



SUPER JOY - A STUDY IN PHILIPPIANS (Week 4) - A Life Worthy of the Gospel

Introduction

Philippians 1:27-29

27 Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ,

Paul is speaking here of the Christian life. Now, to live a the Christian life in any manner you first have to have spiritual life. He who has the Son has the life. He who does not have the Son of God does not have life. So,

don't let this language confuse you. When he says, "A life worthy of the gospel," he is not talking about earning your salvation by your good life. He is talking about how you live your life once you have spiritual life birthed in you by the Spirit of God. This is life after you're on the team, in other words. After you're a Christian.

Your manner of life is simply how you live your Christian life — your habits, your lifestyle. But Paul uses this phrase quite often in his letters to the churches.

2 Thessalonians 1:11-12

11 And in this regard we pray for you always, that our God will make you worthy of his calling and fulfill by his power your every desire for goodness and every work of faith, 12 that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Colossians 1:9-10

9 For this reason we also, from the day we heard about you, have not ceased praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his

will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10 so that you may live worthily of the Lord and please him in all respects—bearing fruit in every good deed, growing in the knowledge of God,

Now, to live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel you must understand the gospel.

What does the gospel invite us into? What kind of life?

Isaiah 43:2

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;

Isaiah 54:10

For the mountains may depart
and the hills be removed,
but my steadfast love shall not depart from you,
and my covenant of peace shall not be removed,"
says the Lord, who has compassion on you.

These are what we call gospel promises, meaning this — if you have embraced the gospel (the Person and work of Jesus Christ on your behalf) then these promises are for

you. (He who has the Son has life.) If you haven't embraced the gospel, then unfortunately you are outside of these promises. (He who does not have the Son does not have life, meaning you do not have access to these promises. If you're not part of the family, you don't get the inheritance.)

But the good news is that God invites you into these promises through the Lord Jesus Christ.

These are unconditional promises. This means you do nothing to deserve them. That's the kind of life the gospel invites you into, a life of grace. You are presently receiving what you do not deserve — the loving care of God as your Father.

But because we receive the loving care of God the Father we also live a certain way. We want to live a life worthy of what Christ has done for us. Again, this does not mean you merit or earn your salvation by becoming worthy, but once you receive salvation as the gracious gift that it is — you want to live for Jesus.

- Becket's testimony - when he received Christ he knew at that moment that he couldn't go back to the life he was living, but it didn't matter to him because he didn't want to go back to that life. He had a new life from that moment. Now he wants to live a life worthy of the gospel.

In their exposition of the book of Philippians, Tony Merida and Francis Chan write, "Believers are making a statement about the gospel not only with their lips but also with their lives."

And I paraphrase, "The gospel is about love — therefore we should be known as loving people. The gospel is about justice — therefore we should be justice-seeking people. The gospel is about life — therefore we should be known for living it to its fullest. The gospel is about liberty — therefore we should be known for our freedom in Christ, not living as stuffy legalists. The gospel is about humility — therefore we should be a humble people, gladly serving others."¹

¹Merida, Tony; Chan, Francis. *Exalting Jesus in Philippians (Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary)* (Kindle Locations 1691-1692). B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

Now, in the verses following his statement about living a life worthy of the gospel, Paul gives us some further examples of what this kind of life looks like.

Let's look at four marks of a life worthy of the gospel.

so that whether I come and see you or am absent,

1. **The first mark of a life worthy of the gospel is that we understand we are living life before an Audience of One.** We understand that not only what we do before other people matters, but what we do when we're alone matters. We understand that not only do our actions matter, but our very thoughts matter because the Lord knows our thoughts from afar. And our thoughts lead to our actions.

All this is to say, the Christian lives his or her life in a relationship with the risen Christ. It's not just to please people, but it is primarily to please the Lord.

Now, we care about pleasing people because we care about pleasing the Lord, but we are not driven by pleasing others. When we're driven by pleasing others we

are people-pleasers, which is negative in the Scriptures.

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,

2. striving side by side — **the Christian understands that every other Christian is just as accepted by Jesus as he or she is.** We are all equal at the foot of the cross. There is no room to think that we are superior to any brother or sister in Christ. And yet however much we say amen in our hearts to such things, how much do we fail in our practice of this? Think of that Christian who has disappointed you and be honest about it — do you look down on them? Do you think less of him or her? But in your own failures (whether through thoughtless mistakes or rebellious sins) you run to Jesus and expect His full acceptance. Do you not? But what does the gospel say? It says:

Romans 15:7

Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

**Some of you know the old hymn:
*Just as I am, without one plea
But that Thy blood was shed for me***

**We come just as we are and Christ takes us
in just as we are. Jesus says in John 6:37,
“Whoever comes to me I will never cast out.”**

striving side by side ***for the faith of the gospel,***

**I am convinced of this, the reason we
churches feel threatened by other churches
is because we do not really believe the
gospel. We will say this is why we exist —
striving side by side for the faith of the gospel
— but in practice this is not the case.**

**We have stopped expecting people to get
saved. This is why we're so frightened to lose
our church attenders. We function like
businesses trying to maintain our customer
base. C. John Miller said, “Faith without
expectancy is an empty shell.”**

**Do you come to church expecting anything
to happen?**

But what did Jesus say?

