

JOY: Gospel Faithfulness: The Precedence of Christian Living

Philippians 1:27-30

MPS Christ-followers live a life of ALL by gospel precedence to bear a faithful witness both in believing and suffering.

OBJ Every person can understand a life worthy of the gospel by three qualities they bear a faithful witness.

INTRO I love to hike. This summer I completed a “bucket list”-type hike in Colorado: 26+ miles, 4 passes over 12,000’, and seven friends to cajole and taunt me all along the way. Here’s what I learned: The trail is often difficult, and sometimes dangerous, and demands one be vigilant at all times; but the best views, the reason I hike, only come after the hardest work and highest challenge for the biggest payoff. **The glory of view is the fuel 2 push thru the difficulty of the trail.** (And a friend harassing you to hurry up!)

READ Philippians 1:27-30

Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, 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,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.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. **Philippians 1:27-30**

“Only”, Paul says. Paul completes his introduction with a word that expresses the idea of aloneness or solitary. He does not “wind down” to conclude his argument, but “amps up” to the highest point of his whole exhortation. This is not a word of transition but of prioritized placement. **“Only” means that what Paul is telling them stands alone as his highest exhortation, that which is most important for him to say and for them to understand.**

And what is so important that it stands alone above all else? “...let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel”. The way a follower of Jesus lives is so important that it stands alone above all else, because of what you know to be true of God and his work in redemption through Jesus Christ. The gospel stands alone, in the place of solitary value and preeminence, and is worthy of a person’s whole life. And the way you demonstrate the true worth and value of the gospel is for it to determine your whole life. Paul tells the Philippians that a gospel life is not for the few, the elite, or only a special few, but for all who follow Jesus. In light of all the Philippians have experienced, witnessed, and that Paul has said, the highest glory for each one is to give their whole life for the fullest display of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The way a Christ-follower lives should reflect and represent the whole of God’s salvation in Jesus Christ. **The gospel is worthy not only of priority in your thinking, but preeminence for your whole life, and particularly precedence in the manner of your living.**

TRANS And knowing that it should leads to understanding what that means.

What does a “manner of life...worthy of the gospel” mean? Simply put, the worth of the gospel determines the way of life. When you know the worth or value of the gospel, you know how much of life you can align with and extend for it, in what ways and to what extent for your life for it. You don’t want to align a part of life that it is not sufficient to cover, to overextend yourself, expect more than the gospel can cover, or attempt more than it can accomplish or provide for you. This may sound strange, but we have all asked these questions or wondered for some situation in our life, **“How much (far / deeply) can I trust God?”** One’s trust in God in the way they live should be directly proportionate to the worth and value of the gospel. **This is the question Paul addresses with the Philippians, and his answer is big, really BIG; Jesus is worthy of our all, ALL the Way in Every way!** You can trust God for all things, all the way, and in everything because there is nothing that He has not promised and provided, both in this life and eternity by the blood of Jesus; in Him every promise is “Yes” and “Amen”.^{2Cor1:20}

The manner of life for the Christ-follower is All the way in Every way! As big as the gospel, you can trust God with your life. Remember and consider the worth of the gospel; it is the power of God for those who believe^{Rom1:16}. **A Christ-follower’s whole life with God is hidden in Christ, ALL of it!**

ILLUS The Training of our Hymnody **Baptist Hymnal, 62 – All The Way My Savior Leads Me, verse one**



All the way my Savior leads me; what have I to ask beside? Can I doubt His tender mercy, who thro life has been my guide? Heavenly peace, divinest comfort, here by faith in Him to dwell. For I know what e'er befall me, Jesus doeth all things well.

APPL A partial manner of life bears false testimony against Jesus because He is worthy of ALL. When a Christ-follower lives like only a part or partial, a portion or percentage of the gospel is worthy, that bears a false testimony against God that says He is mostly worthy, somewhat able, kind of glorious. When we live like we believe God will be faithful to take us to heaven when we die, but He's not worth our time or energy now, that's a false testimony. When we live like God gets a measure of credit for our good but loses control to bear some blame for our hurt of hard times, we bear false witness. When God is good because our income is stable, steady or rising, but not good when it is not, we bear a false witness. When we believe God is good when we meet our "soul mate", but is to blame, got it wrong or changed His mind when problems arise, we bear false witness. When we live like we believe some area of life is not worth being bothered by or the teaching of His Word is not worth believing; any area, like purity, integrity, marriage, raising our children, performing at work, sharing with others, excelling in generosity, investing in church, when we live this way, in "partial obedience", we bear false testimony against God that says the gospel is not worthy. **IF God is not good and worthy of all praise, honor and glory at all time, then why bother with Him at any time? But He is, He IS, HE IS worthy; Jesus is ALWAYS worthy; All the Way in Every Way!**

Christ-follower, by every standard of measure for every conceivable situation and to every imaginable extent, your life should be lived "All the Way in Every way" because the gospel proclaims the One who is infinitely and eternally worthy, who came all the way and gave all of Himself.

Christ-followers live a life of ALL by gospel precedence to bear a faithful witness both in believing and suffering.

TRANS I pause here to review the first weeks of our study, and remind us of four convictions that lead to today's message.

Five Foundational Convictions of the Christian Life

1. God **promises** to complete His work of glorious redemption by the gospel at the Day of Jesus Christ. (1:6)
2. God **purposes** to advance the gospel in the world to the ends of the world. (1:12)
3. Gospel **proclamation** of Jesus as Lord; crucified, buried, risen, exalted, and reigning, is the center and glory of God's mission. (1:18)
4. God **progresses** the growth and maturity of His people in Christ's likeness for their joy in the faith. (1:25)

TRANS Paul builds his exhortation on these convictions. And today we learn a fifth and final conviction. But first, we must look at what Paul says is HOW a life is lived worthy of the gospel to bear a faithful witness.

