

Pastor Paul Bawden
Grace Evangelical Church
Sunday, February 6, 2011
Communion Sunday
"Living Worthy Of The Gospel"
Philippians 1:27-30

"The proof of the pudding."

Is an old saying that has been around for some time. It really is a shortened form of the old Proverb, "The proof of the pudding is in the eating," In fact, I have heard that saying this way, "The proof is in the pudding."

The Oxford Dictionary dates this very old Proverb back to the early 14th century. But the earliest printed example of the proverb seems to be in William Camden's Remaines of a Greater Worke Concerning Britain (1605). You can do more research on that if you like.

As one writer suggested, though, the longer version makes sense the shorter version really doesn't mean anything.

The word, proof, means to "test," telling us that the evidence demonstrates the truth – or a showing to be true. As the baker "proves" yeast by letting it stand in warm water for a time, to determine that it is active.

So what does "The proof of the pudding is in the eating" have to do with our thoughts today?

Basically this. As eating pudding demonstrates the tastiness and goodness of pudding, so we who claim to know Christ as personal Savior give evidence of that reality by how we live our lives before God and others. Put this way, "When people get to know you, as a believer in Jesus Christ, do they experience something of Jesus Christ?"

Said another way, the proof that you and I know Jesus Christ as personal Savior is that His life is seen in your life and my life as followers of HIM!

This is what Paul was writing about to the Philippians as he was chained to a soldier of the praetorian guard while in a Roman prison around A. D. 61.

Paul doesn't say here, "The proof that you know Christ as Savior, is that you live as Christ lived," although that is what he meant. Or as John wrote in his first letter, "Walk as He or Jesus walked." LIVE AS JESUS LIVED."

Rather Paul urged the Philippian believers to "Conduct themselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ."

Note the Scriptures' teaching here.

I. Engage in the daily challenge. (Philippians 1:27a).

"Only, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ."

1. Only.

What does the word only mean?

Only means, solely. Make it one's utmost priority. This a follower of Christ must do.

What must the follower of Christ do solely in his or her life?

2. Conduct yourselves.

(1) The meaning of the word, conduct.

What does the word, conduct, mean?

Conduct is a political word. It means to live one's life as having the rights and privileges of being a citizen. So it means living one's life in one's thoughts, words, and actions in a certain way according to one's citizenship.

Question. Where is the follower of Christ's citizenship? Of course, it may be talking about being a citizen of the Roman Empire, or for us today, being a citizen of the United States of America.

But if you turn to Philippians 3:20, Paul told the Philippian believers that their citizenship was in heaven.

Paul, then, when he used the word, conduct, here was telling the Philippians believers and us, that as followers of Jesus Christ our citizenship, our status, is that of being a member of heaven. Their names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life, and they belong to God's eternal kingdom. In fact, the same is for us.

Perhaps God has the "Spiritual Birth Certificate" of each believer in Christ, the Lamb's Book of Life, which may say when we were spiritually born into God's kingdom through faith in Jesus Christ.

I can remember when I came to know Christ as personal Savior. I was seven years old at the time. That night in our living room after family devotions, when I asked Christ to be my Savior, I believe that the Lord wrote my name in the Lamb's Book of life. He can look back in the Lamb's Book of Life – His Spiritual Birth Certificate Book – and see, when I accepted Christ as personal Savior. If you know Jesus Christ as your personal Savior today, God has your name written in the Lamb's Book of Life – what I call His "Spiritual Birth Certificate Book." He knows exactly when you asked Christ to be your Savior.

I trust that you know for certain that your name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life – God's "Spiritual Birth Certificate Book." If you are not sure, I would love to talk to you after the service, so you can know for certain that your name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life, His Spiritual Birth Certificate Book.

Since believers in Christ are citizens of heaven while on earth, they have all the rights, privileges, and responsibilities that go along with that citizenship.

This also means that the believer as a citizen of heaven while on earth, gives his allegiance to those who are over him as a citizen of heaven, God the Father, God, the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

While those in charge of the heavenly citizenry, the Trinity, provide protection and direction for those who members of heaven. Yes, God provides us His Constitution in His Word, the Bible for how to conduct ourselves as citizens of heaven while living on earth to further His eternal kingdom on earth for His eternal glory. For we are the Lord's ambassadors, representing Him from heaven on planet earth.