John 4:35

Don't you have a saying, 'It's still four months until harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.

There are people God is ready to save.

**According to Scripture, this is the first priority
of the church — to proclaim the gospel to the
lost, that they might believe in the risen Christ
and be saved.**

**Paul said the gospel is the power of God. He
also said this Word is living and active and
can cut right through a person's soul and
reveal their heart.**

**The gospel doesn't need to be defended. It
needs to be proclaimed.**

**God wants to reveal Himself to people. This is
the kind of expectation we need to get ahold
of. He desires that none should perish but that
all should come to repentance. God sent His
Son because He loves people.**

1 Timothy 1:16-17

16 But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life. 17 Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Do you believe the gospel has the power to reach the worst of sinners? Well, we should! We should expect the gospel to reach the worst of sinners, the people we would least expect to come to Christ we should expect to come to Christ.

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.

3. **A life worthy of the gospel understands that it is a life lived in the victory that Christ won on the cross — “of your salvation, and that from God.” He is King and Ruler and Authority and Savior in heaven and**

earth now and in every age because of the cross.

This should put us on the offensive, not on the defensive. The defensive position is a position of fear. We should be on the offensive.

The difference between the church today and the early Reformers, according to C. John Miller, is “while our emphasis is on preserving true doctrine and defending the faith, theirs was on taking the gospel and going on the offensive, bringing God’s message to men (and women) and conquering them in Christ. They wanted not only to preserve the gospel, but to put it to work, to see it change lives and expand God’s kingdom.”

So, what prevents us from moving forward? What keeps us from advancing the gospel?

Probably the cost. The fear of what we might have to face if we do.

29 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, 30

engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

We may never suffer like the first century church, but we are engaged in the same conflict. Even though we're with the Victor, there is a battle raging on.

- 4. A life lived worthy of the gospel understands that being part of this cosmic battle is a privilege granted to us. It has been said, "The Great Commission is God's declaration of war." The war has been won, but the enemy, in a fit of anger, flails about like a prisoner who knows he can't escape but just wants to inflict as much harm as he can while the guards labor to shackle him. But we know he's going down.**

Luke 10:19

19 I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.

and not frightened in anything by your opponents.

We are free to love. We are free to engage the worst of sinners.

How are you living your life, Christian? Do you live it before an Audience of One? Are you still a Christian when you are alone?

Are you living your life in light of Christ's victory on the cross? Because His victory is your victory.

Are you living with faith in these promises?

Isaiah 54:10

For the mountains may depart
and the hills be removed,
but my steadfast love shall not depart from you,
and my covenant of peace shall not be removed,"
says the Lord, who has compassion on you.

Or do you find yourself outside of these promises because you're outside the Son? Because you're not a Christian yet. In just a moment you're going to have an opportunity to change that.

Paul said that God showed him mercy in Christ because he was the worst of sinners and he did so that other sinners who think they're the worst might understand that God loves them and sent Christ to die for their sins. Do you feel like the worst of sinners? God has demonstrated his love for you in that while you were yet a sinner Christ died for you. God wants to save you.

Father in Heaven,
I believe that Jesus Christ, Your Son, in His great mercy and love, died for me and in my place, bearing my sins in His own body on the cross. And believing this, I do here and now welcome Him into my heart as my Savior from sin, from selfishness, from the power of the devil, and from hell itself.

Jesus Christ said in the Bible that if I will go to Him, He will not cast me out. (John 6:37) And I do come to Him with all my heart just now, as a poor, helpless, guilty sinner, seeking salvation. I know that He will not reject me.

As well as I can, I believe that He does at this very moment take me in. He forgives me now.

His blood that was shed at the cross washes all my sins away. He was wounded for my sin; He was bruised for the wrong that I did against Him and others; the punishment I ought to have endured was laid on Him; and with His suffering I am healed and brought into a right relationship with You, Father, the one true living God. I am forgiven at last. Praise to God - Jesus saves me now!

Hear the good news!
The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.
He himself bore our sins
in his body on the cross,
that we might be dead to sin,
and alive to all that is good.

I declare to you in the name of Jesus Christ,
Anyone who is in Christ
is a new creation.
The old life has gone;
a new life has begun.
Know that you are forgiven
and be at peace. Amen.