

Introduction: Striving Side by Side for the Gospel

Isn't it nice when you get a text or a letter or a note, and it lets you know somebody's thinking about you? **These are all the letters my mum wrote to me from Ireland over the years before she died.**

In Paul's letter to the Philippians, he reminds them that as partners with him in the Gospel, they are in his heart and his prayers.

He now gives them the believer's job description: Live A Life Worthy of The Gospel of Christ.

What Does That Life Look Like? Verse 27

Imagine living in a city where the culture, the language, and the laws are completely foreign to your upbringing. In the first century, the people of Philippi understood this perfectly.

Philippi was a Roman colony; though it was located in Greece, its inhabitants were granted Roman citizenship. They dressed like Romans, spoke Latin, and followed Roman law. **They were a "little Rome" away from home.**

How does this 2,000-year-old letter to a small Roman colony relate to us in 2026? It provides a practical roadmap for Christian conduct in a polarized world.

In verse 5 of this chapter Paul wrote, *"for you have been my partners in spreading the Good News about Christ from the time you first heard it until now."* **In other words – we worked together.** Then here in verse 27 he brings up working **"together"** again.

He lays before them an enormous challenge: *"let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ."*

We have to be careful here, because part of the gospel message is that we do not earn or deserve God's favour in our lives.

To live **"worthy"** of the gospel means to live so that your life gives proper weight to all that God has done for you.

When we talk about living worthy of the gospel, we're talking about living in such a way to reflect the reality that God has forgiven you in Christ.

Eugene Peterson (The Message) translates it this way: **"Live in such a way that you are a credit to the message of Christ."**

It brings up an old question I'm sure we have all heard many times.

"If we were arrested for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict us?" Living in such a way that no one can deny our true identity.

In These Verses Paul Shows Us Four Marks of a Life Worthy of The Gospel.

- 1. Stand firm**
- 2. Strive together**
- 3. Share the gospel**
- 4. Recognize that suffering may happen**

The Dual Citizenship:

The NLT translates verse 27, **“to live as a citizen of heaven.”** "You are citizens of Rome but also citizens of Heaven, and your behaviour must reflect that Kingdom, even while you reside in Philippi."

Paul is reminding us if we're Christians, we're citizens of another kingdom. We hold dual passports, dual citizenship.

While we're here on earth, we have a dual responsibility: **to live in a way that reflects the King we serve.**

We're citizens of this earthly realm and citizens of a heavenly one.

So what can we glean from verse 27?

Faith In Christ Changes the Way We Live.

A watching world draws conclusions about Jesus Christ by the way we live.

This is vastly important because the world around us has become increasingly hostile to biblical truth.

There's almost no middle ground any more on any issue, moral, spiritual, political, cultural, racial or educational. **It's becoming more difficult to get a hearing in the marketplace of ideas.**

When Paul wrote these words, he had no idea if he would ever get out of jail in Rome or ever visit Philippi again. So burdened was he for his Philippian brothers and sisters, he encourages them to;

Stand Firm: *“Stand firm in one spirit”* (v. 27a).

The phrase **“stand firm”** describes a Roman military formation in which the soldiers stood shoulder to shoulder and back-to-back **with their shields up and their spears outward**, creating a strong defensive position.

It's a powerful witness to any community when they see Christians standing together “in one spirit.” We're not to divide, and yet we do, sometimes over the most trivial of issues.

Barriers of race, skin colour, geography, worship style, mode of baptism, and denominational affiliation should not divide us so we can concentrate on faithfully preaching the gospel of Christ.

We should never forget the powerful words of Jesus that a watching world will know that we are his people by our love for one another. (John 13:34-35) *By this shall all men know you are my disciples.*

But Paul is not finished. We're to be "*contending or striving together as one for the faith of the gospel*" (v. 27b).

Strive Together: This is the heartbeat of our text. The "*faith of the gospel*" encompasses that great body of Christian truth that presents salvation in the finished work of Christ on the Cross.

One Spirit, One Mind: Disunity is the greatest thief of our witness. When the world sees a church divided, they lose interest in the Gospel. **When they see people from different backgrounds standing shoulder-to-shoulder, they see a miracle.**

When we put these words together here is what they mean:

There is a faith we must believe.

That faith is worth fighting for.

That faith must never be compromised.

That faith is the basis of our unity.

That faith should be preached in all the earth.

We Stand Together - We Strive Together

We need this because too many believers have been intimidated and have left the battlefield.

God's word to the church is always **Go Forward!**

As far as I know, God never told his people to retreat, **not ever.** Jesus said, "*Go and preach the gospel*" (Mark 16:15). He called us to "*Go and make disciples*" (Mathew 28:19) And what are the first two letters of the word Gospel? **G-O!**

There's another way our Christian testimony can impact a community.

Paul brings up something that believers are facing more and more today.

"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" (Philippians 1:28)

Speak Without Fear: **Paul doesn't sugar-coat the truth.** If we speak up for Jesus publicly, social media will be on us like a flash. **Speak up anyway.** Don't be afraid of the faceless people who use modern technology in an attempt to silence you.

Some people won't like our message. **May God give us a holy boldness to witness for Jesus.**

The reason believers upset the world is because they stand as a rebuke to everything the world stands for. When we say, “You must be born again,” someone is sure to call us fanatics.

If you say the Bible is the Word of God, someone will mock your beliefs. If you say, “I know I’m going to heaven,” you’ll be accused of thinking you’re better than everyone else.

