

Shalom AZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption



"In Fighting in THIS kingdom with the Rules of God's Kingdom"

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Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Texts (TLV): Phil. 1:27-30; Phil. 2:5-11; Phil. 3:10-11, 20-21; 2 Cor. 10:3-4; Jer. 9:22-23

When someone comes against us, something instinctive rises up inside us. We want to defend ourselves. We want to protect what is ours. We want to answer the accusation, correct the injustice, and make sure nobody takes advantage of us. If someone pushes, we want to push back. If someone threatens something we value, our natural response is to fight for it. But following Yeshua confronts us with a much deeper question: **When we fight the battles of this world, whose rules are we fighting by?** It is entirely possible to defend something good while doing it in a way that looks nothing like the Kingdom of God.

That is where Paul turns the Philippians in Phil. 1:27. He has spent much of the chapter talking about his imprisonment, his suffering, his opponents, and the uncertainty surrounding his future. But suddenly he says, essentially, "Above everything else, focus on this." *"Only live your lives in a manner worthy of the Good News of the Messiah."* Paul does not want their attention fixed on what is happening to him. He wants them focused on how **they** are living. They are in Philippi, but ultimately they are citizens of another Kingdom. And if we belong to that same Kingdom, then our citizenship must shape not only **what** we stand for, but **how** we stand, how we struggle, how we respond to opposition, and even how we suffer.

1. LIVE LIKE A CITIZEN OF THE KINGDOM

Paul writes, *"Only live your lives in a manner worthy of the Good News of the Messiah."* The phrase translated "live your lives" comes from *politeuesthe*, a word connected with *polis*—a city—and with the idea of citizenship. Paul is essentially saying, "Live out your citizenship." That language would have landed powerfully in Philippi. Philippi was a Roman colony whose people were deeply proud of their Roman citizenship and all the privileges that came with it. But Paul reminds these believers that their deepest identity is not rooted in Roman citizenship. As he later writes, *"For our citizenship is in heaven, and from there we eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Yeshua the Messiah"* (Phil. 3:20). They lived in Philippi, but Philippi was not ultimately where they belonged.

Paul then says they are to live in a manner **worthy** of the Good News. The word is *axios*, carrying the idea of something possessing the value it has been declared to possess. In the ancient world, a precious-metal coin could slowly wear down until its actual weight no longer matched its declared value. Paul is saying, in effect, "Be what the coin says you are." At the beginning of this letter, he called these believers *kedoshim*—holy ones. That is what God has declared them to be. Now they are to walk according to that worth. The same is true for us. We have been entrusted with the Good News of the Kingdom, and the Gospel is not simply something we declare with our lips; it is something we demonstrate with our lives. **Walk with the worth of what God has declared about you. Live in this kingdom as a citizen of His Kingdom.**

2. STAND TOGETHER WITHOUT BEING INTIMIDATED

Paul continues, *"Then, whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit—striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the Good News, and*

not being frightened in any way by your opponents.” Paul does not describe isolated believers fighting individual battles. He pictures them standing together—one Spirit, one mind, side by side, contending together for the faith of the Gospel. Philippi itself had military roots, so this image would have been familiar. Roman soldiers survived by standing tightly together, protecting one another, moving together, and refusing to break ranks. Paul takes that imagery and redirects it toward the Kingdom. The believers are fighting, but they are not fighting one another. They are standing together in the power of the Spirit.

And notice what Paul does **not** tell them to do. He does not say, “When your opponents threaten you, become more threatening than they are.” He says, *“not being frightened in any way by your opponents.”* Their confidence does not come from possessing greater earthly power. It comes from knowing who ultimately saves them. *“For them this is a sign of destruction, but for you salvation—and that from God.”* The Philippians lived in a culture that demanded allegiance to Caesar as lord and savior, but believers already had a Lord and Savior. Their refusal to bow might make others think they were doomed, but Paul says their deliverance comes from God. The weapons of our warfare are not the weapons of this world. We do not have to become like the kingdoms around us in order to stand against them. Our calling is to stand firmly, together, without intimidation, while continuing to reflect the character of the Kingdom we represent.

