

Philippians 2026 Series -Lesson 10
“Torn Betwixt and Between Prompts Proper Behavior”
Spheres of Grace Ministries International, Inc.

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Introduction:

In our previous studies we have discovered that the purpose of the believer’s life and the purpose of the believer’s death is to glorify Christ, that is to live out our individual roles in the redemption of humanity and the settling of The Angelic Conflict. We are to model grace and live a “Faith/Rest” life. Now as we continue our study of Philippians 1:22-23 where Paul says, “*...yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:*”

It is important to note that this is not a decision for Paul to make but is a statement of his preference. He was not in control of the matter anymore than we are of our own life or death, but Paul simply identifies his preference. That phrase “*...yet what I shall choose I wot not.*” Is literally translated, “*...Then what I prefer for myself, I do not know.*” Paul tells us he is torn between two things and does not know which he even prefers; “*...For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better...*”

The Preference May Be Ours, but the Choice Is God’s.
Philippians 1:22b.

1. Literal translation: *Then, what I prefer for myself I do not know*
2. See? This is only a preference.... God makes the decision of life or death.
 - (a). God has assigned our number:

Job 14:5

*Seeing his days [are] determined, the number of his months [are]
with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass;*

I. Torn Betwixt Two:

1. To Depart and Be with Christ
2. To Abide in the Flesh and Minister

A. To Depart and Be with Christ: (Philippians 1:23)

“...having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:

1. Paul had a desire to depart

“...having a desire” (epi-thu-mian) = **craving or longing**

(a). Remember, Paul had visited Heaven: (II Corinthians 12: 2-4)

I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

(b). Paul now has a craving to live in Heaven:

“depart” (ana-lu-sai) = **once and for all depart from this life as a matter of purpose** (an idiom)

Infinitive - denotes purpose

Aorist Tense - point of time divorced from time and perpetuated

2. Paul Has a Desire to Be with Christ:

“...and to be...” (ei-nai) = **keep on being as a matter of purpose...**

Infinitive form of the verb “to be”

Present Tense - continuous action

“...with....” (soun) = **together with...**

Preposition - this preposition emphasizes a unity - together

“...Christ...” (Christos) = **Christ...**

The absence of the article emphasizes the character of Christ and the quality of being with Him.

3. Being With Christ Is Far Better:

“...which is far better:” (pol-loh)(gar)(mal-loh) **which is far better...**

B. Or to Remain and Minister: (Philippians 1:24)

“...But nevertheless to abide in the flesh [is] more needful for you.”

1. Isn't There Always A - But...

“Nevertheless” (deh) = **but....**

Although Paul would rather go be with Christ which is far better, he will remain awhile to continue ministering, which is more needful to them.

2. Paul Needs to Remain a Little Longer:

“to abide in the flesh [is] more needful for you”

(a). Paul will continue to abide in the flesh for a while

“abide” (epi-me-nein) = **to continue tarrying...**

This infinitive indicates it is God’s purpose for him to continue to tarry a while before going home.

“in the flesh” (tae)(sar-ki) = **in the flesh...**

Listen to Paul in II Corinthians 5:6-8

Therefore [we are] always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) We are confident, [I say], and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

(b). It Is More Needful to Other Believer’s for Paul to Tarry:

“[is] more needful” (an-ang-kai-o-ter-on) = **more necessary**

This is a comparative adjective indicating that compared to Paul’s departing it is more necessary that he tarry for a while...

“for you” (di)(humas) **on your behalf.**

II. Paul Knows His Purpose: Philippians 1:25

“And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith;

A. Paul Is Confident He Will Remain:

“And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all.”

1. Paul Uses a Perfect Active Participle Indicating That He Has Complete Confidence That He Will Continue to Remain with Them.

2. The Word *“Continue”* is **‘para-me-noh’** And Means **To Dwell Along Side You.**

B. Paul’s Continuing Ministry Is Two-Fold:

for your furtherance and joy of faith

1. Paul was to remain with them to cut out a way for them to advance

“furtherance” (pro-ko-paen) = This Greek word means **‘to cut out a way for them to advance.’**

2. Paul was also to remain with them for them to experience the Joy of their faith. History tells us that he was freed from prison and ministered to them for about two more years then was rearrested and beheaded. His temporary freedom was designed to map out a way for them for their further training and for the joy of their faith,

“and joy of faith” (cha-ran)(taes)(pis-te-ohs) = **joy from the source of faith.**

Real joy comes from the experience of resting in faith. Therefore, as Paul ministers to them he will cut out a way for them to advance and will provide foundational teaching which will increase their faith and thus their joy. Our joy as well as theirs is found in following the way Paul mapped out.

