

## Philippians 1:27-30

### God has a purpose for your suffering.

“Only” After saying everything from verses 18-26, Paul uses “only” as an instruction.

“Only” or “So here’s what I want you to DO:”

“Conduct yourselves” or “let your manner of life” or “let your conduct” or “live in such a way”

\*NLT has “live as citizens,” a great addition! Because...

All those terms replace the Greek word “politeuomai” (POLY-TU-O-MYE)

Which translates more literally – “Be citizens”

The history of Philippi is a great thing to know in order to understand the usage of this term

\*BTW, it is always great to study the history of the cities to which Paul writes

After the Battle of Philippi (40BC), during the reign of Octavian, the city-state was organized as a colony for military men. Most in the colony were granted Roman citizenship to operate more freely.

Roman citizenship was

1. A valuable status (Acts 22:28, tribune tells Paul he bought his citizenship for “a large sum”)
2. Came with privileges (fair trial before conviction of crime, freedom with life and business)
3. Required one to live in allegiance to the king

Philippians got the reference to citizenship in a way we don’t when we read through (\*Maybe that’s why the translation is an alternative one\*).

Look at Philippians 3:20, “But our citizenship is in heaven...” Same root word there for citizenship, *politeuomai*.

In other words, Paul is making a point here in Ch. 1 that he fully expounds upon in Ch. 3

We are now not just citizens of Rome.

We are no longer just citizens of the United States.

Or France, or Nigeria, or India, or Argentina, or China.

### **We share citizenship as believers in Christ’s kingdom. He is our king. We are his subjects.**

1. Roman citizenship was a valuable gift to the Philippians by the emperor. If you were born in the U.S., you were given your citizenship for free. So is our citizenship in heaven a valuable gift.
2. Just as Roman citizenship came with privileges, and think about it: our American citizenship does as well (freedoms of speech, representation in government...), so does *heavenly* citizenship.

3. *AND FINALLY*, Just as Roman citizens were EXPECTED to and HAPPY to live in allegiance to the emperor of Rome, and we are EXPECTED to follow the laws and to represent ourselves and be “good citizens” in the U.S., as Christ’s subject are EXPECTED to live by his teaching, and will be HAPPY to glorify him in that way.

So, Kurt’s translation goes: “Live as **citizens** worthy of the Gospel of Jesus Christ...”

And of course, the **Gospel of Jesus** is of **infinite worth** because it’s the way by which people find Jesus himself. “**Gospel**” means “**good news**.” So the Good News of Jesus, that even while we sinned, God sent his son to bear the punishment of our sin so that we can be made right into a relationship with our Creator and Father.

THIS IS A VERY HIGH CALLING!!! Intimidating?

**SO WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE**, to live “worthy of the Gospel of Jesus Christ”? (Still verse 27)

- “Standing firm in one spirit”
- “one mind”
- “striving side by side for the gospel”

This is called the Church.

One spirit, one mind, one goal... Sounds a lot like **Ephesians 4:4** “There is ONE body, and ONE Spirit [in all believers of Christ] – just as you were called into ONE hope... ONE Lord [that’s Jesus], ONE faith [that’s in Jesus], ONE baptism, ONE God and Father of all.”

Or **1 Corinthians 12:12**, “the body [that is, the Church] is ONE and has many members... For in ONE Spirit were all baptized into ONE body...”

And you can read these passages to get a better grasp on unity of the gathering of believers.

Do you know that Jesus himself prayed for this unity for YOU all, when he was on Earth?

Remember that last dinner Jesus had before being betrayed?

John records it in his account, Ch. 17:

“When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said: ...

[in front of his 12 disciples (minus one)]

[And after praying for his close followers to be guarded, he also prays for believers of all generations]

I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word [that is those of us who elieve in Jesus by the testimony of those apostles] that they may ALL BE ONE!!!...”

Do you know how we live as “worthy” citizens of Christ?

**We imitate him. We love like he did. We serve our brothers and sisters like he did. We are unified.**

When that happens – verse 27 is fulfilled.

And what is the result?

If we strive side by side, with one Christ and one spirit, and when we are “not frightened” (from vs. 28)...

And why are we not frightened? Remember this is a continuation of verses 18-26. Because DEATH is no longer a scary thing, but rather something we look *forward* to! WHY?? Jesus raises us up! There is an eternal life waiting for us who are his children, who believe in our Lord! That is *joyful*, NOT *frightening*! Remember **Romans 8:18**, “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”

When we’re confident in the hope of resurrection in Christ and doing all those other things,

“IT IS A SIGN to the opposition

1. Of their destruction
2. Of your salvation”

Monologue: When people come against the church and attack it, but church’s response is humility, love, and peaceful submission without becoming afraid of death or anything else... the opposition realizes that Christ is real... they are headed for destruction, HELL... that the Church is truly saved.

**This is a sign that is much needed by the opposition! THEY NEED TO SEE THAT!!!**

**This is why Paul says in 2 Timothy 2:8-10, “Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel, for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal. But the word of God is not bound! Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.”**

So now we answer the intriguing question that comes up from reading verse 29.

Not only is *believing in Christ* a gift granted to you, but *suffering* is a gift as well.

Does God really will our suffering?

Answer: YES

Peter says it this way: “Therefore let those of you who suffer ACCORDING TO THE WILL OF GOD entrust their souls to him...” That’s 1 Peter 4:19

And Paul says here in Philippians that God doesn’t just *allow* our suffering, or even that he tests us with it. No. But He gives it to us as a gift: wrapped and with a bow on top. For our enjoyment.

charizomai (KHA-**REE**-ZU-MYE) – to give *graciously* or to bestow

**God gives us out of his abundant grace not only the ability to believe in Jesus Christ but also the chance to suffer for Christ’s sake.**

What is the meaning of this? Why is suffering a gift? Why does Paul have to be so weird?

It’s simple.

When we persist in suffering, it glorifies Christ.

And we can't persist through it, continuing in love to one another and in peace to the opposition, unless we are given the ability to believe.

And we can't display our belief in Christ that way until we meet opposition and suffering.

So the two work perfectly together:

1. The gift of believing
2. The gift of suffering

And they work as a SIGN, a TESTIMONY, and a message screaming the truth, "HEY! YOU'RE HEADED TO DESTRUCTION! WE ARE THE ONES WHO ARE TRULY SAVED!" We don't scream that literally. We do what Paul instructs, living in unity and grace while undergoing opposition. And a sign, a clear sign, erects over us. And it starts flashing that message.

And if we LOVE it when Christ is magnified through our lives, this should be a joy to us – to suffer and still represent Christ so as to show the world a sign, and like verse 28 says: that sign is from God because **He gave us the faith, He gave us the suffering, and He will likewise give those of the opposition who respond to that sign by changing their way – he will give them His Spirit.**

**EMPHASIZE: THIS WILL SAVE THE OPPOSITION AND WE WANT THEM SAVED, NOT A DEGRADING THING!!!!**

When suffering comes, we have two choices:

1. to be frightened, to be angry, to give up on loving sacrificially
2. to remain confident and joyful, to love others when they don't deserve it, and strive side by side with one another

Depending on how we respond to suffering, it shows whether or not we're a true citizen of heaven.

So, we chose to persist in love when we go through difficulty, knowing that God has a purpose for our suffering, and it just might be a sign that leads an opponent to really believing in Christ as a real savior.