Elisha's answer to his servant:

"Don't be afraid," the prophet answered. "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them." And Elisha prayed, "O Lord, open his eyes so he may see."

II Kings 6:16-17

God answered Elisha's prayer, and suddenly the servant



was able to see a great heavenly host of horses and chariots of fire. Elisha and his servant were in no danger at all! But a mind-set of confidence rather than hopelessness was only possible if they chose

to walk by faith and not by sight. This has always been God's way for His people, whether the Jews of Israel or the members of His Church!

Our Response

Let's take this a step further by asking, "*How is the saved child of God meant to relate to his or her Savior?*"

Though you have not seen Him, you love Him; and even though you do not see Him now, you believe in Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy ...

I Peter 1:8

Pressing yet further, how does the Christian achieve victory in the Christian life? We do so in part by believing the promises He has given us.

His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness. Through these He has given us His very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

II Peter 1:3-4

These promises for the most part deal with unseen things, yet they have the power to enable us to escape the corruption of this world and participate in the divine nature! To walk by sight as a Christian is to live far below our heavenly citizenship—perish the thought!

Just to make sure we do not take this too far: *God does bless with that which is seen to strengthen our hold upon the unseen!*

Consider the following question: "Does God ever provide that which is *seen* as part of our development?"

Of course He does! Was the resurrection of Jesus Christ an example of seen or unseen revelation by God? In I Corinthians 15:6 we read that over 500 people saw Him at one time after his resurrection.

I would tell you that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is one of the greatest pieces of empirical data of all time, but here is the point: His appearing was meant to prompt faith in the unseen. Specifically, it was meant to prompt the understanding that faith in Christ actually did lead to forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

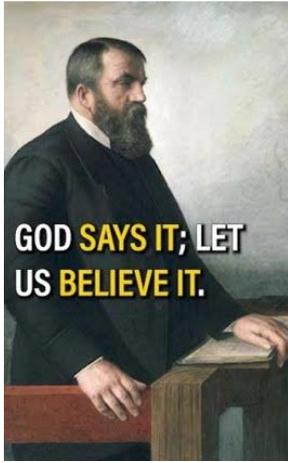
Think of the Israelites coming out of Egypt. What were the opening of the Red Sea, water out of the rock, and daily manna? They were all *seen* phenomena! What were they supposed to do? Their purpose was to build faith within the community in order that the Israelites would trust the ability of their God to bring them into a Land they had never seen—the Promised Land!

The children of Israel didn't learn the lesson, but I hope you will agree that it was not for lack of evidence. Let me suggest that God does exactly the same thing in our lives. He reaches in from time to time and answers prayer in a specific way, so that we can learn to trust Him.

A Here and Now Example

As you can see, we are right in the middle of a very lengthy discussion. Before we continue, allow me to share what I think is a wonderfully practical example of what it means to live in light of our heavenly citizenship. Here is something Dwight L. Moody said later in his life. Decide for yourself if he is thinking in terms of his earthly or heavenly status!

Some day you will read in the papers that D. L. Moody, of East Northfield, MA, is dead. Don't you believe a word of it! At that moment I shall be more alive than I am now. I shall have gone up higher, that is all—out of



this old clay tenement into a house that is immortal; a body that death cannot touch, that sin cannot taint, a body fashioned like unto His glorious body. I was born of the flesh in 1837. I was born of the Spirit in 1856. That which is born of the flesh may die. That which is born of the Spirit will live for ever. DLM

That's an example of a man whose feet are firmly anchored in the heavenlies!

Our Challenge from Verse 27

Now we have much yet to cover, so let me once again put before us the verse of Scripture we are covering and repeat the challenge it presents.

Just one thing: As citizens of heaven, live your life worthy of the gospel of Christ ... *Philippians 1:27 CBS*

Here is the Challenge this verse presents:

As believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we are called to live as "worthy citizens" of a place that we have never seen (heaven) while, at the same time, understanding that we are living in a land ruled by the arch enemy of our Sovereign (this world). This complicates things for us, because it is the only land we have ever known!

To understand this challenge, there are a number of things we must grasp from the content of this verse.

First, *what does it mean to live as "worthy citizens" of a place we have never seen (heaven)?*

It is very helpful to understand that part of the background of the word *worthy* is as a term of the marketplace. It means that you get the amount of something, take grain for example, that is in keeping with the money you paid. When used as a descriptive term for the quality of the life we live—our walk—it is commanding us to live in such a way that our life is of an *equivalent weight* to the Gospel of Christ.