God has a design for each of us to minister and we will remain until we either complete that ministry or neglect that ministry. It is needful to others for us to perform effective ministry.

Paul said he was torn between two things, to depart and be with Christ, which, was far better - or to remain and minister to them which was more needful. Of course, as we noted, the choice was not Paul's to make - God determines life and death.

Paul concluded his consideration of this issue by stating, (Philippians 1:25-26)

And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again.

III. In anticipation of seeing the Philippian believers again soon, Paul challenges them concerning the proper conduct of believers.

Philippians 1:27-28

Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.

The key phrase for our study of this passage is found in verse 27, ***“...Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ...”*** Our manner of life is to be such ***“...as it becometh the gospel of Christ...”*** In other words, we are to live in accordance with the philosophy of the gospel of Christ. The evidences of such a life are stated in

our text:

- Others will hear of our affairs
- We will have stability
- There will be a concerted effort for the faith of the gospel
- We will not be terrified by anything.
- This will prove to the opposition that they are going to be destroyed
- This will affirm the believer's salvation

Let's examine the details.

IV. Exegetical Study of The Text:

Verse 27

Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

“Only” (monon) **Only...**

This word establishes an exclusive position - there is only one kind of conduct that the Believer should even consider. We are to exclude all other forms of conduct. Although our salvation is not dependent upon our conduct - our conduct should be determined by our salvation.

“let your conversation be” (po-li-teu-es-the) = **conduct yourselves as proper citizens...**

Verb- expresses action

Imperative Mood - a command

Present Tense - continuous action

Middle Voice - subject participates in the action and is affected by it

This Greek word refers to the proper conduct of a citizen. We are citizens of the Kingdom of God - therefore we need to conduct ourselves as citizens of God's Kingdom.

The middle voice indicates the Believer does not act alone but participates in this conduct - the Holy Spirit has been sent to participate with us. He instructs, encourages, equips, and empowers us, enabling us to maintain proper conduct. Our part in participation is a yieldedness to the control of the Holy Spirit in order to live properly.

“as it becometh” (axi-ohs) = **worthily...**

This is an adverb that modifies the verb ***‘conduct yourselves as citizens.’*** It is used here to describe the proper behavior of a Believer - ***worthily of the gospel.*** (in a manner befitting the gospel)

Of course none of us are worthy of the gospel - all of us are sinners – but we

have been cleansed at salvation and with the help of the Holy Spirit we can walk worthily of the gospel, that is, in a manner that is befitting of the gospel of Christ.

“the gospel of Christ:” (eu-ange-li-ou)(tou)(Christou) = **the gospel of the Christ...**

The gospel of the Christ is the good news concerning a salvation that is provided by grace through faith. It identifies the standing of the Believer in the righteousness of God so as to be declared, ***“Holy and without blame...”*** (Ephesians 1:4)

“that” (hina) = **in order that...**

This subordinating conjunction establishes a purpose clause - Here Paul will identify the purpose of the proper conduct of a Believer. The purpose is not salvation. Conduct cannot save us. However, there is a purpose in maintaining proper conduct.

“whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs,”

Some people get hung up on the privacy of the Believer to the extent that they miss the application of this passage. We have a responsibility to others - not an accountability to others - but a responsibility to others. Others are to ***see our good works and glorify our Father in Heaven*** (Matthew 5:16)

Paul wanted to go visit the Philippian Believers. But, whether he was able to be there or not he expected to hear of their affairs. What are these affairs Paul to which Paul refers? He identifies them in the following passage.

“that ye stand fast in one spirit,”

The first thing Paul mentions is the need for unity among Believers.

“stand” (stea-ke-te) = **stand firm...**

Verb- express action

Indicative Mood - mood of reality

Present Tense - continuous action

Active voice- Notice! This is action each believer is required to perform with his or her free will.

“in” (ehn) = **in the sphere of...**

“one” (heni) = one...

“spirit” (pneumati) = **spirit...**

This phrase ***“one spirit”*** identifies the unity that is only accomplished by our being yielded to the Holy Spirit. As Believers we are ***“...to stand firm in the sphere of one spirit...”*** Do we have the same spirit among our fellowship?

“with one mind” (mia)(psuche) = **with one soul...**

A life threatening weakness in the church today is the failure of Believers to establish this one-soulness with others in the local congregation. We are to function in the body of the church in the same manner in which the various members of our physical body function - with one soul.

