

Phil. 1:27-30

I. Only live as citizens appropriately of the Gospel of Christ (27a)

‘worthy of the Gospel’ not in the sense of deserving

But in the sense of appropriate, matching what is suitable and right

Live as citizens = conduct one’s life with reference to one’s obligations to others

The city of Philippi was an official Roman colony and therefore, its people were granted citizenship in Rome – a privilege they took seriously, with a lot of pride. Paul uses this to urge them to take their citizenship in the Kingdom of God as seriously, by living in a way that is appropriate for that Kingdom

II. Purpose: so that you will live rightly and I will hear about it (27b-30)

A. So that I am hearing the [good] things about you (27b-e)

1. No matter if I am present or absent (27b-d)

On presence and absence, cf. 2:12, Col. 2:5

Paul's usual method was to stay in a place, planting a church until he was forced to leave, or until the church was healthy. Then he would move on to plant churches in other places. Then he would keep in contact with the churches via letter and also occasionally visit them as circumstances allowed.

a Whether coming and seeing you (27b-c)

1) Either coming (27b)

2) And seeing you (27c)

b Or being absent/far away (27d)

2. I am hearing the things about you (27e)

Almost certainly, Paul hear news about them through Epaphroditus, when he came to Paul to deliver the gift from the Philippians (see 4:18)

B. Specifically, what I am hearing (27f-30)

1. That you are standing in one [unified] spirit (27f)

Holding conviction in belief and conduct

Unity is a theme for this section and the next

2. Specific ways that they are now and are to continue standing firm in unity (27g-30)

What follows is 3 items in parallel construction, describing the manner in which they are to stand firm in unity

a Toiling together with one soul for the faith of the Gospel (27g)

“with one soul” is emphasized by its position in the sentence, it means unity in mind, feelings, and will – all parts of the human personality, cf. Acts 4:32

“toiling together” is a term with two components 1) to contend/struggle/toil, which implies opposition, and 2) that this struggle is done along with others doing the same, cf. 4:3

“the faith of the Gospel” is a phrase occurring only here in the New Testament. It means either “the ‘faith’ which is proclaimed in the Gospel” or “for the sake of people having faith, as the result of the proclamation of the Gospel”

- b Not being intimidated, but trusting God in suffering (28-29)
 - 1) Not being intimidated in anything by those opposing you (28a)
 - In Acts ch. 16, we learn of the opposition to the church in Philippi. This opposition apparently continued after Paul left town. And here we learn that the church did not give in to this intimidation.
 - But this is also an encouragement from Paul to continue resistance to any intimidating actions or circumstances.
 - 2) This is God's plan and proves you are on God's side (28b-29)
 - a) This is proof of their destruction and your salvation (28b-c)
 - The church's upright, unified behavior in the midst of opposition testifies to their God, their ultimate vindication, and the futility of all opposition to God's sovereign plan
 - (1) Neg: Which is to them proof of destruction (28b)
 - (2) Pos: but [proof of] your salvation (28c)
 - b) Your standing firm under intimidation is part of God's plan (28d-29)
 - (1) This is from God (28d)
 - "This" is almost certainly their standing firm under suffering.
 - For Paul to assure them that their suffering is not outside of God's control would be very assuring, and strengthening for continued standing
 - (2) Reason: God has given you both to believe and to suffer (29)
 - (a) Because this is granted to you on behalf of Christ (29a)
 - "granted" has the connotation of graciously given, cf. 2:9
 - Suffering for Christ is a privilege given by God
 - (b) To believe in Him and suffer for Him (29b-c)
 - (i) Not only to believe in Him (29b)
 - (ii) But also to suffer on behalf of Him (29c)
 - These two are parallel, strongly suggesting that their faith is granted by God as much as their suffering
- c Struggling/fighting after my example (30)
 - 1) Having the same struggle/fight (30a)
 - Paul highlights the similarity of what they are going through with what he is going through
 - 2) Which you know I have and am going through (30b-c)
 - a) You saw the same kind [of struggle] in me (30b)
 - b) And you now are hearing [about the struggle] in me (30c)