



## A Life Worthy of the Gospel

### PHILIPPI HAD BEEN

made a Roman colony with status equal to the Roman colonies of Italy eighty years before Paul arrived there. Many of its citizens were descendants of veterans of the Roman armies who had been retired and settled there by Caesar. Paul was a Roman citizen, was proud of the fact, and claimed his rights as such (Acts 16:17; 22:25-28; 25:10). Such account for certain words in our text and enhance their meaning.

"Let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ," writes Paul. "Manner of life" is a translation of *politeuesthe*. Other translations use "conversation, conduct, behave" which convey the general meaning of the term, but dilute somewhat the original significance. Literally, the word meant "citizenship." To a non-Christian Philippian, Paul's "Be a worthy citizen" would mean: Conduct yourself commensurate with the dignity, honor, rights, and rewards of Roman citizenship; i.e., *be a true Roman!*

Later in his letter, Paul wrote, "Our citizenship (*politeuma*) is in heaven" (3:20). He wanted the saints at



Philippi to understand that they were citizens of a spiritual kingdom, of which Christ is king, the throne of which is in heaven, and whose capital city is not Rome or earthly Jerusalem, but the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of our God (Hebrews 12:22-23). He wished for them to know they were "sojourners and pilgrims (aliens, JWA)" on the earth (1 Peter 2:11), and "Here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come" (Hebrews 13:14). In the words of a popular religious song, Paul was saying, "This world is not my home; I'm just a passing through."

Just as a Philippian citizen gloried in his Roman citizenship and was careful to conduct himself in a manner commensurate with the dignity and glory, the laws and the institutions of Rome, Paul insisted that Christians live so as to reflect the dignity and

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## WORSHIP TIMES

### Sunday Worship:

9:30 AM - Sermon  
10:30 AM - Bible Class  
11:30 AM - Lord's Supper

### Wednesday Worship:

7:00 PM - All ages

### Friday Bible Study:

10:15 AM @ Annex

### Bible Class Topics:

Selected Psalms  
Prison Epistles  
Apologetics  
Children: Sacred Hearts  
Check with deacons for workbooks

### Shepherds

Amos Rowe  
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Feel free to stop by the preachers' offices for Bible studies, prayers, talks, or a meeting.

glory, the laws and institutions of their spiritual king, the Lord Jesus Christ. Having thus admonished his beloved Philippians, he tells them how to comply.

He said, "Stand fast in one spirit." He refers not to the Holy Spirit, but to spiritual fellowship in Christ. Just as the human spirit is the life principle of the soul and body (James 2:26), so spiritual union with Christ into which we are ushered by baptism results in reconciliation to God (2 Corinthians 5:17-21) and renders us dead to sin and alive to God (Romans 6:11). Hence, Paul is urging Christians to stand fast or hold on to their relationship to Christ thus accomplished as the basis of fellowship and unity with others thus united with Christ. F. J. A. Hort identifies "in one spirit" as "the spirit of fellowship" obtaining in "the new commonwealth," the *ekklesia*, over which Christ rules as king from Heaven (*The Christian Ecclesia*, p. 137).

Paul adds, "with one soul." The word "spirit" is a translation of *pneuma* and "soul" of *psuche*. A distinction between spirit and soul may be difficult, but there is a difference. Otherwise, two different words would not be used in the same text (See also 1 Thessalonians 5:23). Note also that it is *in* one spirit and *with* one soul. "In" suggests relationship, while "with" denotes instrumentality. The spirit is the life principle in human beings. The soul is the life principle manifested in thoughts, feelings, words, and deeds; i.e. the intellect, the emotions, and the will. As a result of mutual fellowship in Christ, Christians in a local fellowship such as obtained at Philippi, are to be one in thoughts, feelings, words, and deeds with reference to "the things of Jesus Christ" (2:21).

