

## THE BOOK OF PHILIPPIANS

“Christian Conduct”

Philippians 1:27-30

### Background

1. The Spirit of God has clearly revealed to the Apostle Paul that his circumstances as a Roman prisoner were not without enormous benefits (v. 12).

2. Among the positive matters rising from Paul’s chains are these: 1) Furtherance of the Gospel (vv. 12, 13). 2) Preaching of Christ (vv. 14-18). 3) Life and death having meaning for eternity (vv. 19-26).

3. It was indicated by the Holy Spirit that Paul would not die, but be released to continue his ministry, including a visit to Philippi (vv. 24-26).

4. With the prospect of the Apostle’s coming to the saints at Philippi, a series of instructions are written to them. Study these:

1. About LIVING v. 27

a. It is a caution

The word “only” expresses this clearly. Whether Paul comes or not, he wants them to understand he has something to say which is totally indispensable. All else what it may be -- only this!

b. It is a concern

Here is an imperative expressing a command. This verb is only here and in Acts 23:1 in the N.T. In the first instance it refers to the behaviour or conduct of a citizen of the state. It means to exercise your citizenship or act (live) as a citizen. What a fabulous command!

c. It is a conviction

The citizen concept obviously is in regard to one’s heavenly home base! It is to be “worthy” of the Gospel of Christ. The standard of citizenship sought is the good news of Christ Himself. This suggests not something individual, but corporate. It refers to duties of a man as a member of a body with common principles.

2. About ACTING vv. 27-29

The verbs “see” and “hear” (v. 27) relate to all of these experiences of actions

a. Generally

The phrase “your affairs” means “your state.” It is the translation of a prepositional phrase indicating “the things concerning you.” Thus, Paul wanted to see and hear everything about the believers at Philippi.

b. Personally

This includes the fact that the saints “stand fast,” a perfect tense verb providing an expansion and definition of “your state.” Bless God when “your state” is something in which to “stand fast.” Note the areas of activity personally involved.

1) One Spirit Some might argue that the human spirit is meant especially in view of the term “soul” or “mind.” However, the common unity of the spirit is only possible by the working of the Holy Spirit, hence the “Spirit” must be a reference to the Life-Giver who orders the Divine Atmosphere.

2) One Mind The original text reads “soul.” This is a reference to the sphere of the will, affections, and center of the personality. There is no suggestion of divisiveness at Philippi.

3) One Energy The present tense participle enforces the ongoing contest, as in sports to get the victor’s prize. Competition is set aside for the sake of complementation. What precious fellowship was enjoyed at Philippi! Note it relates to the faith. The articular noun “faith” must have reference to the content of faith (creed) as well as the possession of faith (personal). In either case, it is centered in the gospel which is personalized in the Lord Jesus Christ.

c. Outwardly

The verb “terrified” is used in reference to “scared” horses and is only found here in the N.T. In the midst of the violence at Philippi, they are instructed to refuse to be scared of their opposers, open and avowed enemies of the Lord. On the one hand, the enemy is shown, in that they cannot intimidate the true believers at Philippi, that they are rushing to their own destruction. Those who oppose Christ as Saviour are doomed! On the other hand, the steadfastness of the believers is a sure sign of their ultimate salvation and perseverance.

3. About RECEIVING vv. 29, 30

a. The gift of suffering v. 29

“Given” is an aorist passive form of the verb “freely given.” It is a reference to the initial grace of God wrought in the hearts of the Philippians at the beginning of their salvation (cf. 1:6). Whoever thinks of this? Suffering is a “grace gift” just like trusting Christ for eternal salvation. Hence, an ordeal of affliction and persecution has to be endured “for the sake of Christ.” Thereby one’s faith is proved genuine.

b. The gift of conflict v. 30

The present tense participle “having” speaks of the fight of faith which is common to all believers. “Conflict” is a reference to a contest in an athletic game with all the strife, exertion, struggle, and hardship connected therewith (cf. 2 Tim. 4:7, 8). The church at Philippi had “seen” the flogging and imprisonment Paul endured there. Now they “hear” how he is afflicted in his Roman captivity. All was “in me.”

### Conclusion

The thrust of this passage is patent -- whether Paul is able to come to them or not. The thing that really matters is that Christ be magnified in the manner of life of the Philippian believers. So be it! Amen.