Thus the verse means that our character, deportment, and mindset must match with a message that has the power to save—centered in the Savior of the world! This is a reminder that God has predestined us to be *conformed to the likeness of His Son*. (Romans 8:29) That, in turn, should cause us to measure the quality of our walk against God's outcome for every child of God.

Second, *what about this call to mistrust the world in which we live?*

Following Adam's sin and what we refer to as *the Fall of Man*, the rulership of this world defaulted from Adam to Satan. Satan very clearly has an organized system of opposition to the plans and purposes of God.

We know ... that the whole world is under the control of the Evil One. I John 5:19

For our struggle is ... against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Ephesians 6:12

The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the Gospel ... II Corinthians 4:4

Satan is hard at work trying to hold onto his subjects (the lost) and seeking to do all he can to compromise the lives of believers.

It is no wonder that James writes:

You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.

James 4:4

To be a friend of the ruler of this world is to be a friend of Satan. To adopt his messaging is to partner with him rather than having a *walk worthy* of the Gospel of Christ!

Do you see the magnitude of the challenge we face? We live here. Thus, it is tempting to respond to what is seen rather than be committed to the unseen truths of Scripture. It is easy to live in keeping with *Human Viewpoint* rather than *Divine Viewpoint*! But that is not a walk worthy of our Savior or His Gospel message!

When we let the sins of the culture into our churches, we have listened to the seductive voice of the world, which is really the voice of Satan. We have betrayed the Sovereign of the land of our true citizenship. If we do not take this to heart and exercise vigilance, the battle will be lost in no time!



You adulterers and adulteresses, don't you know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

James 4:4 WEB



In our day we need the courage of Joshua:

"... choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve ... But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."

Joshua 24:15

Third, if we are to mistrust the world, what, then, is the proper object for our faith?

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

Colossians 3:1-3

I hope you are saying to yourself, "*Of course! Since I am a citizen of heaven, where else should I turn for my marching orders than to things above? This would most certainly be the revelation of God as contained in His Word!*"

In fact, the onus is on us to make an extra effort to seek out the heavenly in the Word of God. For the world bombards us with error all day long. Thus, we must frequently and regularly get away to a place where we can silence the world and listen to what our heavenly Sovereign has to say.



Fourth, as we meet this challenge, don't underestimate our need for each other!

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Hebrews 10:24-25

We need to gather with other *heavenly citizens*. We cannot go-it-alone against the world. We need to stand shoulder to shoulder with like-minded believers in order to encourage one another to stand firm.

This is marvelously illustrated in a story told by General Eisenhower. On the eve of the first crossing of the Rhine River in 1945, the General couldn't sleep. So he went out for a walk with the next day's river crossing on his mind. He met a young soldier who also couldn't sleep. When questioned about his sleeplessness, the young soldier, who didn't recognize his Commander responded, "I guess I am a little nervous about tomorrow." General Eisenhower responded, "So am I. Let's walk together and perhaps we'll draw strength from each other." How can we, those who make up the body of Christ, do less?

Thus, I leave you with one more look at Philippians 1:27:

Just one thing: As citizens of heaven, live your life worthy of the gospel of Christ ...

It is not complicated, but living a life worthy of our citizenship in heaven is a mighty challenge. First, we must understand it, then choose to respond in obedient faith, and, finally, turn to our heavenly Father to provide the spiritual enablement to make it a reality in our lives.

... faith means obeying (trusting) God in spite of the circumstances around us, the feeling within us, or the consequences ahead of us.

Warren Wiersbe

What This Looks Like for the Church

After exhorting us in the strongest possible terms to live in keeping with our heavenly citizenship and worthy of the Gospel of Christ, Paul is going to close Chapter 1 of the Book of Philippians by giving us some specifics of exactly what it looks like to do so. This is crucial guidance for the Church. Let me give you a summary of what we are going to find in these closing three verses.

The Bride of Christ is walking worthy of her heavenly citizenship when she:

- I. Stands fast ... in one spirit.
- II. Is like-minded in striving for *The Faith*.
- III. Turns from fear and takes persecution in stride.