“striving together” (sun-ath-loun-tes) = **laboring along with...**

This word is used of physical labor and is prefixed with the preposition ‘sun’ meaning, together with

“for the faith of the gospel;” (tae)(pis-tei)(tou)(eu-ange-li-ou) = **in the sphere of the faith from the source of the gospel....**

The place in which we are to be laboring along with other Believers is the sphere of faith - the faith that comes from the gospel.

Romans 10:17 says, ***“So then faith [cometh] by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”***

Therefore, Believers are to labor together with each other in the sphere of faith that is produced by hearing the Word of God.

Paul continues in Philippians 1:28

Verse 28

And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.

“And in nothing” (kai)(ehn)(mae-de-ni) = **And in not one thing...**

“terrified” (pturo-menoi) = **being terrified**

The Believer is not to become terrified. God has provided His peace for us and He has promised to cause everything to work together for our good - thus, we are not to be terrified....

“by your adversaries;” (hupo)(tohn)(anti-kei-me-nohn) = **by those opposing you...**

So, the Believer is not to become terrified a single time by those who oppose him. Remember the attitude of David when he went out to meet Goliath... He said, ***“...The battle is the Lord’s.”***

Now in the phrase that follows, Paul identifies two specific results of our not being terrified by those who oppose us.

“which is to them an evident token of perdition,

This phrase indicates that our not becoming terrified by them serves as an indictment of proof of their eventual destruction

“evident token” (en-deix-is) = **indictment of proof...**

“perdition” (apoh-leias) = **of their destruction but not annihilation...**

“but to you” Here Paul gives the other result of our not becoming terrified by anything done to us by those who oppose us. The first thing is it will be an indictment against them and secondly it will be an indictment of proof for us...

“of salvation,” (so-tae-rias) = **of your deliverance that is from God...**

Yes! An indictment of proof of our deliverance is our not becoming terrified by a single thing done to us by those who oppose us. This does not mean that we are not saved if we are afraid of those things done to us by the opposition. The word “sotaerias” is used here of our deliverance. When we cease to be afraid of the opposition it is an indictment of our confidence in our deliverance.

“and that of God.” (kai)(tou-to)(apo)(the-ou) = **and this from God**

This deliverance is from God. It is based on His character, His ability, and His grace.

V. Principles of Application:

1. There are some definite guidelines concerning the conduct of Believers that are to distinguish them from unbelievers. We examined these guidelines a few weeks ago when we studied what Paul had to say about magnifying Christ in our bodies. But it is summed up in the phrase, ***“...exclusively conduct your life in a manner that is fitting a citizen of the Kingdom of God....”*** (Philippians 1:27)
2. Conducting your life in that manner will result in others knowing, from your life, about God and giving Him the glory. Paul said, ***“...in order that I might hear of your affairs....”*** (Philippians 1:27).
3. Conducting your life in this manner will result in greater stability as we operate in the sphere of the spirit. Paul said, ***“...that you stand fast in one spirit....”*** (Philippians 1:27)
4. Conducting your life in this manner will result in your being part of a fellowship of believers that are one soul and function as the body of Christ. The Greek text says, ***“...having one soul....”*** (Philippians 1:27)
5. Conducting your life in this manner will result in a joint effort of concerted labor with other believers operating in the sphere of faith that originates from the gospel. The text says, ***“...striving together in the faith of the gospel....”***

(Philippians 1:27).

6. Conducting your life in this manner will result in your not being made afraid by anything the opposition can do. And, your not being afraid of anything they can do results in:
 - A. This will prove to the opposition that they are doomed.
 - B. It will prove to you that your deliverance comes from God

The text says, *“and in nothing terrified by you adversaries, which to them is an indictment of their destruction, but to you of salvation and that from God...”*

Conclusion: Three Personal Inventory Questions:

As a result of this teaching each Believer should answer the following three questions:

1. Is my life and conduct different from the behavior of unbelievers?
(Remember Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego?)
2. Do others hear of or detect my higher standards?
(They had heard of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego)
3. Are the results of this manner of life evident?
 - A. Do I have stability?
 - B. Am I part of a Concerted effort for Christ?
 - C. Do I have deliverance from my adversaries?

But it All begins at Salvation:

*For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God...
The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life...
With the heart man believes unto righteousness...
But with the mouth confession is made unto salvation...
For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved!*

“... and your joy no man taketh from you...”
(Luke 16:22)