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Walking Worthy

1: 27-30

Walking worthy DIG: What conduct is worthy of the Good News? Why is this so important to Paul? Why should it matter whether Paul comes to them? Why is suffering a benefit granted by God? How does this relate to Paul's joy in difficult circumstances? What does this tell you about the nature of a believer's life?

REFLECT: The question we should all be asking ourselves regularly is this: Am I walking with the Lord? Am I conducting myself in a manner worthy of the Gospel? What is our most important weapon against the enemy? How can you make better use of this weapon in your life? Why is consistency in life important?

The greatest weapon against the Adversary is a godly life.

Paul had a special love, respect, and appreciation for the church at **Philippi**. It was one of the most mature of the churches described in the B'rit Chadahah. Nevertheless, its members had a few problems, some of them potentially serious. Like every church in every age, they needed to be on guard against **false teachers (3:2)**, and repudiate those in the congregation who were **enemies of the cross (3:18)**. **Paul** knew that it doesn't take long for even a faithful church to slip into indifference and eventually into moral and doctrinal error.

Paul now turns from the autobiographical emphasis of the first part of the letter to focus on the **Philippian** congregation. **He** calls on **them** to maintain **their** spiritual commitment, to continue to **walk worthy** in a way that is consistent with the power of **the Gospel**. **He** calls on **them** to look carefully into **their** own hearts to determine if **they** have spiritual integrity. Because **Paul** believed it was necessary for **their** spiritual well-being, **the apostle** was confident that **the Lord** would allow **him** to **remain with them so he [could] continue to help them grow and experience the joy of their faith (1:25)**.⁵⁶



Only (Greek: *monon*) **walk (conduct yourself) worthy of the Good News of the Messiah (1:27a Greek cf. Colossians 1:10)**. The word **only** connects **Paul's** statement that the assurance which **he** has that **he** will be given **his** freedom, comes from the fact that the **Philippian** church still needed **his** ministry (**to see link click Aq - To Live is Messiah, to Die is Gain**).⁵⁷ The most important weapon against the enemy is not a powerful sermon or book; it is a godly life. The word **conduct** is related to our word politics (Greek: *politeuomai*, meaning *behave the way citizens should behave*). **Paul** was suggesting that we believers are **citizens of heaven**, and while we are on this earth we ought to behave like **heaven's** citizens. **He** brought this concept out again later when **he** said: **My citizenship is in heaven (3:20a)**. It would be a very meaningful expression to the people of **Philippi** because it was a Roman colony, and its citizens were actually Roman citizens, protected by Roman law.⁵⁸ Such colonies considered themselves "little Romes" and took great pride in that association. They gave unqualified allegiance to Rome and to the emperor, adopted Roman dress and Roman names, and spoke Latin, the official language of Rome.

The Church's greatest testimony before the world is spiritual integrity. When believers live below the standards of biblical morality and reverence for their **Lord**, they compromise the full biblical truth concerning the character, plan, and will of **ADONAI**. By doing so they seriously weaken the credibility of **the Gospel** and lessen their impact on the world. **God's** people have always been **the enemy of the world (First John 2:15-16)**, because **the world is the enemy of God (Romans 1:28 and 5:10; Ephesians 2:3; Colossians 1:21)**. But the world can hardly be expected to embrace a **faith** whose proponents so little emulate its standards of holiness and fail to reflect the transforming power of **the Son of God**.

When the unsaved look at a church or Messianic congregation and do not see holiness, purity, and virtue, there appears to be no reason to believe **the Gospel** that it proclaims. When pastors commit gross sins and are later restored to positions of leadership in the congregations of **God**; church members lie, steal, cheat, gossip, and quarrel; and when congregations seem to care little about such sin and hypocrisy in their midst, the world is understandably repulsed by their claims to love and serve **ADONAI**. And the name of **Messiah** is dragged through the mud and dishonored.