I. Stands Fast ... in One Spirit

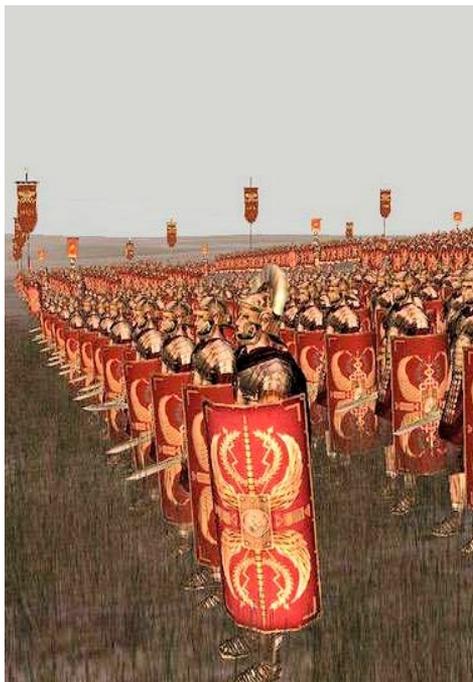
The Bride of Christ is walking worthy of its heavenly citizenship when it stands fast ... in one spirit.

... so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit ...

Philippians 1:27

The word translated *stand fast* is a military term used as a call to hold one's ground and not let yourself be moved by the enemy. It also carries the connotation of being persistent in one's efforts. Then add to that the term *one spirit*, which is a call to spiritual unity, all believing the same essential truths.

Now at the time Paul wrote Philippians, Rome was the dominant power in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. The Roman Legions were famous for their discipline, tactics, and ability to overcome much larger armies. They were able to do so because they presented an impenetrable front from which to engage in close combat, while javelins and arrows were launched from behind. The key to their success was that every man *stood fast* in his assigned place.



Understand the Image. Now I know that many do not like military images or talk of warriors and war. But the truth is, swords are not going to be beaten into plowshares until Jesus returns. In the meantime, Paul has given us a number of very powerful illustrations which we dare not ignore!

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the Devil's schemes. Ephesians 6:10-11

We have two thousand years of Church history to prove the truth of the above statement. It is a reality that we cannot avoid simply because of the following truth Jesus provided to His disciples just before the beginning of the Church.

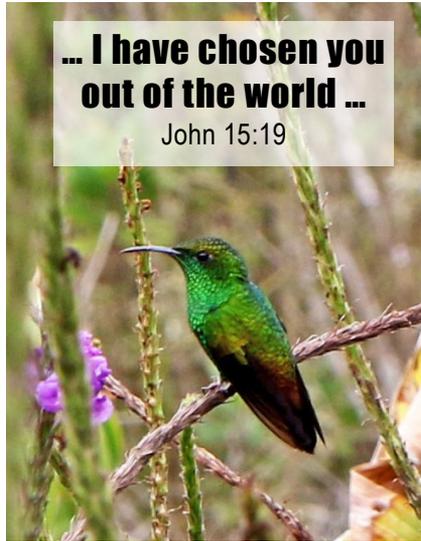
“... you do not belong to the world ... I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.” John 15:19

Do you not see that there is a conspiracy against the Gospel? It is philosophical, academic, scientific, political, and technological! The world is trying to push us away from our allegiance to Christ! What are we to do?

Stand Fast in the Spirit. The initial issue is to determine whether this is guidance to the individual or the Church.

Paul is writing to the church in Philippi. Of course the individual must hold fast to the faith within the context of his or her own life, but that is not what is on Paul's mind. If the Church is going to be the Body of Christ and prevail against the spiritual darkness of this world as it seeks to make disciples of all nations, then it must collectively stand firm. Lone Ranger Christians do not serve the purposes of God; a body of believers standing shoulder to shoulder in the faith do!

We need to understand how we are to stand fast. What are the means of doing that?



For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does (not surprising since we are actually citizens of heaven). **The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.**

II Corinthians 10:3-5

And just how do we demolish arguments, every pretension, and take captive every thought obedient to Christ? By the Holy Spirit guided application of the Word of God!

