

Title: We Must Decide If Christ is Worth It

Text: Philippians 1:27-30

Date: March 3, 2019

Irony of Philippians:

- Sometimes following JC- pleasure
- Sometimes following JC-painful
- Every day we follow Him – worth it

If your life is good:

- Praise God
- Enjoy it
- All His grace!

If life is a struggle:

- Keep looking to Jesus
- Christians hope it'll get better
- C.S. Lewis quote – heart for another world

Background in Acts 16:

- Paul/Timothy trying to go into Asia
- Spirit redirected them into Macedonia
 - Macedonian vision
 - Lydia's conversion
 - Paul casts out evil spirits
 - All of Philippi is touched

- Paul/Timothy put in jail
- Sing praises at midnight
- Earthquake, jail break
- Guard, prisoners convert

Philippi:

- Experiences awakening/revival
- Despite persecution and poverty
- 1.Eager to receive Gospel
- 2.Eager to participate in supporting Paul

Spirit of the Lord is liberty (2 Cor 3:17)

Why??? Because God was there!

- Paul simply signed up to go where God was!! (Asia-Macedonia)
- Was it easy? No
- Was it worth it? Yes

What Paul and the Philippians knew

It is better to suffer in life (yet experience the fullness of God's presence) then to seek happiness on your own. (Yet suffer, because you don't have the Lord) Better to suffer physically, yet know God spiritually than seek happiness physically, and miss God spiritually.

Don't hate/resist your pain!

Let your pain drive you into the arms of His grace!

I'm not saying the pain isn't real! It's real and it hurts, but the salve of God's spirit will minister to you!

Proverbs 17:1 (CSB)

Better a dry crust with peace than a house full of feasting with strife.

Proverbs 15:17 (CSB)

Better a meal of vegetables where there is love than a fattened ox with hatred.

INTRO:**Paul in 1:3-11**

-I love you -I miss you -Every time I think of you, I have joy

-Only in church, “deep calls to deep”. Know someone who loves God, wants to experience God – It blesses your heart!

-FACT: Negativity is cancerous/contagious; but so is love/joy!

Paul in 1: 12-20

- I’m in jail, but don’t worry
- God’s used it!
 - a. Jail getting saved
 - b. Strengthening resolve of others
 - c. Don’t care what happens to me so long as Gospel advances
 - d. Die or live “I’m ready”

1:27 “Just one thing”

KJV/NKJV, only let

NIV, Whatever happens

NLT, above all

Phrase in verse 27 links it with Paul’s preceding point about readiness in living and dying:

1. I don’t mind dying – b/c I’ll be with Jesus Christ
2. If I’m to live – I want Jesus Christ to use me

Now in 1:27

Just one thing, one main point: as citizens of heaven, live life worthy of Gospel of Christ:

1. Note the phrase: “as citizens of heaven” (1:27)
 - Paul speaks with assurance/confidence
 - I know where I belong
 - I know where I’m going
 - I know whom I believe (1:7)
 - I know who I belong to

-Because of JC, I’m as sure of heaven as if I’m already there

- Certainty! (Thief on the cross)
- All I know is I’m not home yet, this is not where I belong...

-Citizenship in ancient day

- Birthright
- Parents, lineage
- Location of your birth

- Philippi as a colony possessed Roman citizenship

- Surely, many Philippians have never been to Rome
- But citizens because Rome came to them

-I’ve not been to heaven yet, but I’m a citizen of heaven because heaven has to come to me!

Sing: Heaven came down and glory filled my soul

When at the cross the Savior made me whole

My sins were washed away...

2. Note, Paul ties declaration of heavenly citizenship to expected holy behavior (1:27)

- Live life worthy of Gospel of Christ

FACT: On one hand, never worthy
Forever unworthy

FACT: But as testimony to JC, live like Gospel matters/transforms

- Greatest testimony to Gospel is your constant daily transformation and sanctification

We've cheapened and oversimplified WWJD

- But really.... What/how does a kingdom citizen live? Ask it always.

3. So what does a worthy citizen of the Gospel in God's Kingdom look like?

- Description outlined by Paul (1:27 – 28)
- Standing firm - In one spirit, in one accord
- Contending - Together → speaks of Unity
- Not being frightened → speaks of Courage

FACT:

Tough guy, alone is nothing
One person, without strength, is nothing

- A. Courageous man
- B. Unified with other courageous men
- These are a major threat to the devil

-Lots of tough people aren't flexible, lots of flexible people aren't tough
-But a tough, flexible church in God's hands is unstoppable

Questions FBCW must ask -

- A. Am I bold for Jesus Christ?
- B. Am I a good teammate? (Easy to cooperate with)

Courage (Tough)

- I will not compromise
- Conviction
- Never back away from Gospel
- Absolute truth regardless if Popular

Unified (Flexible)

- Selfless
- Whatever it takes to reach others
- Team/Mission matters more than me!
- Feelings, opinions, tradition is subservient to the mission

4. When a Christian is willing to persevere and keep believing in Jesus, even as they suffer personal hardships, this is perhaps the greatest testimony of all! (1: 28-29)

- Job 13:15
- Jesus Christ on the cross, "Father forgive them..."