Oneness of soul demands unity of practice, hence Paul says "striving together" (KJV). This is one word in the original, *sunathlountes*. The root is *athleo*, the word from which we have athlete. The prefix *sun* means together. Hort translates the term "wrestling together" (ibid). The figure is that of a team sport. Team members are such by a

common relationship and motivation. Each exerts himself to the limit of his capacity and in unison with his teammates for the achievement of common goals. In team sports there are always adversaries to overcome. Christians in local fellowships (churches) are thus to labor. Teams have coaches and captains as directors and coordinators. Philippi had its "bishops (*episkopois*)" and "deacons (*diakonois*)" thus to serve (1:1).

Paul identifies the common goal by saying, "For the faith of the gospel." Faith is here used objectively of that which is believed, not subjectively of the act of believing, hence the body of teaching which is the instrumental basis of the Christian's subjective faith. This body of teaching is also called: "The gospel, the truth, the word of truth, the word of God, the doctrine of Christ, the doctrine." It consists of the sum of the teaching of Christ while on earth and from His throne in Heaven, revealed and confirmed by His Spirit-guided apostles and prophets. Spurious efforts have been made to divorce *gospel* and *doctrine*, but such is artificial and arbitrary. No part of the King's will can be ignored with impunity and without subverting His lordship.

One who "lives worthy of the gospel" must honor Christ as Lord, submit willingly and unreservedly to His will, exemplify daily the "risen life" (Colossians 3:1-4), and militantly exert himself in scriptural unison with all other Christians in "the defence and confirmation of the gospel" (1:7).

Adams, J. W. (1990). A Life Worthy of the Gospel (Philippians 1:27-30). Christianity Magazine, 7(11), 14.

# Christ Above All

"COUNT ALL THINGS loss for Christ"—these words seem to have a ring of the teaching of our Lord, in regard to counting the cost of being one of His disciples (Luke 14:28). When I read what Jesus said, and then see the things in Paul's life that he gave up, I feel very little, indeed.

This is something that we need to continue to teach, especially to our young—the things we should count loss.

There is one word that is mentioned three times in our text, the word *count* (or *counted*), which seems to emphasize Paul's attitude at the time he was converted. It describes his attitude from day to day in counting all things loss to continue in Christ. It also reveals his attitude toward the judgment day, in that he counted all things loss to be in Christ.

In order to appreciate the things counted as loss, we must go back to verses 3–6. This touches on his relationship to his nation. Paul says that he was circumcised the eighth day (see Genesis 17:12). He was of the stock of Israel, not a proselyte. Paul was from the tribe of Benjamin. God had selected this tribe to be part of Israel. He says that he was a Hebrew of Hebrews, i.e., both his parents were Hebrew. Concerning the law, Paul was a Pharisee (Acts 26:5).

Paul was very zealous. He had persecuted the church (Acts 9). However, Paul was blameless. He could not be charged with any willful sin against the law. Do not underestimate the value of this in Paul's day. This was something he could boast of above many of the Jewish people of that day. In the eyes of a Jew, these things were gain (Hebrews 11:24–25).

Like worthless stock, he counted these loss. The most precious thing in life is of no value compared to Christ. In verse 7, Paul says, "these I counted loss for Christ." They had no value to his salvation in Christ, so they were counted for loss. He also is saying, *I still count them loss*, in verse 8.

We like to hear what a man has to say after he has tried or tested something. Paul had tried being a disciple, and said, "I still count all things loss." Then he went a little further in his counting in verse 8 and said, "I count them as rubbish." This is a very strong word. It means worthless. Paul was not asking them

to do something that he had not done. He tells all that he counted all these things loss for one person—Christ. That I may gain, or win Christ ... Paul discovered the true blessings of being in Christ. Now, just put the list of all the things that Paul gave up on one side, and then on the other side—*one Christ*. Other things do not compare to Christ.

Paul says that he did all these things not only to win Christ while on earth. Here is where all the blessings of God are to be found (Ephesians 1:3). Then, when life is over, in that day, Paul wanted to be found *in Christ*.

