



World Christian Fellowship

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Book of Philippians

Lesson 07

Paul's plea to be worthy of Gospel

Philippians 1:27 -30, *Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel,²⁸ and not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God.²⁹ For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,³⁰ having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear is in me.*

So far in this letter Apostle Paul has been talking about his joy in suffering and how it had helped the gospel to advance.

Now his focus is shifting from him to the church at Philippi. Paul is pleading with them to live a life worthy of the Gospel.

Not fearing of the enemies

When God has called us to preach the Gospel we should never have fear of the enemy.

Nehemiah chapter 4 is fine example.

Whenever you try to accomplish anything significant for the Lord, you will face strong opposition!

Satan never bothers with half-hearted people who are content with a lukewarm spiritual existence. But if you come on fire for Christ, then you will face all kinds of opposition.

As long as you live with one foot in the world and another one for God, living according to the world's values and for the world's goals, Satan won't trouble you.

V 1-3, **Setback by the enemies**

Satan often uses the anger of others to try to crush the newfound joy and zeal of a new believer.

Satan frequently uses ridicule against those who take a stand for the Lord.

Satan still uses indirect or open threats and intimidation to oppose Christians.

- If you don't keep quiet about the boss's corruption, you'll get fired.
- If you discipline your children as Scripture directs, the authorities will take them away from you.
- If you write a paper in defence of the Christian faith, the professor will fail you

V 4-6, Prayer and Action

V 7-8, Setback by the enemies

V 9, Prayer and Action

V 10- 12, Setback by the enemies

V 13- 23, Action out of Prayer

Satan uses fear to paralyze God's people and keep them from attempting anything significant for the Lord.

1. It's a fear of failure?

Not sure about the acceptance since you've never done it before and you don't know if you can do it.

2. It's a fear of rejection?

If you try it, others will think you're a fanatic and stand off from you.

3. It may be a fear of conflict?

If you do what God wants you to do, you know that you will be faced with disapproval. So, you back off.

Biggest mistake in the modern-day theology.

A number of true believers fail to understand comprehensively the future dimensions of the blessings brought to us by sacrificial work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

They believe because Jesus has suffered on behalf of them they no longer suffer!!

They have been taught that if you have faith then you can live in the blessings constantly. Have the blessings here on earth and as well as in Heaven.

This is what you hear from the many TV prosperity preachers.

I am not going to de mean in any way the sacrificial work Jesus Christ on the cross. That's one part of it. We need to embrace and take every aspect and characteristics and attributes of God in equal measure.

Let us look at what Jesus had taught.

Luke 9: 23-26, Then He said to them all, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily,^[a] and follow Me. ²⁴For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. ²⁵For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost? ²⁶For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory, and in His Father’s, and of the holy angels.

Luke 9:57-62, Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, that someone said to Him, “Lord, I will follow You wherever You go.” ⁵⁸And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.” ⁵⁹Then He said to another, “Follow Me.” But he said, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.” ⁶⁰Jesus said to him, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God.” ⁶¹And another also said, “Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house.” ⁶²But Jesus said to him, “No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

Luke 14:26-33, “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers

and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. ²⁷And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. ²⁸For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it— ²⁹lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, ³⁰saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish’? ³¹Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? ³²Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. ³³So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.

John 15:18-21, *“If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you.¹⁹ If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. ²⁰Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. ²¹But all these things they will do to you for My name’s sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me.*

Look at the Apostles teaching

Acts 14:22, *strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God."*

2 Timothy 3:12, *Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.*

1 Peter 4: 12-16, *Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; ¹³but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. ¹⁴If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. ¹⁵But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. ¹⁶Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.*

They do not understand that Christ is still rejected by the world (**1 Peter 2:7-8**)

We share in His suffering and rejection

Philippians 3:10, *that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,*

Colossians 1:24, *I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church,*

Discipleship is not about self-actualization or self-indulgence; it is about self-denial.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27, *Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.²⁵ And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.²⁶ Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air.²⁷ But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.*

Our present experience is not the “crown” but the “cross.”

The types of suffering found in the Bible:

1) Because we are a part of a fallen creation (Romans 8:18-25).

2) Because of the temporal consequences of personal sin (believers and unbelievers):

Deuteronomy 28:15–30:20; Proverbs 1:20-33; 4:19; 13:15; 15:19; Matthew 18:15-20; Acts 5:1-11; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 11:27-30.

3) Because of the eternal suffering of hell for rejecting Christ

Luke 16:19-31; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10; Revelation 20:11-15.

4) Because sometimes “involuntary” suffering or chastening at the loving hand of God to enhance our trust and obedience as His sons

Job; Hebrews 12:1-13; James 1:1-4; 1 Peter 1:6-7

5) Voluntary suffering in identification with Christ and in living a godly life

John 15:13; Acts 20:33-35; Romans 12:10; 15:1-3; 1 Corinthians 9:1-27; Philippians 2:1-4; 3:7-11; Colossians 1:24; 1 Peter 2:12, 18-25; 3:15-17; 4:1, 12-19

Conclusion:

Whether someone watching or not our life should reflect the glory of our Lord in our life.

Not to be fearful of the opposition to the Gospel.

Wholly committed to the Lord come what may we will follow the Lord only and obey Him alone!

When we suffer for the Gospel then we should know that we have been given the privilege to suffer for Him. What a Joy to suffer for Christ and taking part in His sufferings.

Application for us today:

How can you know the difference between legitimate rebuke and ungodly opposition? How can we grow even if it is the latter?

How can we acknowledge the problems and unhealthy negativism?

Does Satan use believers to oppose God's work? If so, how?

Are you whole hearted to follow God?

What happens to your faith when you are opposed?

If Satan opposes the committed believer, why not avoid this by being lukewarm (see Rev. 3:14-22)?