Someone is bound to call you a narrow-minded, judgmental bigot. And on it goes. **Believers annoy the world because we are citizens of heaven and live by different principles.**

Paul’s advice is simple: Don’t be frightened or surprised when someone criticizes your Christian faith. It happens to all of us sooner or later.

“For you have been given not only the privilege of trusting in Christ but also the privilege of suffering for him. We are in this struggle together. You have seen my struggle in the past, and you know that I am still in the midst of it.” **Philippians 1:29**

Recognize That Suffering May Happen

There are two gifts mentioned in these verses. **There is the gift of faith** (“the privilege of trusting Christ”). This is the gift that enables us to believe in Christ in the first place.

Then There Is the Gift of Suffering (“the privilege of suffering for him”)

This is also a gift—but it’s the gift no one wants.

There are many applications from this passage. Let me make the most obvious one.

Don’t ever give up on your friends and loved ones. Don’t ever stop praying. Don’t stop loving them. **And don’t be afraid to speak up for Jesus when the opportunity arises.**

Here’s what’s on Paul’s heart that we need to remember. **As citizens of heaven;**

Stand without division.

Strive without compromise.

Speak without fear.

As I thought about Paul exhorting the Philippian believers about striving together for the faith of the Gospel and to live as citizens of heaven, it reminded me of our congregation here and our upcoming 154th Anniversary in May.

God gave to our forefathers a vision for Gospel ministry and witness to this town when they laid the foundation of this church.

He expects us with determination to carry on that work they started – and to do it together as brothers and sisters in the Lord.

He has more work for us to do, more people to come to Christ, more missions for us to support, more individuals and families to reach, more spiritual growth for us as a church.

Why do these truths matter? Here are the reasons why the things we've looked at this morning are so important.

They Remind Us That We're All Partners Together in The Gospel.

It's not just the missionary's job, it's not just the pastor's job, **we all work together with a common goal** to present the gospel faithfully in the community God has placed us.

This partnership starts at our own doorstep - right here in Petrolia.

God has placed us here in this congregation at this juncture in time - to carry out His mission where we are.

It's not by accident that this church stands here today, and that we're here together at this moment of its history.

It's not by accident we're here today as members and friends of First Baptist.

The reports at our last business meeting, outlined the ministries that we have committed together to support and carry out for the glory of God this year.

1. The ministry of preaching the Good News to this community in the name of Christ.
2. The ministry of Bible Teaching and Worship Services.
3. The Ministry of Music.
4. The Ministry of Visitation to the Sick and Shut ins.
5. The ministry to Seniors.
6. The ministry to kids.
7. The outreach of Missionary Support.
8. The ministry of Prayer.

All these ministries focus on one ultimate objective, the message of the Gospel, the Good News in Jesus Christ

Here is the reason why we are to strive together as one for the faith of the Gospel.

- That this church would always be a welcoming place for saint and sinner alike.

- That this church would always be a place where the scriptures are read, and in their reading the voice of Jesus is heard.

- That this church would always be a place where you're informed of the promises of the Gospel and encouraged to deepen your relationship with God.

- That this church would always be a place where the message is unashamedly evangelistic.

Where we proclaim Jesus Christ as Saviour, and urge everyone to believe on Christ, and make a personal commitment of their lives to Him.

- That this church would always be a place where we preach a message of reconciliation.

Ambassadors for Christ - 2 Corinthians 5:19-20

To declare that *"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, and has committed to us the message of reconciliation."*

- That this church would always be a place where together we declare to broken lives separated from God, **"Be reconciled to God"**

- That this church would always be a place where together we reach out to broken homes, to husbands and wives and children separated from each other and from God, and say, **"Be reconciled to God"**

- That this church would always be a place where to a society broken with hate, greed, immorality and war, we declare together that Christ is the answer, **"Be reconciled to God"**

- That this church would always be a place where together we say to the wife beaters, the gamblers, the alcoholics, the child abusers, the drug addicts and the thief, **"Be reconciled to God"**

Every activity, every meeting, every message, every function, every programme of the church comes to focus on this ultimate declaration that Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost.

What a privilege we have to be "partners together in the Gospel."

The challenge for us this morning is simple:

Pray for holy boldness to live lives worthy of the Gospel we proclaim

Pray when people look at our lives, our speech, our unity, our courage, they will see something that points them to Christ?

The world may oppose us, misunderstand us, or even mock us. But our calling remains the same:

Stand Firm.

Strive Together.

Speak Without Fear.

And If Necessary, Suffer Faithfully for The Name of Christ.

The story is told that amongst the army of Alexander the Great, was a young soldier who was a skilled warrior, but during one particular fierce battle, he became so frightened and afraid that he hid in a cave to avoid the battle.

When he was found, he was brought before Alexander the great warrior and conqueror, and Alexander asked him, **soldier, what is your name? He said sheepishly, Alexander.**

Alexander the Great asked him again, this time with a little more force, **what is your name?** And the young soldier replied, **Alexander.**

Alexander the Great looked at him and said, **change your name or change your conduct,** because you're being a bad reflection on a name that is my name, **the name Alexander.**

In a sense, that's the message of the New Testament to those of us who call ourselves Christians. **Live a life worthy of what God has called us to.** After all, He gave His one and only son to die for us.

Stand firm in the spirit, strive together for the advancement of the gospel, don't be afraid to share the gospel even when there's opposition, and recognize that you might suffer for the cause of Christ.

May God help us to make a difference for Christ by the way we live.

Prayer: Our Father, we praise you for Jesus who is still in the business of changing lives. Help us to delight to serve boldly in His name, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel.

In Jesus' name we pray, **Amen.**