

Sermon: Side by Side for the Gospel

Delivered by: **Rev. Ben Panner**, high school pastor

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Bible text explored: Philippians 1:27–30

²⁷Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, ²⁸and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. ²⁹For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, ³⁰engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have. [ESV]

Review and application:

The church at Philippi is facing persecution. Now imprisoned himself, Paul sends a letter to the fellowship he helped form to support and strengthen them.

1. In the New Living Translation, *verse 27a* is rendered, “Above all, you must live as citizens of heaven.” Why would this be an especially relevant theme for Paul’s readers, residents of a Roman colony, and thus citizens of the city of Rome itself?
(See Acts 16:20-21.)

What retribution might be incurred by those pledging ultimate allegiance to Christ?

2. What report does Paul hope to hear (*v. 27b*) about the unity of purpose and effort of the disciples at Philippi?
What forms of disunity were they up against?
(See Philippians 3:2-3 and 18-19; 4:2.)

What challenges to full-fledged allegiance to Christ are we facing?

How does focusing on the shared goal of advancing the gospel make getting along with each other more doable?

3. What (*v. 28*) does Paul hope to hear about the Philippians’ courage?

Withstanding assaults on our faith with meekness is what kind of a sign . . .

. . . to our opponents?

. . . to ourselves? (See 2 Cor. 2:15-16.)

4. Why is suffering for Christ (*v. 29*) a gift rather than a curse?

How is Jesus our ultimate example? (See 1 Peter 3:18 and 22.)

5. How would Paul’s suffering have served as an affirmation to the Philippian Christians? (See Acts 16:25-32; Phil. 1:12-13.)

Are we prepared to accept suffering as an opportunity rather than rejection or a roadblock?

How does what Pastor Panner’s mother heard one nursery-school toddler say to another—“If you’re whining, you’re not shining”—apply to us?