

“Gospel Gifts”

Philippians 1:27-30

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Rev. Brian T. Smeal; pastorsmeal@gmail.com

Belonging to a certain group often bestows additional benefits to you. Gas stations, hardware stores, restaurants, grocery stores, and more offer free perks/benefits to card-carrying members.

The gospel message of Jesus Christ is that He, the Son of God, has come into the world, and has called men and women, boys and girls to Himself. We are all guilty of sin (Romans 3:23 – “**All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God**”) and therefore, each one of us has fallen short of God’s standard of perfect obedience, so when we step out of this mortal existence and into an immortal existence, our sin requires separation from a perfect and holy God (Romans 6:23 – “**The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**”) But, “**To all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.**” [John 1:12]

Becoming a child of God happens when you receive Jesus Christ as your Savior, asking Him to forgive you of your sins and choosing to follow His teaching and His leading. That’s the way, and the reason, you become a Christ follower, but the gospel message also carries some other benefits, some of which Paul mentions in Philippians 1:27-30.

The gospel grants citizenship (v.27a)

- Same word in 1:27 is also used in Philippians 3:20 – “**Our citizenship is in heaven**”
- “*The gospel regulates the lives of heavenly citizens¹*”
 - A right understanding of the gospel doesn’t lead us to look at each other and say, ‘*look what the world has come to.*’ A right understanding of the gospel leads us to look to those who are not believers and say, ‘*look what has come to the world.*’ (Adaptation of a quote by Carl F. H. Henry)

The gospel calls you to personal and collective responsibility (v.27b)

- Standing firm has connotations of a military force, standing together
 - Your own individual ability to defend the gospel matters (1 Peter 3:15)
 - When opposition to your faith hits hard, THAT is when you stand firm in your own faith, and stand supportively for the faith of another
- *The gospel calls us to a pack mentality (v.27c)*
 - Author Rudyard Kipling – “*The strength of the wolf is the pack, and the strength of the pack is the wolf.*”
 - The gospel calls us to be strong individually, and even stronger together, because opposition is coming. But...

The gospel dispels the need for fear (v.28)

- Paul says when opposition to your faith comes along, you don't have to wonder, is this because I'm wrong?
- *Opposition to your faith is a gift, not a curse (v.29-30)*
 - Not everyone has faith enough to be trusted to face opposition. God is showing you that your faith is real; that your faith is powerful; that your faith is one of belonging.

The gospel message of Jesus Christ is that anyone, and everyone, who receives Him as Savior will receive eternal life, and that good news comes with other benefits and privileges, including citizenship, responsibility, and freedom from fear. Jesus made those a possibility when He endured death on an old rugged cross.

¹ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible, page 215

DIG IN!

Here are some farm-fresh questions that will help you to personalize and apply this morning's message.

1. ***What does it mean for you to live in manner worthy of the Gospel of Christ? How are you doing this already? What needs to be different?***
2. ***What does it mean to 'stand firm in one spirit'? What would the exact opposite statement be? What would be wrong with living this way?***
3. ***Name a decision worse than thinking, "I'll just stop and get gas in the morning."***
4. ***Why would any Christ-follower not actively pursue unity? What should you do in order to promote unity among the believers around you?***
5. ***Why do you suppose Paul mentions that he shared in the same conflict as that which the Philippians are or would be facing? Why is this important?***