(2) The structure of the word, conduct.

****The word, conduct, is in the present tense,** meaning living as citizen of heaven on earth is to be an on-going, daily experience for the believer in Jesus Christ.

****The word, conduct is a command,** meaning that acting like a citizen of heaven on earth is not an option and it is a daily deal commanded by God's word. The believer in Christ is to act as a citizen of heaven on earth at all times in all situations.

****The word, conduct, is in the middle voice,** meaning that the believers are to fulfill their privileges and responsibilities as citizens of heaven on earth. It emphasizes who is to act as citizens of heaven on earth, the believers in Jesus Christ – which includes the Philippian believers, we who are followers of Christ today, yes, all believers in Christ who read this letter.

Seeing the structure of the word, conduct, we see why the word, "ONLY," or "SOLELY" WAS USED. Solely, bringing emphasis to the word, conduct, to act continually as citizens of heaven on planet earth. Make it your aim in life to live as a citizen of heaven on earth at all times.

How are believers in Christ, who are citizens of heaven to conduct themselves?

3. In a manner worthy.

This means that which is fitting, or that which is suitable.

These words are telling that a citizen of heaven on earth will live a certain way.

What is the suitable way for the citizen of heaven to live on earth?

4. Of the gospel of Christ.

The citizen of heaven is to continually live his or her life in a manner fitting of the gospel of Christ.

So I ask . . .

(1) What is the gospel of Christ?

Gospel is the word for "good news" or "glad tidings."

It's the word that the angel used to describe the message to the shepherds concerning the birth of the Savior in Bethlehem those many years ago.

When the angel of the Lord showed up to the shepherds tending their sheep outside of Bethlehem, they were terrified as the glory of the Lord shown around them. But what did the angel say?

"Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news (the gospel) of great joy which shall be to all the people" (Luke 2:10).

The angel continued.

"For today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior who is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2:11).

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, angels, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and one earth peace among men with whom he is pleased."

The gospel, then, is good news of great joy that the Savior, Jesus Christ has been born.

Which means the gospel is the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Paul put it this way in I Corinthians 15:1, 3-8.

"Now I make known to you brethren, the gospel which I preached unto you

"For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins (was our substitute, the perfect sacrifice for sins) according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day, according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, and then to the twelve. After that He appeared to 500 brethren at once, then to James and all the apostles and then to me."

The gospel, the good news of great joy is Jesus Christ's person, who died for our sins, was buried, rose again from the grave bodily and was seen of others.

Those four things make up the gospel of Jesus Christ. He died for our sins, was buried, rose from the grave bodily and was seen of others (there are eyewitnesses of the resurrected Lord).

In the midst of what's happening in the Middle East, in the midst of our country being deeply in debt to China, in the midst of the uncertain economic conditions in our country, in the midst of the immorality, of the breakdown of marriage, and of the family in our culture, there is good news of great joy.

The Savior has come and provided forgiveness of sin and eternal life for all who will acknowledge to Him that they are sinners before Him, desperately need His forgiveness and eternal life, and then ask Him to be their personal Savior.

As you watch what's happening in Egypt and the Middle East, as you see what's happening in Washington regarding the various issues facing our country, do you think in the midst of all the negative that there is the GOOD NEWS OF GREAT JOY? If you have unsaved family and relatives, or friends who don't know Christ as personal Savior, do you think that they need the GOOD NEWS OF GREAT JOY IN JESUS CHRIST??

Paul was in prison in Rome. He could have been negative and complaining.

He wasn't. Why? The gospel of Christ had changed His life on the Road to Damascus some 30 years before.

Certainly, Paul knew what the gospel was and what it had done for him.

But Paul also knew

2. The gospel of Christ should affect the believer's daily life.

Only live as citizens of heaven in a manner suitable of the gospel of Christ.

