

Philippians 1:27-2:4

Verse 27:

--**Only**. . . or you could translate it *whatever happens* ties us back to Paul's thought in **26** and makes this broad principle a warning and an exhortation.

--Paul warns them to focus on progressing in their faith because regression is an ever-present danger. We are either progressing or regressing. There is no middle ground. Everything tends to wilderness.

--He also exhorts them their progress in their faith should display **conduct**. . . **worthy of the gospel of Christ**.

--Greek word that Paul uses here for **conduct** (*politeuomai*) specifically refers to the conduct of a citizen. It is not the general word that Paul uses for the Christian life when he speaks about a believer's **walk** (*peripateo*) as in Ephesians. No doubt he is playing off their citizenship as Romans as he will again in **3:20**.

--We might call this a "missionary mindset," but really, it is just living in our character as strangers and pilgrims of heaven on our way through earth.

--This is a purifying and clarifying Christian principle. I should never conduct myself in any way that would be improper for a witness or ambassador of Jesus Christ. *Would my common actions hinder me from effectively sharing the gospel?*

--**so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs**. . . Paul was planning on seeing them again, and even if he didn't get there personally, he was sending Timothy (**2:19**) who would return and inform him on how the church was doing—particularly with their gospel witness.

--What does Paul desire to hear of them? **That you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel**. . .

--Paul wanted them to *stand fast & strive* for the right things. He knew the Christian life required fortitude, courage, and tenacity. Our circumstances, conditions, and even other Christians will never be perfect! We live in a sinful world. Still, we should not let go of our personal faith or public witness.

--And Paul wanted them to remain in the good fight **in one spirit, with one mind**. . .

--The only way we can truly stand together is through the common reality of the Holy Spirit working in and through us (**Eph. 2:18; 4:4**).

1 Corinthians 12:13: For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.

--There should be a supernaturally-natural unity in our determination to hold our faith personally and publicly—as one man/body. *There is such blessing in serving Christ with other brothers and sisters in Christ!*

Verse 28:

--We should not be **terrified**—the word was often used to describe a frightened horse. That type of fear is not worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

--It is not a sin to *feel* fear. We cannot help it. Our sin is in the surrender of our faith and obedience *because of* fear. How many battles has Satan won through intimidation?!

--The truth is, Satan is a liar, even when he roars. Intimidation is one of his most effective tools!

Jericho, Goliath, Fiery furnace, Lion's den, Martyrs, Demonic activity, etc.

--The secret that Satan knows—that God has revealed—and we often forget is that if we resist him, he will have to flee.

--Christian was traveling and reached a narrow pass at the end of which he saw two lions and thought to turn back. . .

*Bunyan (Pilgrims Progress): *"But the Porter at the lodge, whose name is Watchful, perceiving that Christian made a halt, as if he would go back, cried unto him, saying, "Is thy strength so small? Fear not the lions, for they are chained, and are placed there for trial of faith where it is, and for discovery of those that have none: keep in the midst of the path, and no hurt shall come unto thee."*

James 4:7: Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

--Our boldness in the face of our adversaries' threats is a proof of our salvation and of their coming judgment. Courageous obedience despite fear, even to the point of martyrdom, actualizes the triumph of the truth in real life.

--Read: ***2 Thessalonians 1:4-10***

Verses 29-30:

--**(29)** This type of persecution from adversaries means that we are on the right road. This is the very opposite of the false health-and-wealth message or the prosperity gospel. A gospel-worthy walk will lead us directly into the cross-hairs of the enemy.

2 Timothy 3:12: Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

--How has this ***been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake?***

--It allows us to prove our love for Him and our love for the world.

Acts 5:40-41: And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.

--How did Jesus combat the evil in the world? With good. With suffering. With love. With truth. With the cross. Our very life and salvation were secured by the suffering of Christ and we are His followers! *Notice as well that *shame* was a part of the suffering. Some would rather die physically than be shamed culturally.*

2 Corinthians 5:14-15: For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

--Our focus is so often on the suffering. Paul's focus was on Christ.

--There is a Martyr's Monument in Oxford, England, where bishops Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley were burned at the stake in 1555. The inscription reads: *"To the Glory of God, and in grateful commemoration of His servants, Thomas Cranmer, Nicholas Ridley, Hugh Latimer, Prelates of the Church of England, who near this spot yielded their bodies to be burned, bearing witness to the sacred truths which they had affirmed and maintained against the errors of the Church of Rome, and rejoicing that to them it was given not only to believe in Christ, but also to suffer for His sake..."*

--**(30)** The Philippians had learned about the suffering Savior from a man who suffered for them—and was still suffering for the cause of Christ!

--I cannot tell anyone why their suffering should be theirs specifically. Only God could. We will all suffer one way or another in this life. Even so, the Bible clearly teaches part of what it means to be a follower of Christ is to follow Him through suffering to glory.

Luke 9:23: Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me."

--The only question left is this: *What will I do with my suffering? For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.*

Chapter 2

Verse 1:

--**Therefore if** . . . because Paul knows that there is a real experience of life and love and affection in Christ, and he would have the Philippians share it with one another. *Those around us most, should receive the most love from us.*

--Wonderfully, there is no correction of bad doctrine here. That is not Paul's concern. Instead, Paul is inspired by the Holy Spirit to exhort them to live in line with the good doctrine they already knew and believed. Good doctrine isn't meant to be merely interesting but life-changing.