OBJ 3 Qualities of a Gospel-Worthy Life for faithful witness

Christ-follower's give the gospel precedence in life by how we live; the behaviors, actions, and rhythms by which we live, that demonstrate by our "walk" what gets explained by testimony in our "talk". Paul "insists upon the very highest standard as the pattern of the believers' behaviour."¹ Paul identifies these three qualities as characteristic for a faithful testimony.

1. Unity of fellowship - standing firm in one spirit .27

Paul says that whether he returns or not, he wants to know and hear that they are "*standing firm in one spirit*". He desires to know that they are living in such a way as to practice dependence upon Jesus by participation with one another. And by their participation with one another, the Spirit of God will produce a oneness of spirit among them. This quality unity of the fellowship by participation flows from two persistent behaviors. First, each one must be faithful to live out of their new identity in Christ. If they are not living in faithful obedience to Jesus, they can't be living in unity of fellowship. This doesn't mean anyone is perfect, but walking by faith, believing what God's Word says about them, for them and to them. Second, each one must remain faithful to press in more deeply with the fellowship of brothers and sisters in the church. Without living in fellowship with brothers and sisters in Christ, you cannot be living faithful to your new identity in Christ. Paul introduced

¹ Ralph P. Martin, [Philippians: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 11, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 91. Martin states, "Worthy of the gospel recalls similar phrases in other Pauline letters (e.g. Rom. 16:2; Eph. 4:1; Col. 1:10) in which he insists upon the very highest standard as the pattern of the believers' behaviour."



this quality in verses 3-11. [Unity of fellowship is a gift of God's goodness from Holy Spirit when brothers and sisters dwell together in unity of spirit.](#)^{Psa133:1}

2. Clarity of Vision – “with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel”, .27

A unity of spirit produces a clarity of mind to understanding a vision of serving the gospel. Vision defines “the what” of their sharing and serving together; *striving side by side*. But vision also includes “the why” of serving and sharing together; they are contending for the faith of the gospel, strengthening their own faith and inviting others to faith in Jesus. People struggle to serve the gospel with others when they forget or neglect who they are in Christ. [Clarity of vision answers the issue of WHO, WHAT, and WHY simultaneously to fuel faithfulness to serve Jesus' commission by the power of Holy Spirit.](#)

APPL LPC Life Compass LifePoint has strived to hold clarity of vision from the very beginning. We believe that when God's people understand who they are [WHO], it explains [WHAT] and fuels [WHY] all we do because it syncs “what we do FOR Jesus” with “who we are IN Jesus”! [LifePoint heralds the Christ-follower's identity, Worshiper – Servant – Disciple – Missioner, as the fruit of the gospel because the WHAT of serving Jesus is only faithfully fueled by the WHY from the WHO!](#)

[Clarity of vision means everything gets defined by the gospel: the WHO \[Worship – Servant – Disciple – Missioner\] for the WHAT \[make disciples of all nations\] by the WHY \[glory of King Jesus\]; real Christ-followers in life together for MORE JESUS by telling every person “You are LOVED”.](#)

3. Steeled in missional resolve – “not frightened in anything by your opponents.” .28

Finally, Paul says that the lasting quality of a gospel worthy life is unyielding, determined perseverance; “*not frightened in anything by your opponents.*” Paul has explained this for his own life throughout the first chapter, but here he makes it universal for all Christians. When we understand a life of gospel precedence in all things, we certainly begin to see the value of a right perspective on all of life and a Jesus-prioritize pattern for our thinking. “*Not frightened*” means we do not lose heart. Paul tells Timothy, “God gave a spirit not of fear or timidity, but of power and love and self-control.”^{2Tim1:7}

Acts records that every time the disciples were threatened, beat or abused for a faithful testimony, it produced more courage and steeled resolve to persevere and remain faithful. But I see many today who claim Christ wilt in personal witness because they are worried about reputation, influence and number of followers, whether someone might become upset, or whether we may lose a friend. They focus on doing something for God so they can be faithful to God. But until we are faithful to Him, we are useless for Him. You may have to risk someone being offended by you, walking away from you, or, heaven forbid, even canceling you, to understand the One that consumes you. The way we remain faithful when threatened becomes a testimony both to believers and non-believers of our salvation. [Only a heart fully consumed by Jesus can be steeled in missional resolve, because every other is pre-occupied with satisfying all the little idols of life.](#)

Paul teaches that God gives two gifts of grace in a gospel-worthy life; “*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,*”. The Greek word translated “*it has been granted*” means what is granted is a sign of grace, of goodwill toward the recipient. For the Christian, suffering is a gift from God by because He is good, not as evidence against Him! Believe and suffering both testify, to believer and unbeliever, that Jesus is worthy in salvation and suffering. [Suffering is not a blight against God, but a gift of His grace! When a Christ-follower remains steeled in missional resolve, it serves as a faithful witness TO Jesus, that He IS good in all, and at all times.](#)

TRANS Here we see Paul's fifth and final conviction of the faithful, Christian life.

5. God empowers a Christ-follower's ALL by a life of gospel precedence in believing and suffering for Christ's sake. (1:29)

When times get hard, hurt is deep, or wounds seek to drive you away, we do not shrink back because Jesus is worthy! Christians do not fear what may, might or will come because we believe that God is good in all! And a Christian's faithfulness to believe in Jesus, even and especially in suffering, serves as a faithful witness to God's goodness in salvation.

[Christ-followers live a life of ALL by gospel precedence to bear a faithful witness both in believing and suffering.](#)



CLOSE What part of ALL are you withholding from God today? I invite you, surrender your all to Jesus now! He is worthy!