So that whether I come and see you or I hear about you from a distance, you stand firm (Greek: *steko*, referring to *steadfastly holding one's ground regardless of danger or opposition*). The word is used of a soldier who defended his position at all costs, even to the point of sacrificing his life (**1:27b CJB**). **Standing firm** is both positive and negative. It is to stand for **ADONAI** against **the Adversary**, to stand for truth against falsehood, to stand for righteousness, and against sin. **Paul** makes a similar appeal later in the letter: **Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends (4:1)!** In **Ephesians** he twice uses a related verb in calling on believers to **put on the full armor of God . . . to stand firm against the schemes of the devil** and to **be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm (Ephesians 6:11 and 13)**.

United in one spirit, fighting with one mind (1:27c Greek). Unity in **His** Church was one of **Yeshua's** great passions. At the Last Supper **He** told **His** disciples: **A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another (John 13:34-35)**. Being obedient to **Messiah's** desire, the unity of the local church was also one of **Paul's** greatest passions. **He** reminded the believers in Rome that **just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Messiah's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other . . . live in harmony with each other. Don't be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don't think you know it all (Rom 12:4-5 and 16 cf. 1 Cor 1:10)**.

Paul gives us the key to true unity in the Church when **he** writes: **Be of the same mind, loving one another, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value**

others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In other words, **he** goes on to say: **In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Messiah Yeshua (2:2-5).**⁵⁹

Striving together (Greek: *sunathleo*) **for the faith of the Good News (1:27d CJB).** Paul now changes the illustration from politics (Greek: *politeuomai*) to athletics. **He** pictured the church as a team, and reminded them that it is teamwork that wins victories. Yet, there was division in the church at **Philippi**. Two women were quarrelling with one another (see **Bm - Life in Harmony**). Apparently the members of the fellowship were taking sides, as is often the case, and the resulting division was hurting the ministry of the church. **The enemy** is always happy to see internal divisions in the local church (see C. S. Lewis' novel *The Screwtape Letters*). It is only when believers stand together that they can overcome **the wicked one**.

It would not be difficult to expand this idea of the local church as a team of athletes. Each person has their assigned place and job, and if each one is doing their job, it helps all the others. Not everyone can be the quarterback or the pitcher. The team has to follow the rules, and **the Word of God** is our rule book. There is one goal – to honor **Messiah** and do **His** will. If we all work together, we can reach our goal, win the prize, and glorify **the Lord**. But the minute anyone starts breaking the training rules (the Christian life does demand discipline), or looking for **glory**, teamwork disappears and division and competition takes over.⁵⁹

Don't be frightened by those who oppose you (1:28a Greek). Whenever **the Gospel** is preached there is **opposition**, but the believer **is not** to be **frightened**. Believers in **Paul's** day, including those in **Philippi**, had good reason to be **frightened** of possible beatings, imprisonment, and even execution by opponents of **the Gospel**. But, for us, this doesn't mean we must repress **fear**, but that by **God-given** strength we should not let it govern our behavior. We should overcome **it** by realizing that **God causes everything**, even **opposition, to work together for the good of those who have been called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28).**

The content of **fear** differs from place to place. Throughout the world Messianic Jews face rejection by family, friends, and the Jewish community. In the State of Isra'el believers **fear** loss of their jobs, friction from anti-missionary neighbors and co-workers, violence from anti-**Gospel** zealots, governmental imposition of restrictions on evangelism. Non-permanent residents **fear** being expelled from the

country, since the Interior Department need not give reasons for refusing to extend visas.