3. FOLLOW MESSIAH EVEN WHEN THE WAY INCLUDES SUFFERING

Then Paul says something that can be difficult for us to hear: *“For to you was granted for Messiah’s sake not only to trust in Him, but also to suffer for His sake—experiencing the same struggle you saw in me, and now you are hearing in me.”* The word translated “granted” is connected to *charis*—grace. Paul says that they have been “graced” not only to trust in Messiah, but also to suffer on His behalf. That does not mean believers should seek suffering or celebrate pain for its own sake. Paul’s understanding of suffering is completely centered on Yeshua. A crucified Lord produces disciples who are willing to take up a cross and follow Him. As Paul later writes, *“My aim is to know Him and the power of His resurrection and the sharing of His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death—if somehow I might arrive at the resurrection from among the dead”* (Phil. 3:10–11).

Paul is not teaching something he refuses to live himself. He is writing from prison. He has been beaten, falsely accused, opposed, shipwrecked, threatened, and treated unjustly. Yet what do we hear from him? Not, “Look what they did to me,” but, “Look what the Lord is doing through this.” Earlier he said that what happened to him had *“actually resulted in the advancement of the Good News”* (Phil. 1:12). His focus is not his offenses. It is not his opponents. It is not even primarily his freedom. His focus is Messiah and the advancement of the Gospel. Yeshua’s disciples looked at the cross and thought it was the end, but it became the beginning. Messiah laid down His life so that we might have life. That means Kingdom freedom cannot produce an attitude that says, “He died for my freedom, so I will destroy anyone who threatens mine.” The way of Messiah is fundamentally different. **He laid down His life. We are called to follow Him.**

Conclusion

There is a struggle. Paul does not pretend otherwise. He uses the language of contending, striving, standing firm, opposition, conflict, and suffering. But the question is not whether believers will have battles. The question is **how we will fight them**. Will we fight according to the instincts of this world—fear, anger, retaliation, self-preservation, political power, and “me

first”? Or will we fight according to the ways of the Kingdom—standing in the Spirit, united with one another, refusing intimidation, loving as Messiah loves, trusting God for our deliverance, and being willing even to suffer rather than abandon the character of Yeshua?

Maybe that is the prayer we need today: “Lord, give me eyes to see what You are actually doing.” When Paul looked at chains, he saw opportunities for the Gospel. When others looked at opposition, he saw an opportunity to stand firm. When others saw suffering, he saw fellowship with Messiah. Today, bring before the Lord the battle you are fighting right now—the injustice, the fear, the person who has opposed you, the freedom you are afraid of losing, or the situation that makes you want to fight back. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal whether you have been fighting the battle by the rules of this kingdom or His. Surrender your right to respond in the flesh. Say, “Yeshua, teach me to live as a citizen of Your Kingdom. Teach me to stand without fear, to stand with my brothers and sisters, and to walk in Your way even when Your way includes suffering. Let my life demonstrate the Good News I proclaim.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does Paul mean when he tells believers to *“live your lives in a manner worthy of the Good News of the Messiah”* in Phil. 1:27?
2. Why is Paul’s picture of believers “standing firm in one spirit” and “striving side by side” important to the way we understand spiritual warfare?
3. What does Phil. 1:28 teach us about where our confidence and deliverance are supposed to come from when we face opposition?
4. **Personal Reflection:** Think about a conflict, injustice, or cultural issue that makes you want to fight back. Are you responding according to the values of God’s Kingdom or according to the instincts of this world?
5. **Personal Reflection:** Is there something you are afraid of losing—freedom, comfort, reputation, security, control—that has begun to compete with your loyalty to Yeshua? What would it look like to entrust that completely to Him?

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, remind us that our citizenship is ultimately in Your Kingdom. Teach us to live in this world in a manner worthy of the Good News of Messiah Yeshua. Help us not merely to declare the Gospel, but to demonstrate it in the way we speak, respond, stand, love, forgive, and endure. Fill us with Your Spirit so that we stand together rather than fight against one another, and keep us from being intimidated by the opposition around us.

Lord, give us eyes to see what You are actually doing, especially in the places where we see only difficulty, injustice, or suffering. Shape our mindset after Messiah Yeshua. Keep us from fighting the battles of this world according to the rules of this world. Teach us to walk in the way of our Master, trusting that our salvation and deliverance come from You. May our lives carry the full worth of the identity You have given us as Your *kedoshim*, and may everything we endure ultimately serve the advancement of Your Good News.

B'Shem Yeshua, In the name of Yeshua, amen.