Let's get the true meaning of all this. Paul was trying *at first* to gain salvation *by law*. However, he discovered he could not attain Christ by his own perfection. It came through faith in Christ—whatever he did, it was by faith (Acts 22:16). He believed that, when he obeyed, Christ would take away his sins.

Many today are trying to build their salvation on their *own merits* ... their knowledge ... their works. We need to remember that salvation comes by Christ. We need to count human wisdom loss to have a true knowledge of Christ.

When one is not connected to Christ, he is like Paul who (before his conversion) was a Pharisee. He may be connected to some religious organization and still not be in Christ. Notice that Paul said, "I suffered the loss of all things." Paul gave up much to become a Christian.

While I was still in denominationalism I had people tell me what to give up, but found that very few in the Lord's church were willing to do the same. Nothing is as precious as gaining Christ (Mark 9:42–50).

What would you give up in order to gain Christ (Matthew 10:37)? Remember that Paul gave up former things to gain Christ. Abraham was willing to give up his son to please God. What are you willing to give up in order to gain Christ?

Jackson, R. (1990). Christ Above All (Philippians 3:4–9). Christianity Magazine, 7(11), 17.

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# Member News and Prayer Requests

- Linda had to take Wayne to UAB Highlands Wednesday morning. They found out he has a GI bleed. They finally got him in a room at UAB Main on Thursday. Prayers please.
- Claudia Smalley and her sister are suffering from mild symptoms of COVID. Claudia appreciates all the prayers and calls.
- Billy Birtley's father suffered a stroke and is on hospice care. He is not doing well. Please continue to pray for the entire Birtley family.
- Chris Gill was diagnosed with COVID but is doing fine. She will begin her CHEMO treatments on January 31st. She has expressed confidence in God and her faith remains strong. Chris is facing three types of CHEMO and three rounds of treatment. She appreciates our prayers from Hueytown.
- Elisabeth Lowery had her hip replacement surgery on Wednesday, January 25, at UAB because her hip would not stay in the socket and she couldn't walk. She's done great and got to go home on Friday afternoon. Continue prayers for a full recovery.
- Amy Sims has pneumonia. She got the flu while on a recent trip to Hawaii and it became staph pneumonia. She is now getting the proper meds and is feeling better. Prayers please.
- Philip Hester, Matt Carter and Jill McKeever's uncle, was involved in a car accident on Wednesday. He has 4 broken ribs but nothing life threatening. He has been moved to a regular room with hopes of going home very soon. Philip lives in Trinity, near Decatur, and is an elder in the Lord's church there. Prayers for a speedy recovery.
- Our deepest sympathy to the family of Denise Dunn who passed away Wednesday afternoon while in Princeton Hospital. She has been on total life support since Saturday after she coded and they got her back. There will be no service, only the immediate family at the grave to say their goodbyes. Please pray for her children, Linda Rogers (her sister) and the family.
- Gabriel has an ear infection but is better. Shanna is suffering with sciatica and now has whatever viral infection that Gabriel has had. Prayers for relief from their pain.
- Our sympathy and prayers go out to the family of Greg Gravitt, the preacher at North Gardendale. He was killed in a motorcycle accident last week. His parents are Pat (Janet Etheridge's sister) and Bill Gravitt who attend the Gardendale church.
- Jan had successful cataract surgery last Wednesday and is recovering at home. She will have cataract surgery on the other eye on Monday, January 30, 2023. Prayers please.
- Aunt Craig is much better after having COVID. She's not coughing or having any leftover symptoms. Thank you Lord.
- Carol is a little better but is still recuperating from a bad fall she had several days ago. No broken bones, thankfully. Her pain is better but she is still sore. She is going to therapy 3 times a week. Please pray that it will help her and for Don as he cares for her.
- Lift up your voice! There will be a congregational singing at the Vestavia Church of Christ on February 3, 2023 at 7:00 PM. Tim Stevens and Todd Dennis will be directing.
- We will have a Gospel Meeting with Bro. Joseph Casimier beginning Sunday, March 5 - 8.