II. Is Like-minded in Striving for *The Faith*

*Continuing through our text, the Bride of Christ is walking worthy of its heavenly citizenship when it is like-minded in striving for *The Faith*.*

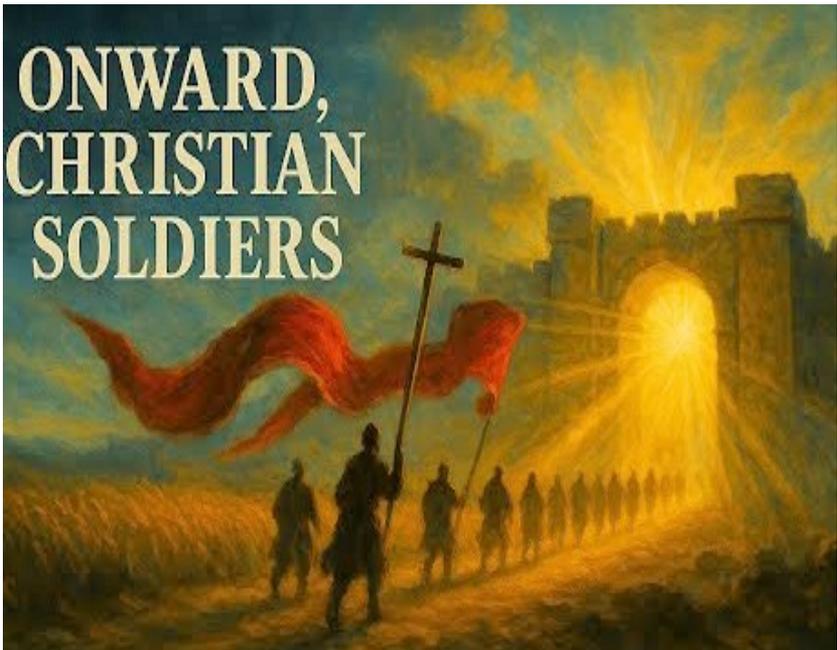
... so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel ...

Philippians 1:27

Understand the Terms. To be of *one mind* is to be in agreement. The word striving has an athletic connotation: The struggle to win the prize. We are to have more than just an intellectual assent to our spiritual calling; rather, it is what moves and motivates us. Further, when we have the definite article coupled with faith to make it—the faith—we are no longer talking about the act of believing, but about the body of truth that is believed.

There is only one outcome for those who refuse to put on the *full armor of God*, falling in battle at the hands of the enemy rather than standing firm. We simply can't dismiss these kinds of passages because we don't like military metaphors. Even more importantly, we dare not miss the fundamental idea of conflict, which is the life and lot of every New Testament Christian.

... indeed, you cannot read a single New Testament epistle without finding in it an exhortation to stand and to fight. No one can read the New Testament without getting the impression that the Christian Church is a kind of army, or that it is involved in a great contest, a test of endurance, a striving for a prize from the enemy; this whole idea of a struggle, a fight, a contention is an essential part of all the teaching. D. Martin Lloyd-Jones

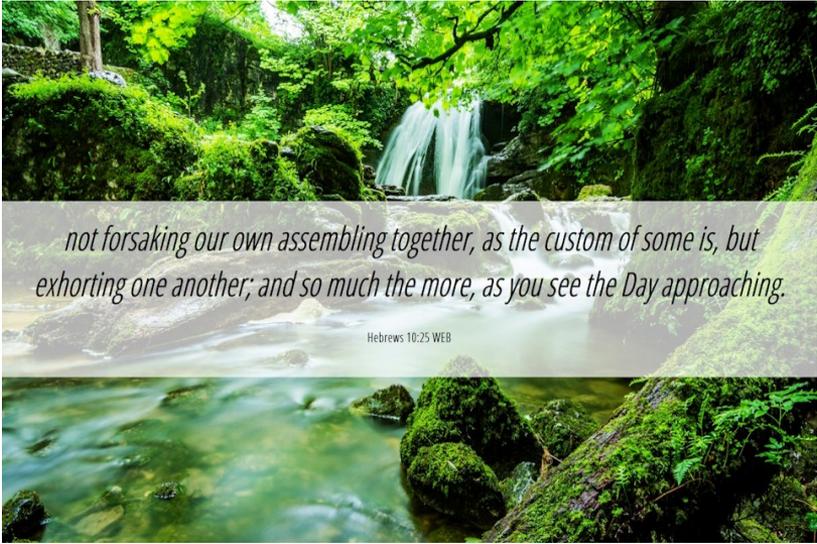


Striving together for the faith has two aspects which we must first understand, and then to which we must respond.