The acceptance of the gospel of Christ is only the beginning of a life with Jesus Christ that ends in His presence. The gospel of Christ is not just for salvation, forgiveness of sin and eternal life, the gospel of Christ is also for daily living as a citizen of heaven on earth.

This means that Paul is not just giving a challenge to the Philippian believers and us today, He also, then, tells the Philippians and us how **to put into practice** living the gospel as citizens of heaven on earth.

II. Put into practice the daily challenge (Philippians 1:27b).

Paul continued, "So that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are"

Paul is saying that regardless of where I am, I want to hear that you are doing the following.

Paul wants his readers to know that he always wants to hear from them that they are going on in the gospel of Christ as citizens of heaven on earth. Paul never loses interest in those God has used him to bring to Christ and to disciple. His heart for people to grow in Christ is so clear here!!! May we follow his example.

For you do that, here is what you Philippians, yes, what all believers need to do.

This is how to put into practice what it means to live out daily the gospel of Christ as a citizen of heaven on planet earth.

1. Keep standing firm in one spirit.

Stand means to be firm, be permanent, endure. It conveys the idea of not flinching, not giving up – a military stand.

It is a command in the present tense – it is to be a daily, a constant standing firm and permanent.

In what are believers to stand firm?

Believers are to continually stand firm in one spirit.

One spirit seems to be referring to having one common purpose – active harmony and unity as brothers and sisters in Christ in the local church, in individual and family relationships.

From Philippians 2:2, it seems that there was some selfishness, not schism, displayed among the Philippians believers. Euodia and Syntyche were evidently having some disagreements. They had forgotten what their common purpose was to live out the gospel of Christ in harmony. They were to

stand firm on the gospel with common purpose to grow in the gospel and share the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit.

2. Keep standing firm in one soul (one mind, is the translation in the NAS).

The words, "keep standing" are inferred from what is just said, But it is soul, the seat of one's feelings, that Paul is talking about here.

When feelings aren't based upon the unchanging truth of the gospel of Christ and God's unchanging Word, all kinds of things can happen in relationships – such as jealousy, destructive criticism, gossip, comparing one's self with others, factions, party spirits, hatred, bitterness, animosity, and unforgiving spirit, and the list could go on and on.

The gospel of Jesus Christ provides the believer in Christ His nature, His resurrection life. That life does not display jealousy or a destructive spirit, or carry out comparison, or show hatred, have bitterness, or an unforgiving spirit. The believer in Christ does not carry his feelings on his sleeve. He is accepted in Christ, and stands firm in his soul, his feelings in Christ. In the power of the Holy Spirit he seeks to love like Christ being patient, kind, not arrogant or boastful, having a forgiving heart like Christ.

3. Be continually striving together for the faith of the gospel.

Striving is a present participle and it really means – cooperating vigorously with a person, like in athletics. The team cooperates vigorously to win the game.

Here it means to be continually striving vigorously together for the faith of the gospel (the good news of Jesus Christ).

Why do we cooperate vigorously with each other in the faith of the gospel? God is for us and thusly we are for each other. We may disagree at different time, and we work through those disagreements, but we are for one another. We are brothers and sisters in Christ.

Standing firm in one spirit, with one purpose, standing firm in one's feelings and cooperating vigorously is all done for the faith, yes, the furtherance of the gospel through each believer's life that will reach out to others who need the gospel of Jesus Christ.

For through faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ, the believer is identified with Christ in His death, burial, and bodily resurrection, and has been raised to new life, to live in harmony with individuals, in family relationships, and in the church relationships. Now in the power of the Holy Spirit, we can display what it means as citizens of heaven on earth to live a heavenly life in an unholy world.

But in that standing firm in one spirit and soul while striving together as a team for the faith of the gospel of Christ, we should be fully aware that there will be opposition to Christ living His live out through the believer individually, in the family relationship, and in the church.

Note what Paul says in Philippians 1:28.

III. Know spiritual opposition will always be present (Philippians 1:28).

"In no way alarmed by your opponents – which is a sign of their destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and that too from God.

