

## **“Only Let Your Manner of Life ...”**

*“... be worthy of the gospel of Christ; that whither I come and see you or be absent, I may hear of your state, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one soul striving for the faith of the gospel ...”* (Phil. 1:27). The previous section of this chapter has shown the “quandary” of Paul. Should he “wish” for death (which for him would be “*very far better*”? Should he “wish” for release from prison, more needful for the Philippians’ sake? Considering both views he determined it would be better that he “abide” for the benefit of the Philippians and thus he expressed his confidence: *“I know that I shall abide, yea and abide with you all”* (vs. 25). Nevertheless, there was still uncertainty as he expressed in his words in verse 27.

Whichever way it was: release to see them again, or absence from them; his appeal was that their manner of life should be *“worthy of the gospel of Christ.”* The way Christians live may bring glory to Christ or shame upon Him and His people. In the Roman letter Paul appealed, by the mercies of God, that brethren there present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God (Rom. 12:1f). His second Corinthian letter urged brethren to come out and separate themselves from unholy practices and partnerships, adding, *“Let us cleanse ourselves for all defilements of the flesh and of the spirit”* (2 Cor. 7:1). Nor was Paul alone in urging holiness of life. Peter, in view of the fact that someday our world would be destroyed, asked, *“Seeing these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness”* (2 Pet. 3:11)? He whose life is marred by defilements of the flesh and spirit does not have his manner of life worthy of the gospel of Christ. The gospel calls us all to a high calling and demands of us holy living. Anything less is an unworthy walk.

While holy living is essential to a life worthy of the gospel, the full circle requires mental stability as well. We are a part of God’s family. God is our Father, which demands certain deeds and attributes of us -- but Christians are our brethren, and this demands harmonious inner workings, as well. We must *“stand fast in one spirit.”* There can be no doubt about the truth we have embraced, and the adversary should meet a solid wall of constancy and resistance about the gospel of Jesus Christ in all Christians. We should all have Paul’s spirit: *“I know him whom I have believed and I am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day”* (2 Tim. 1:12).

There is, however, an additional aspect of unity and harmony among brethren. Paul describes it here: *“with one soul striving for the faith of the gospel ...”* Is this quality seen in great measure among us? We may be

unshaken in our faith as to the gospel's truth. Are we diligent in "*striving*" for the faith of the gospel? Are we sharing what we know about God's grace with others? Are we joining with other disciples in heeding the command to "go out in the highways and byways and compel them to come in"? I fear not. The gospel has not lost its power. Have we lost our faith in its power? Have we lost our love for others so that we are negligent in sharing the good news with the lost? Let us not forget these words Paul wrote to the Philippians: "*With one soul striving for the faith of the gospel.*"

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