Nevertheless, many believers in Isra'el are bold when witnessing to Jews. **First Peter 4:14-16: If you are being insulted because you bear the name of the Messiah, how blessed you are! For the Spirit of the Sh'khinah, that is, the Spirit of God, is resting on you! Let none of you suffer for being a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or a meddler in other people's affairs. But if anyone suffers for being Messianic, let him not be ashamed; but let him bring glory to God by the way he bears this name. Paul writes that when tempted to give in to fear he does not lose courage (Second Corinthians 4:1-2).** Let Messianic Jews and all believers everywhere continue to communicate **the Good News about Yeshua with humility and fear (First Peter 3:16)** not of **the opposition** but of **God**, who will one day judge whether we obeyed **His** commission to **make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19)**.⁶⁰

This will be for them a sign that they are headed for destruction and you for salvation (Greek: *soteria*, which can be translated *deliverance*). **Paul's** confidence of **salvation** is built on the TaNaKh's promises of **ADONAI's** eventual vindication of **His** people (see [Isaiah Kg - The Second Coming of Jesus Christ to Bozrah](#)). **The destruction of the opposition and the salvation of the faithful** are both signs **from God (1:28b Greek)**. The first, to mark out **His enemies**, and the second to mark out **His children**. Similarly, **Paul** encouraged **the faithful Thessalonians**, saying: **We ourselves speak loudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure**, and then **he** explained that **this is a plain indication of God's righteous judgment (Second Thessalonians 1:4-5, cf. 6-8)**.

For it has been granted (Greek: *chariszo*, which is the same root as the noun *grace*) **to you on behalf of Messiah not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for Him**. In **His** sovereign grace, **God** not only gave believers the marvelous **gift of faith** to believe in **Him**, but also the privilege **to suffer for Him**. Through that **faith** comes the salvation **Paul** has just mentioned in **verse 28**. In **Ephesians**, **he** explains in more detail that **God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Messiah even when we were dead in our transgressions - it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Messiah and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in order that in the coming ages He might show the incomparable riches of His grace, expressed in His kindness to**

us in Messiah Yeshua. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God (Ephesians 2:4-8). Everything involving salvation, including **the grace** and **faith itself**, is a **gift** from **ADONAI**.

When **the Philippians** suffer for **the Lord's** sake, **Paul** goes on to tell **his** readers, **they are going through the same struggle** (Greek: *agona*) **which you saw in me**. *Agona* can be translated as conflict and used to describe an athletic contest. Our word *agony* comes from it. In reality, life is an Olympic festival. We are **God's** athletes to whom **He** has given an opportunity of showing the stuff we are made of. **Paul** uses it to describe the hostile opposition and persecution **he** and **Silas** faced when **they** were imprisoned in **Philippi** (see the commentary on **Acts Bz - Paul and Silas in Prison**). **And now hear that I still have (1:29-30 NIV)** refers, of course, to **the apostle's** present **imprisonment** in Rome, which **he** has already mentioned (see **Ao - Paul's Chains**).⁶¹

Here **Paul** applies the power of **the Gospel** to **the Philippians**, who feel the pressure of being marginalized by the society around **them, people** who might be tempted to retreat in fear, or to lash out in retaliation, or to vent frustration on each other. But **Yeshua** offers another way to respond: confidence grounded walking worthy. **God's grace** that frees you to react to opponents with calm kindness, and to failing fellow believers with humility and forgiveness. **Citizens of heaven** behave in ways that reflect the character of **their King**. By **His** transforming **grace**, we can show courageous humility, bold gentleness, and selfless solidarity, calmly enduring all that this decaying culture can throw at us.⁶²

*Dear Abba **Father**, praise and thank you for rescuing me from the dominion of darkness to bring me into **the Kingdom of Messiah (Colossians 1:13)**! Thank you for not stopping with rescue and deliverance. **You** so graciously provided the promised **Ruach Ha'Kodesh** to live within me so that I may be given the wisdom to **walk worthy**. For those who have been raised in an ungodly secular household or society, without the Scripture to read nor any role model to follow, it is difficult to **walk worthy** of your calling. How wise you are to include the story of several great men of **God**, like **Joseph, David, and Nehemiah**, who suffered much opposition, yet **they walked worthily**. May I follow **their** examples by loving and trusting **You**, In **Messiah Yeshua's** holy **Name** and power of His resurrection. Amen*