--True Christian graces should flower in us and flow through us. God's children will not only *be blessed* but are also meant to *be a blessing*. We must not talk big about Christian experience but live small in our homes, workplaces, or fellowships.

--What are we to have experienced and, in turn, share? These spiritual realities: **consolation, comfort, love, fellowship, affection, mercy**. . . suffering is not all that we are granted in Christ. These wonderful gifts are also from the Lord!

--There seems to be a trinitarian structure here similar to **2 Corinthians 13:14**, though God the Father is not explicitly mentioned.

Colossians 3:12-14: Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.

--These virtues are required in the body of Christ because of our imperfections. They are displayed in response to burdens, wrongs, and weaknesses. In the end, our choice will be to allow God to change us or to separate from God's people and the fellowship of the gospel.

--Who do you choose to fellowship with? Christ was willing to die for the Church so that His bride could be with Him forever.

Acts 4:23: And being let go, they went to their own companions. . .

Verse 2:

--Extending to others the grace of Christ shown to us, is the very truth that made Paul's heart overjoyed. His joy-cup would be filled to overflowing if this was true of the Philippian fellowship.

3 John 4: I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the truth.

--This must be living spiritual reality and not merely holding doctrinal positions.

--To be **like-minded** does not mean that all their thoughts would be uniform. It means that their mindset and purpose were the same. ***We can be of one purpose and mindset with those who hold different doctrinal positions or ministry methods.***

--**having the same love** toward God and others—especially those that are of the household of God. Shared mutual affections.

--Being **of one accord, of one mind. . .** is *together in soul* or *of one soul*.

Verse 3:

--Here is our danger. What will break down the unity of fellowship and heart and mind?

--First, Paul warns of **Selfish ambition**. It is the same Greek word (*eritheia*) Paul used of the insincere preachers in **1:17**. It is also translated *strife* & *contention* in the NT.

--There is a good ambition for the honor that comes only from God, but it is to be displayed through the surrender of self in loving service to others.

Matthew 20:25-28: But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.

--The man or woman driven by selfish ambition will always have another personal goal and angle to their service. They want something, and if they don't get that thing, they will no longer serve and will be willing to cause strife and contention to get their way.

--Second, Paul warns of **conceit**. The Greek word (*kenodoxia*) is used only here in the NT. It has the idea of *vainglory*. This is a person who thinks they are something, worthy of something, or should be recognized in a certain way. There is a glory they want in their service, particularly among the fellowship of the saints.

*Tozer (Keys to the Deeper Life): *“The problem is self. Selfishness is never so exquisitely selfish as when it is on its knees. Self is the serpent in the garden, the golden wedge in the tent of Achan, and it renders every prayer ineffective until it is identified and repudiated.*

“Self turns what would otherwise be a pure and powerful prayer into a weak and ineffective one.

“I may, for instance, pray earnestly for the glory of God to be manifested in this generation of men, and spoil the whole thing by my secret hope that I may be the one through whom He manifests the glory.

“I may cry loudly to God that the church be restored to her New Testament splendor, and secretly dream that I may be the one to lead her in; thus I block the work of the Spirit by my impure motive. My hidden desire for a share of the glory prevents God from hearing me. So self, all bold and shameless, follows me to the altar, kneels with me in prayer and destroys my prayer before it is uttered.

*“It is possible to want the walls of Jerusalem rebuilt, but to want to be known as the Nehemiah who rebuilt them. It is possible to want the prophets of Baal defeated, but to dream of being the Elijah who stands dramatically on the mount to call down the fire for all the world to see. My strong desire for a new reformation within the church may be rendered void by my secret desire to be known as another Luther. . . Too often we pray for right things but desire the answer for wrong reasons, one reason being a desire to gain a reputation among the saints. Long after every hope of getting on the cover of ‘Time’ magazine has ebbed away from our hearts we may still harbor the unconfessed desire to get on the cover of ‘Christian Life’. That is, if the world will not appreciate our sterling worth, then the church will! If we cannot enjoy the reputation of being a great statesman or actor or ballplayer we will settle for a big reputation as an unusual Christian. That is to desire flesh instead of manna; and God may send leanness to our souls as a result.”**

--The opposite of these things is **lowliness of mind** where we **esteem others better than** ourselves. The Greek word for **lowliness of mind** is (*tapeinophrosyne*) and is often translated *humility, humbleness of mind, humility of mind, etc.*

--It is the word Peter uses when he says:

***1 Peter 5:5: Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”**

--There is no place in all the world where self will be so confronted, torn apart, and put to death as the Body of Christ. Take your place among the people of God, deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Him.

Verse 4:

--First, the family of God is part of my interests. Eternally so.

--Second, we must remember this exhortation is still in the context of gospel fellowship and bold, unified, witness. Paul is not saying we give up all personal interests. We all still need to work honorable jobs and support our families.

--Third, Paul is exhorting a life of *others-consciousness Vs. self-consciousness*.

--How is this possible? We are all so insecure and selfish! The reality is we can only live for others as we come to know and experience the work of Christ in our own lives. Our relationship and commitment to Him will fuel our relationship with others.

--It did for Paul: ***For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve (Acts 27:23).***

--The carnal trinity of self-life: my pleasure, my profit, my preference. **"I love me some me!"**

--The heart of Christ: *Not My will but Yours be done!*