

## Sunday Service Sermons

**24 January 2021**

### Christian Citizenship

Text: Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ". *Phil. 1:27. Of 1:27-30.*

Read: *Phil. 1:27-30*

Living as we ought to live in order to glorify God and to bring the Kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven.

Paul shared many thrilling truths in his letter to his beloved church at Philippi.

His letter to them is a letter of gratitude and joy that reveals the love of the apostle for this congregation.

It records repeated expressions of the congregation's love and support of the apostle in his missionary ministries.

With genuine love and wisdom and with great optimism, the apostle gave some imperatives to these friends in the family of God.

And as he spoke to them, he speaks to us today.

Philippi was a Roman colony, and its citizens enjoyed the privilege of being Roman citizens.

They enjoyed legal rights there as if they lived on Roman soil near the capital of the Roman Empire.

Paul reminded these believers on two different occasions that their real citizenship was heavenly.

Paul was not suggesting that they ignore the obligations of earthly citizenship, but he challenged them to recognize their unique relationship with God and his kingdom work.

He challenged them to live in the pagan city of Philippi as citizens of the holy and higher kingdom of God.

As he neared the end of his letter, Paul sent greetings to the saints in Caesar's household.

This may have served as a challenge to those in Philippi to be faithful and devoted servants of Jesus Christ for if one could live for Christ in Caesar's household, it follows that one could live for Christ in Philippi or in any modern city.

Our response to God must take many different forms according to the pressures and the needs we encounter.

It is interesting to note that manner in which Paul hoped his readers would conduct themselves as citizens of the kingdom of God.

He would have them stand firm in one spirit with one mind. (*Phil. 1:27*)

The threat of divisiveness of disunity has always threatened the church's witness.

This is true today, and it was true in the early days of the Christian movement.

We need to recognize that there are many handicaps or hindrances to maintaining a unity of mind and spirit.

The immaturity of God's family can cause disunity.

The individuality of persons can often create disunity.

Honest differences of opinion can sometimes be very divisive.

Physical and emotional fatigue can often create disunity.

We must recognize that our enemy, the devil, is always seeking to divide the people of God so that he might conquer them.

The apostle Paul was urging the church in Philippi to take steps toward unity within the body in order that they might reflect God's grace and goodness in their city.

He would have them strive together in a united effort.

We must strive together side by side for the sake of the gospel.

Jesus' followers should work together like dedicated and disciplined athletes on a winning team.

We should cooperate in redemptive activity like the members of a choir singing in perfect harmony.

We should seek to avoid any discord lest we cast reflections on the message we proclaim.

We must strive together to protect the purity of our faith.

Truth has always been attacked by error.

Some people try to mix error with truth.

Thus we must strive together to protect the purity of our message.

We must strive together, side by side, in proclaiming the good news in our personal world.

He would have them stand firm against opposition.

In Paul's words, preaching a message of a crucified but risen Savior was not a popular thing to do.

Because of the multiplicity of idols and shrines, many with vested interests opposed any religion that served as a competitor for the status quo.

Bravery, with a refusal to surrender to fear, was an essential for success in the face of opposition to the gospel message.

Likewise, we must not rush off like a terrified horse when we are confronted by those who oppose our Christian message.

He encouraged them to be willing to suffer for the sake of Christ.

In some parts of the modern world it is popular and socially acceptable for one to be a professing Christian.

Such was not the case in Philippi, nor is it true in many parts of today's world.

And it just might be coming to us in this country of the free.

Many contemporary followers of Jesus Christ have never faced up to the fact that the cross is the symbol of our faith and our commitment to God's will.

If we would be true followers of Jesus Christ, we must be willing to suffer as he suffered and as others have suffered for their faith.

What is the shape of your Christian life in the modern world?

As those who seek for a city whose builder and maker is God, we must demonstrate the characteristics of heavenly citizenship in the here and now.

Philippi was a Roman colony, and the citizens of Rome were encouraged to dress like Romans, act like Romans, think like Romans, speak like Romans, and never forget that they were Romans.

Paul encouraged the saints at Philippi to dress, act, think, and speak in a way that would be worthy of Jesus Christ.

Let us strive, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to be good citizens of the kingdom of God in our community. Then we can be good citizens of God's kingdom forever.