

AS IT BECOMETH THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST PHILIPPIANS 1:27-30

Text:

Introduction:

Philippians is a rich resource for the Christian who is lacking in joy.

Because of Christ, every believer can experience true joy and fulfillment, no matter what is going on around him.

If only believers could actually live every moment with eternity in view—it would change our lives.

The passage before us this evening presents the conflict that Jude called contending “for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 1:3).

Jude 1:3

³ Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

We are to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ as commanded in 2 Timothy 2:3

2 Timothy 2:3

³ Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

In another place Paul told Timothy, to war a good warfare.

1 Timothy 1:18

¹⁸ This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare;

As a soldier, there are several ways to have joy and peace in the heat of the battle.

1. THE CONDUCT OF A GOOD SOLDIER (v. 27)

Philippians 1:27

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;

A. Behavior that Shows Your Allegiance

1. Do you act like a child of God?
2. Do you act like a believer of the Gospel of Christ?
3. If you want peace and joy in the heat of the battle, you need to start acting like your allegiance lies with the Kingdom of God instead of the kingdoms of this world.
4. What happens to a soldier in a foreign country who acts like he sympathizes with the enemy?
5. If he makes it home alive, he may find himself subject to court martial (at least that's how it used to be)!

B. Behavior that Submits to Authority –“whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast...”

1. In an army, the general should not have to stand over each soldier to be assured that he will carry out his assignment.

2. We Christians should encourage each other with the ideas of loyalty to that Heavenly Country, our eternal home on high.

3. Shouts of “Duty, Honor, and Country” would not be out of place when the duty is to God, the honor goes to His name, and the country is Heaven!

2. THE COOPERATION OF A GOOD SOLDIER (V. 27B)

Philippians 1:27

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;

Notice what the Psalmist said:

Psalms 133:1

¹ Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

A. No one finds joy when he or she is in a constant state of friction with other people.

B. It is one thing to fight with the enemy—it is quite another to fight with one another!

Ephesians 6:12

¹² For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

C. Here Paul reminds them of the necessity of unity or cooperation.

D. Cooperation in the ranks of an army is essential— without it, morale will drop way down, and key battles will be lost because of the spirit of divisiveness.

Satan wants to divide!

He knows the principle which Jesus stated in Matthew 12:25

Matthew 12:25

²⁵ And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand:

E. He wants to divide this church; he wants divide children from their parents; he wants to divide married couples; he wants divide faithful

friends; he wants to divide you against Christ; he wants to divide your thoughts against you!

F. Another principle concerning division is disobedience— anytime a person is disobedient or disrespectful to a person who is in authority over them; they are promoting a divisive spirit!

G. Here Paul exhorts us to stand fast (fight the battle):

1. In One Spirit

2. With One Mind

Illustration:

We must all work together just as the members of our physical bodies must cooperate with one another. "Just to keep your balance while standing still, you need to work about 300 muscles." If that much effort is needed to "stay idle," how much more cooperation is needed to "move forward!"

3. THE CONSISTENCY OF A SOLDIER (v. 27– “STAND FAST”)

Philippians 4:1

¹ Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in

the Lord, my dearly beloved.

1 Corinthians 15:58

⁵⁸ *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

1 Corinthians 16:13

¹³ *Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.*

2 Peter 3:17

¹⁷ *Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness.*

Hebrews 13:8

⁸ *Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.*

A. A Lack of Consistency is killing churches and families everywhere today.

1. The average church member stays in a church about 2 years.
2. The average youth pastor which stays about 1 to 1½ years!

3. Most pastors only remain in one place about 3 years on average!
4. Divorce is expected in about 50% of new couples; the rate is just as high for “Christians” as the world!
5. I wonder how many professing Christians are consistent in their daily Bible reading and prayer.
6. We need consistent Christians, just as every army needs consistent soldiers.
7. You will never die for something if you have never consistently lived for it!

4. THE COURAGE OF A GOOD SOLDIER (V. 28-29)

Philippians 1:28-29

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. ²⁹ For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;

Note:

Joshua 1:6

⁶ Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them.

Joshua 1:9

⁹ Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

A. “Courage is doing what you’re afraid to do. There can be no courage unless you’re scared”

B. If you are never afraid, it means you are crazy, not courageous! Courage is not the opposite of fear—it means that by faith, we do what the Bible teaches in spite of the fear of failure or punishment

1. Courage in the Face of Satan (v. 28)

Illustration: Black Bart

He was a professional thief. His name stirred fear. He terrorized the Wells Fargo stage line for thirteen years in and out of the Sierra Nevada’s, spooking the most rugged frontiersmen. In journals from San Francisco to New York, his name became synonymous with the danger of the frontier. During his reign of terror

between 1875 and 1883, he is credited with stealing the bags and the breath away from twenty-nine different stagecoach crews. And he did it all without firing a shot. His weapon was his reputation. His ammunition was intimidation. A hood hid his face. No victim ever saw him. No artist ever sketched his features. No sheriff could ever track his trail. He never fired a shot or took a hostage. He didn't have to. His presence was enough to paralyze. Black Bart was a hooded bandit armed with a deadly weapon.

As it turns out, he wasn't anything to be afraid of. When the hood came off, there was nothing to fear. When the authorities finally tracked down the thief, they didn't find a bloodthirsty bandit from Death Valley, they found a mild-mannered druggist from Decatur, Illinois. The man the papers pictured storming through the mountains on horseback was, in reality, so afraid of horses he rode to and from his robberies in a buggy. He was Charles E. Boles—the bandit who never once fired a shot, because he never one loaded his gun.

2. Courage in the Face of Suffering (v. 29)

- a. We might have to suffer Pain for the Cause of Christ—if we really follow Him!

b. We may have to suffer persecution from those who don't know Him!

c. A good soldier knows that being a soldier requires his putting his life on the line and takes courage!

5. THE CONFLICT OF THE SOLDIER (V. 30)

Philippians 1:30

³⁰ *Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.*

A. Being a good soldier means fighting the battle at some point!

B. It is said that during the Civil war many of the young teens fighting in the battles ran during their first taste of battle—they had no honor when they actually got to the conflict.

C. Many had sung the war ballads the night before and had boasted about what they would do to the enemy the next day; but like a coward ran instead!

Jude said it this way:

Jude 1:3

³ Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

D. Paul's Exhortation

1. "Have the same conflict..."

1 Timothy 6:12

¹² Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

E. Paul's Example

2 Timothy 4:7

⁷ I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

Close:

- May we be like Paul and become a good soldier of the Army of God!
- No soldier will discover joy unless he is the best soldier he can be.
- A soldier without character, consistency, cooperation, and courage will be a miserable soldier.
- Let us strive to be joyful soldiers by being good soldiers!