- First, as a church fellowship, we must strive to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ in the same way that world class athletes strive to master their sports and excel. For most of us, the disciplines of the Christian life—Bible study, prayer, and dependent trust—do not come naturally, they are something we need to develop. They are choices we make as part of choosing to abide in Christ! We are simply not walking worthy of our heavenly citizenship if we do not see the necessity of maturing in this way.
- Second, our striving must be toward a shared unity in the truth we believe. That is going to be what binds us, allows us to encourage one another, and is used by God to impact the lost world around us with the Gospel. This is an essential component of what is necessary for our little fellowship of believers to be a Prevailing Church. Shared unity is a significant challenge that needs further development. Consider the following paragraphs.

Striving for the Faith. As a church fellowship, we are more eclectic than most!

What I mean by this is the fact that our little fellowship consists of individuals from many different denominational backgrounds and theological nuance. That leads to the potential for division and disagreement. Simply trying to find a common denominator is no solution when dealing with matters of truth. Is there any hope for us to be a functional New Testament church—one that is walking worthy of its heavenly citizenship? Of course,



not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as you see the Day approaching.

Hebrews 10:25 WEB

there is! We are doing it! It is a simple, yet very effective approach. We gather, open the Word of God, and see what it has to say. As we respond in truth to the Word preached, we forge a unity built upon being *like-minded in the faith*.

An Ongoing Process. Two things are necessary for this to be an ongoing process:

1. The Word of God needs to be taught every time we meet in a way that is accurate, compelling, memorable, and prompts a response of faith. This is how any group can be unified and mature!

... some to be pastors and teachers ... to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith ... mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed to and fro ...

Ephesians 4:11-14

2. As a collection of those who profess faith in Christ, we need to be willing to align ourselves with the truth by believing it and then building our lives upon it.

Jesus said, “ **...Everyone on the side of truth listens to Me.**” John 18:37

“... everyone who hears these words of Mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.” Matthew 7:24-25

For us to continue to be a prevailing church means that we have a simple division of labor: I am going to do everything I can to teach the unadulterated truth of God’s Word. Then, I am going to leave it between you and the Lord to respond in faith to that truth which is proclaimed.

We are not going to fight denomination battles, respond to felt needs, or do anything else that might be a distraction. This sometimes leads to hurt feelings or unreasonable demands on the part of those who join us. It is not that I am unsympathetic. It is that we already have our marching orders, and we dare not let anything distract or get in the way of these instructions from Philippians 1:27:

... one thing: As citizens of heaven, live your life worthy of the gospel of Christ.

And to do so, we need to collectively:

... with one mind, strive together for the faith of the gospel!

III. Turns from Fear and Takes Persecution in Stride

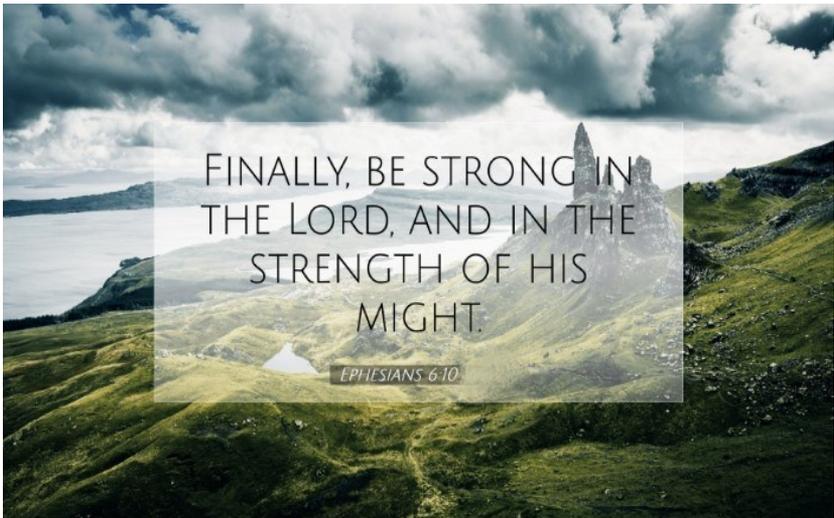
Continuing through this section, the Bride of Christ is walking worthy of her citizenship when she turns from fear and takes persecution in stride.

... 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. For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake ... Philippians 1:28-29

First, make no mistake about it, we are in the midst of a battle—a spiritual one!