There's something about suffering -- it's both painful and glorious -- suffering hurts, but also helps

- a. War
- b. Gym

- c. Ball team
- d. Co-Workers

Don't like it, it is painful – but it's glorious, it refined me, it shaped my character

Sign of destruction to those who mock us:

- Christian endurance/perseverance is a sign of destruction to the haters
- They can kill our body, but they can't kill our spirit!
- They may temporarily stop us, but they can't stop God's message.

It's a sign of salvation for us:

- Will keep persevering
- Illustration: Fellowship of the Unashamed – banner on back of my door in high school

The Fellowship of the Unashamed

I am part of the fellowship of the unashamed. I have Holy Spirit power.

The die has been cast. I have stepped over the line. The decision has been made. I am a disciple of His. I won't look back, let up, slow down, back away or be still.

My past is redeemed. My present makes sense. My future is secure. I'm finished with low living, sight walking, small planning, smooth knees, colorless dreams, tamed visions, worldly talking, cheap giving, and dwarfed goals.

I no longer need preeminence, prosperity, position, promotions, applause, or popularity. I don't have to be right, first, tops, recognized, praised, regarded or rewarded. I now live by faith, lean on His presence, walk by patience, am uplifted by prayer and labor by power.

My pace is set. My gait is fast. My goal is heaven. My road is narrow. My way rough. My companions few. My guide is reliable and my mission is clear.

I cannot be bought, compromised, detoured, lured away, turned back, deluded or delayed. I will not flinch in the face of sacrifice, hesitate in the presence of the adversary, negotiate at the table of the enemy, pander at the pool of popularity or meander in the maze of mediocrity.

I won't give up, shut up, let up, until I've stayed up, stored up, prayed up, paid up, and preached up for the cause of Christ.

I am a disciple of Jesus. I must go till He comes, give 'til I drop, preach till all know, and work till He stops me. And when He comes for His own, He'll have no problem recognizing me. My banner will be clear.

E.I.: Paul Challenged the Philippians to remain committed to the Gospel (to live worthy of the Gospel) even as they suffer

-Hardship shouldn't make us quit! (The cause/mission is greater than our suffering)

-George Washington's army suffered abject poverty, but thank God they didn't quit the Revolution!

-Abe Lincoln lost eight elections, suffered two business failures, had a nervous breakdown, and lost a child – but thank God he didn't quit!

-Civil Rights was hard, thank God MLK, Jr didn't quit!

-Michael Jordan got cut from his high school team, but he didn't quit!

FACT: everyone here has had someone that's NEVER quit on them – (Grandma, Coach, Teacher, Spouse, Friend, Counselor) But most of all, JESUS – Jesus has NEVER quit on you!

Will hardship happen? YES

Should hardship make us quit? NO

If we quit when it's hard, we probably didn't believe anyway!

-O God, Let us persevere! (Illustration: John Stephen Akhwari of Tanzania in Mexico City Olympics – 1968)

BIG IDEA:

Christians must remember: You are a citizen of heaven...your behavior matters...people are watching you...the greatest testimony of all is that you are not perfect, and life is often hard, but because of Christ you never quit!

And I'm proud to be an American
Where at least I know I'm free
And I won't forget the men who died
Who gave that right to me
And I'll gladly stand up next to you
And defend her still today
Cause there ain't no doubt I love this land
God bless the USA

And I'm proud to be a Christian
Where at least I know I'm saved
And I won't forget the Jesus who died
Who gave salvation to me
And I'll gladly stand up next to you
And praise Him still today
Cause there ain't no doubt I love my Lord
God bless his holy name!!!

APPLICATION:

1. Live like Jesus matters (v 27)
 - Be intentional with your faith → as a man
 - As a family
 - In my work, school, etc.
2. When you live like Jesus matters, your testimony travels (v 27)
 - Folks will hear!
3. Remember your faith/perseverance – encourage the team (vv 27-28)
 - Courage, unity, faithfulness is contagious!
 - One reason Jeremy Morton wants to be faithful?
(I've seen Johnny Hunt be faithful)