The reason believers in Christ are to stand firm continually in one spirit and soul, while cooperating vigorously continually is because the evil one is using people to oppose the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The word, alarmed, has the idea of being terrified or scarred, one writer translated this word, intimidated. It is a present tense participle, telling us that the enemies of the gospel continue to try and oppose the gospel of Jesus Christ at all times.

That's why Paul has urged the Philippian believers to continually stand firm in one spirit and soul, striving together for the gospel at all times because opposition to the gospel of Christ never ceases and never sleeps.

The Christians in Philippi should not let the opposition of unbelievers frighten or detract them from their mission.

Using the word , intimidate, which I understand the usage of this word is extremely rare, Paul may be showing, as one writer suggests, that Paul may be concerned that his friends should not break loose in disarray or lose control of themselves as a result of the attacks of their adversaries.

The opposition to the gospel seems to have come from outside the church at Philippi. Evidently, it was being felt directly by the believers in Philippi. In Philippians 3:2, Paul calls the opposition, dogs (a term to describe Gentiles), and to beware of the evil workers, of the false circumcision - the Judaizers who taught that circumcision was necessary for salvation in Christ.

There were those who were distorting the gospel in the time of Paul and the Philippian believers.

It is no different today. The various cults and world religions today distort who Jesus is, He isn't God and Man. So they have a distorted salvation – A counterfeit salvation – a salvation based upon man's ideas not the unchanging word of God. As a result, there is not true forgiveness before God nor eternal life.

But more subtly, the so-called emergent church is a movement led by some who distort the Word of God as being the final authority for faith and practice. Truth is relative. Some of those in the emergent church distorts the gospel giving the idea that all will some how make it to heaven. This movement is being lead by some who have posed as true evangelicals, who have believed the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ, now are doing something entirely different.

There is a spiritual battle going on in our world against the gospel of Jesus Christ to twist it, distort it, change it, so man doesn't see his real need before God and what Jesus Christ has done for him through His death, burial and bodily resurrection.

As Paul told the Corinthians in his second letter, these are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. For even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light (II Corinthians 11:13-14).

In spite of the spiritual battle going in the time of Paul in prison, and the Philippians believers, Paul closes this section with this emphasis.

IV. Understand the privilege to live out the gospel of Christ (Philippians 1:29-30).

"For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for his sake, experiencing the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear to be in me."

Paul is telling the Philippians and us that all believers have received a gracious gift from God. It is an amazing privilege.

What's the privilege?

To be able to suffer for Jesus Christ. The word for "granted," comes from *charis*, meaning "grace."

Few Christians today would view suffering for their testimony as a blessing, but that is really what it is.

For suffering is one of the tools God uses to grow his children into vessels that bring glory to His Son (cf. James 1:3-4; 1 Pet. 1:6-7). Our Lord even learned obedience through the things that He suffered (Heb. 5:8).

Now the Philippians were experiencing the same type of suffering that Paul had during his whole ministry. They had witnessed his struggles in Philippi when he had planted the church there and perhaps in his subsequent ministry there. They had also heard of his sufferings in Rome (2:26).

Paul here was not asking his readers to do something he had not done. In the midst of persecution and opposition he had always stood firm in spirit and soul, while working together with believers in the

churches he established. The Philippians believers would know that Paul was writing from experience. His encouragement to them was to do what he did while with them and what he is doing in prison now.

Keep standing firm in one spirit and soul, striving together against the opposition and the intimidation of the enemy. It may include suffering for Jesus but that is privilege, and God will be glorified through your standing true to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Many in countries today are suffering physically for their faith. We need to pray for the persecuted church. They stand firm in one spirit and soul – striving together for the faith of the gospel.

But how do we respond when we are tempted to agree with unbelievers? Do we take a firm stand on the gospel of Christ in love, or do we kind of go along, or not say anything?

Through faith in the truth of the gospel we can stand firm in one spirit and soul, striving together, in the as a team, in the power of the Holy Spirit, in spite of opposition, for the glory of God.

May it be so in our individual lives, in our family lives, and in our church family.

May we live as holy citizens of heaven in an unholy world to the glory of God.

Then the proof of the pudding will be in the eating!!!

TASTE AND SEE THAT THE LORD IS GOOD!!!