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but ... against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. ... Stand firm then, ... Ephesians 6:12-14

Here we are, trying to walk worthy of the Gospel of Christ, right in the midst of a world-wide conspiracy



against the Gospel! As mentioned, it is a philosophical, academic, scientific, political, and technological conspiracy. No wonder we have to be admonished to turn from fear!

Now I know that some of you are thinking—I'm retired—I don't want to deal with this any more! I can tell you, Satan would love for you to simply sit out your retirement years on the sideline, But I think the Word of God calls us to finish as Prevailing Christians. If we are still drawing breath, then God has a calling on our lives!

Second, why does it have to be this way? After all, we have good news and just want to help! Let me show you the reason by means of the following hypothetical conversation, so that we can understand why a variation of this situation is going to occur over and over again!

Witness for Christ: Let me introduce you to my wonderful Savior ... He'll save you too!

Lost Individual: Why do I need a Savior?

Witness: Because you are a sinner!

Lost: How dare you!

Witness: Not only that, judgment is coming.

Lost: So you think you are better than I am. You Christians are all so self-righteous!

And so, with the best of intentions, we end up with an angry lost person. That is because:

The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

II Corinthians 4:4

You see, the cross strips away a respectable veneer and leaves a sinner. It rejects any form of human good or good works of which the lost are so proud. It requires dependence upon another to accomplish what we can not do ourselves—and pride resists! The redeemed sing:

*Amazing grace how sweet the sound that saved a
wretch like me ...*

The lost exclaim, “How dare you call me a wretch?” God’s Word prepares us for this. We dare not be surprised by it. Or, worse yet, we dare not be silenced or sidelined by it.

Third, we also need not worry because this is part of our calling. We have the one message that has the power to save!

... to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake ...

Philippians 1:29

For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord ... For God ... made His light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

II Corinthians 4:5-6

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes ...

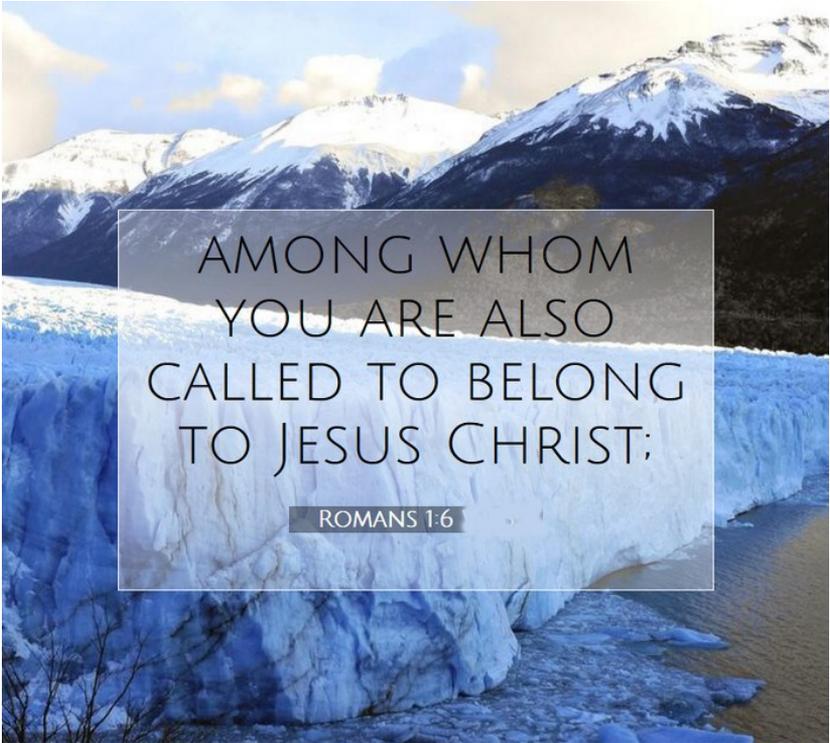
Romans 1:16

As citizens of heaven who currently have an earthly mission, we are going to be on the receiving end of *push-back* from the lost. Satan wants to hold on to his subjects. But that is no reason for dismay. We have the light that can break through Satan’s effort to blind—God’s glory as revealed in the person of Jesus Christ.

For the Good News, centered in the person and work of Christ, is the one thing that has the power to save. To be specific, the Good News is:

- The right person—the eternal Son of God who took on humanity in order to save.
- The right work—Christ’s death on the cross as payment for sin.
- The right response on our part—faith alone in Christ alone!

