

Philippians 2026 – Week 2 – Philippians 1:12-30

Philippians 1:27-30: *Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel ²⁸ without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God. ²⁹ For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him, ³⁰ since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.*

INTRO to Philippians: The letter of Philippians is the perfect starting place for biblical teaching on following Christ as a disciple. This letter speaks to obedience and faithfulness in the life of the individual believer, and the importance of being healthy and unified in the Church. Philippians presents God's instructions in a warm and encouraging tone, as believers are challenged to conduct ourselves at all times and in all places "in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ."

INTRO to Philippians 1:12-30: These verses continue the introductory comments of the letter, while sharpening the focus on how every part of the Christian life is intended to make us more like Christ Himself, even if we experience persecution or suffering.

I. Persecution often advances, not hinders the Good News of Jesus Christ and His Kingdom. (vs. 12-14)

-vs. 12-14: *Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. ¹³ As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. ¹⁴ And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.*

-The persecution Paul was facing, including his imprisonment, had only served to advance the message of the Good News of Jesus by breaking down barriers and obstacles that had been impeding the gospel. This included opportunities Paul had to preach to the full *praetorium* guard of Caesar (up to 9,000 men), and to many others who were now aware of his situation.

-In addition – Paul's imprisonment did not discourage other believers but instead emboldened them to proclaim the Gospel and Kingdom of Christ even more – **vs. 14:** *And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.*

II. A true "Kingdom Focus" prioritizes what is spiritual and eternal, and minimizes what is trivial and temporal. (vs. 15-26)

A. vs. 15-19: *It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. ¹⁶ The latter do so out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. ¹⁷ The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. ¹⁸ But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.*

Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, ¹⁹ for I know that through your prayers and God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.

-Sadly, the preaching of the Gospel and the work in the Church can be subject to “false motives” like envy, rivalry, and selfish ambition just as much as in other parts of life. For an example of the opposite—preaching the Gospel and serving in the Church with “true motives,” see **1 Thessalonians 2:1-6** (below).

-Amazingly, though, Paul rejoiced even when the Gospel was being preached with false motives so long as Christ was truly being proclaimed. NOTE: This is not an endorsement of false teaching or a false gospel.

B. vs. 20-26: *I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. ²¹ For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. ²² If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! ²³ I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; ²⁴ but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. ²⁵ 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, ²⁶ so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me.*

-The faithful commitment of a true disciples is expressed by the Apostle Paul in **vs. 20:** *I eagerly expect and hope that . . . Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.*

-*For me, to live is Christ...* (**vs. 21**) is another way of saying: “As long as I live, Christ is all I truly have and seek.” Even more, as Paul sat in prison not knowing his future, he was saying: “Christ is truly all I have left.” (see also **2 Corinthians 5:6-9** below).

III. Whatever happens, we are called as true disciples of Jesus to conduct ourselves “in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.” (vs. 27-30)

-With regard to living a life that is pleasing to God, here in these verses the Bible does not present us with a list of rules, but rather points us to Christ and says – be like Him! Have the same attitudes and actions of the Lord Jesus Himself.

-God not only appoints His people to salvation, but also to suffering, which is hard teaching. Our suffering, too, serves to make us more like Christ.

-What are some ways the Apostle Paul described his own progress towards Christlikeness throughout Philippians?

- I rejoice and give thanks no matter what
- I live with hope and the expectation of God's promises fulfilled
- I put no confidence in my own flesh, instead whatever was a gain to me I consider in light of knowing Christ Jesus
- I press on to the goal of being more like Christ in all things, for I can do all things through Him who gives me strength.
- My true citizenship is in heaven, and I await a Savior from there.
- I have learned to be content in all things, for I trust my God will meet all my needs according to the riches of His glory in Christ Jesus.

-Regarding those who oppose the gospel – Scripture assures us that we need not be afraid of them or intimidated by them. Their opposition to Christ is evidence that they are headed for destruction; but you have true life...eternal life! (**vs. 28**)

-Paul's suffering and imprisonment did not end his work for Christ. It dawned a new and final period in Christ's work through him. In the same way, our life-experience as disciples in following Christ—including the suffering we will certainly face—is like a crucible within which we are being tested and formed to look more like Christ.

Other Scriptures Referenced:

1 Thessalonians 2:1-6: *You know, brothers and sisters, that our visit to you was not without results.² We had previously suffered and been treated outrageously in Philippi, as you know, but with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in the face of strong opposition.³ For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you.⁴ On the contrary, we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts.⁵ You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed—God is our witness.⁶ We were not looking for praise from people, not from you or anyone else, even though as apostles of Christ we could have asserted our authority.*

2 Corinthians 5:6-9: *Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord.⁷ For we live by faith, not by sight.⁸ We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.⁹ So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.*

Other Quotes/Resources:

-The study referenced about young adults returning to church can be found at:
www.barna.com

-“The line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties either—but right through every human heart.” — Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn