

Live Worthy of the Gospel of Christ

Sermon Text: Philippians 1:27-2:2 (EHV)

²⁷ Just conduct yourselves in a way that is worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come to see you or am absent, I may hear about you that you are standing firm in one spirit, contending together with one soul for the faith of the gospel, ²⁸ not frightened in any way by the adversaries. This is a sign for them of their destruction and of your salvation, and that from God. ²⁹ For it has been graciously granted to you on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him, ³⁰ having the same kind of struggle that you saw I was in, and that you now hear I am still experiencing. ^{2:1} So if there is any encouragement in Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, ² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being united in spirit, and having one mind.

- 1.) What might it mean to conduct one's life "in a manner worthy of the gospel" (e.g. as opposed to the word or God's commands, etc.)?
- 2.) How does the world (and the sinful nature in each of us) view the gospel? How do the opponents of Christ seek to use that to their "advantage"? How do believers respond?
- 3.) Why is unity especially vital in times of persecution? What does it communicate to the persecutor and the persecuted?

First Lesson: Psalm 35:1-18, 26-28

- ¹ Contend, O LORD, with those who contend with me; fight against those who fight against me.
- ² Take up shield and buckler; arise and come to my aid.
- ³ Brandish spear and javelin against those who pursue me. Say to my soul, "I am your salvation."
- ⁴ May those who seek my life be disgraced and put to shame;
may those who plot my ruin be turned back in dismay.
- ⁵ May they be like chaff before the wind, with the angel of the LORD driving them away;
- ⁶ may their path be dark and slippery, with the angel of the LORD pursuing them.
- ⁷ Since they hid their net for me without cause and without cause dug a pit for me,
- ⁸ may ruin overtake them by surprise—may the net they hid entangle them, may they fall into the pit, to their ruin.
- ⁹ Then my soul will rejoice in the LORD and delight in his salvation.
- ¹⁰ My whole being will exclaim, "Who is like you, O LORD?
You rescue the poor from those too strong for them, the poor and needy from those who rob them."
- ¹¹ Ruthless witnesses come forward; they question me on things I know nothing about.
- ¹² They repay me evil for good and leave my soul forlorn.
- ¹³ Yet when they were ill, I put on sackcloth and humbled myself with fasting.
When my prayers returned to me unanswered,
- ¹⁴ I went about mourning as though for my friend or brother.
I bowed my head in grief as though weeping for my mother.
- ¹⁵ But when I stumbled, they gathered in glee; attackers gathered against me when I was unaware.
They slandered me without ceasing.

¹⁶ Like the ungodly they maliciously mocked; they gnashed their teeth at me.

¹⁷ O Lord, how long will you look on? Rescue my life from their ravages, my precious life from these lions.

¹⁸ I will give you thanks in the great assembly; among throngs of people I will praise you.

²⁶ May all who gloat over my distress be put to shame and confusion; may all who exalt themselves over me be clothed with shame and disgrace.

²⁷ May those who delight in my vindication shout for joy and gladness;

may they always say, "The LORD be exalted, who delights in the well-being of his servant."

²⁸ My tongue will speak of your righteousness and of your praises all day long.

1.) Previously we discussed how the world sees God's gentle (non-violent) people as an easy target. Why would it be wiser for them to think twice before moving against the saints?

2.) King David wrote these words under inspiration of the Spirit, and they are clearly Messianic. How would we respond to accusations that words such as these are unbecoming of our Savior, ungodly, sinful, and promote revenge?

Second Lesson: Matthew 10:1,5-8,16-33

[Jesus] called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness. ...⁵ These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. ⁶ Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. ⁷ As you go, preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near.' ⁸ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give. ...¹⁶ I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves. ¹⁷ Be on your guard against men; they will hand you over to the local councils and flog you in their synagogues. ¹⁸ On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles. ¹⁹ But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, ²⁰ for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

²¹ "Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. ²² All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. ²³ When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another. I tell you the truth, you will not finish going through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

²⁴ "A student is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. ²⁵ It is enough for the student to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If the head of the house has been called Beelzebub, how much more the members of his household!

²⁶ "So do not be afraid of them. There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. ²⁷ What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs. ²⁸ Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. ²⁹ Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. ³⁰ And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹ So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

³² "Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. ³³ But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven."

1. How did Jesus' instructions to the Apostles fall in line with living in a manner worthy of the gospel?

- 2.) What promises of Jesus give us the courage to stand firm and unafraid in the midst of danger?

- 3.) Evaluate: The life of a Christian is one spent being a pushover.