We must push everything else aside, put all our *eggs in one basket* by trusting in the finished work of Christ!



Fourth, *Jesus wanted to make sure we wouldn't be surprised!*

“If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you also.” John 15:20

Here is something that might surprise you. You are probably not living worthy of the Gospel if you are not on the receiving end of at least some persecution from the world. Of course, it is pretty mild here in America, but it is still present. You see, if we are not giving the lost reason to be angry now and then, we are probably not bearing witness to the one message that has the power to save. That is why God has left us here after our salvation!

More Is Coming

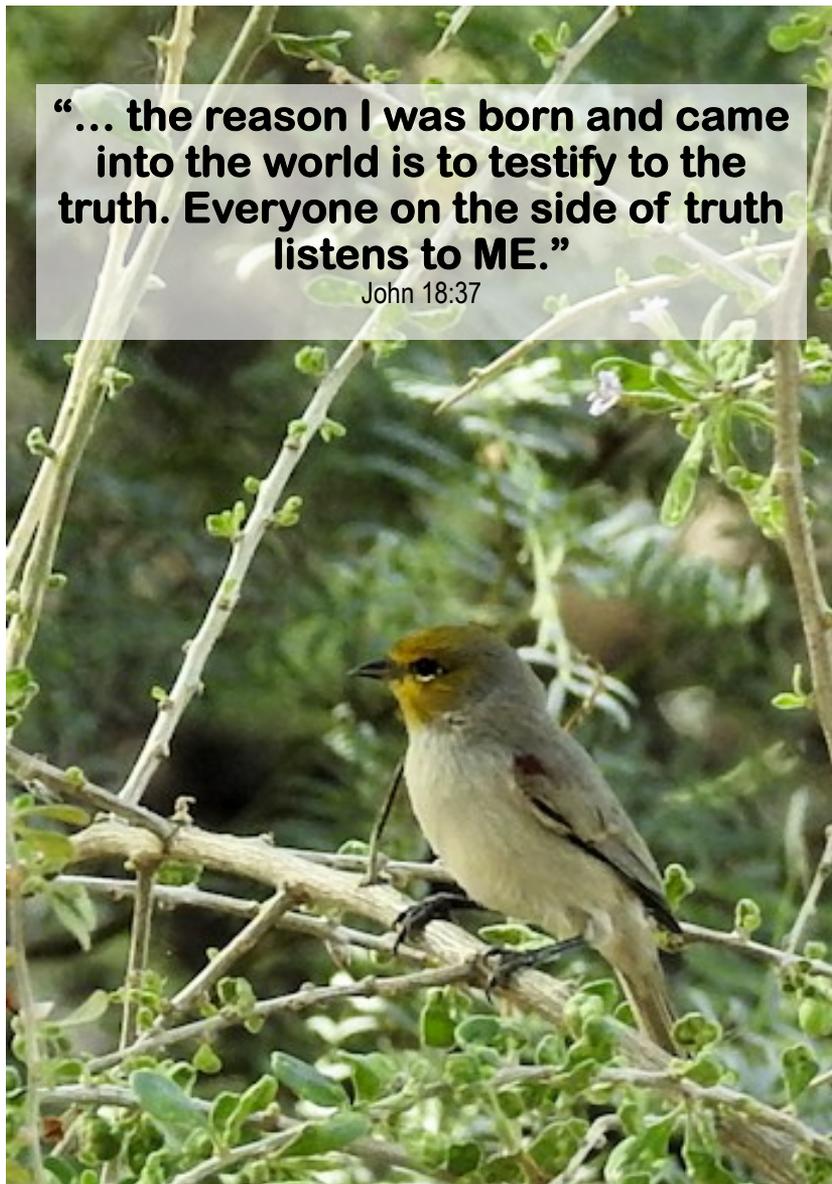
What a wonderful collection of challenges in this first chapter of the Book of Philippians, and there is so much to come in the rest of the books in the series.

As we continue to explore Paul's twin passions—to know Christ and to make Him known—let me leave you with a closing reminder:

Just one thing: As citizens of heaven, live your life worthy of the gospel of Christ. Philippians 1:27

“... the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to ME.”

John 18:37



VISTOSO



Community Church

He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit...*John 15:5*

1200 E. Rancho Vistoso Blvd., Oro Valley, AZ 85755

Phone: 520-825-0652 ☎ web: www.vistoso.org