

Light Brings Salt

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Iron Range Bible Church

Dedicated to the Systematic Exposition of the Word of God
"Sanctify them in the truth: Your word is truth."



Standing Firm - Conduct Worthy of the Gospel

Pastor John Griffith

We find in Philippians 1:27 the beginning of a series of exhortations designed to encourage those Paul is writing to and us by application to unity and courage in view of the external opposition that they were experiencing and that would increase in the years ahead. Paul clearly expresses his concern for the spiritual well being of the sheep.

1:27 Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ; so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; NASB

The importance of our walk as believers is emphasized by the imperative mood of the verb - conduct yourselves.

The word πολιτεύομαι means to perform the duties of a citizen; It refers to one's duty as a member of a body, an organization (from it comes our word politics).

Often it was used to refer to the duties that one was responsible for as a member of a community. It could be translated "*behave as citizens*" or "*Perform your duties as good citizens*". [implies a framework for expected behavior; parameters expected] The Present imperative stresses that this action is to be continuous and habitual for the believer.

Roman citizenship meant a great deal to the citizens of Philippi. Augustus had given the city two names, #1 Colonia, Augustus Julia Philipensis and #2 jus Italium (little Italy). This put them on the same status as those living in Rome. The "*only*" that begins this section indicates that the obedience to the command given here is to be given primary or sole attention. It is to be

followed regardless of what happens to me or the persecutions that you may receive.

"Whatever happens conduct yourselves as good citizens.."

Need to remember that as Paul writes he is in prison, it is his expectation to be released so he could continue his ministry, but this is not the real issue, He says the real issue Philippian believers and for us as believers of the 20th century is our living the Christian life today.

The adverb describes the manner of our conduct as worthy = αξιως means to have the weight of another thing and really could be translated as "weigh as much as". The believers conduct is to weigh as much as the Word of God which we believe. Our conduct, our pattern of life should be in balance with the doctrine which we believe. This is only possible as we live out and apply the truth that we know!

Just as all loyal Philippians desired to live up to their high calling and the special privilege of being citizens of Rome, so the Christians in Philippi were to live up to their high calling as citizens of the kingdom of God.

Thus Paul exhorted them to live "in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ." That is their position and standing in Christ. This is not an unfamiliar concept from the pen of Paul. (Eph 4:1; Col. 1:10; 1 Ths 2:12)

Paul next lays out the strategy to accomplish this command, to conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, and he uses an athletic metaphor, striving together, to make his point.

Paul first stresses again the thought that "whatever happens" whether I come or remain absent.... it should not impact their conduct as believers and he is going to tell them and us by application how to accomplish this.

He shifts from the familiar - their responsibility as citizens of Rome to draw on their familiarity with athletic contests that were very common in the day. It is Paul's desire to hear of them that they

are **standing firm** - solid in the faith, to do this they must have a good **defensive strategy**. Standing firm (στηκω) points to one who doesn't budge one inch from his position. He knows what is right, sticks with it and does it.

To stand firm in one spirit refers to a having a common mental attitude. It takes more than a believer here or there to hold the line against the persistent thrust and pressure of the kosmos it takes teamwork, the whole team, the local church, the gathered body of believers working together. Paul's focus here is the Philippian church and its proper function.

Principle must be the same in any and every local church regardless of size. There must be teamwork with all who are Christ centered.

Principle: Great defenses have been fractured and destroyed by lack of unity and bad mental attitudes, true in any team sport. This teamwork is achieved by having our attitudes, our viewpoint on life determined by the same set of beliefs and values, that is, all determined by the Word of God. As the saying goes all being on the same page. This is impossible with out the active ministry of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers. (Eph 4:3)

Paul next shifts to an offensive strategy.

Striving together (συναθλέω) describes believers as laborers working together in a common cause, *toiling by the side of*, to struggle along with someone. We must compete as a team which fits well with the emphasis of unified effort Paul is stressing here - *in one spirit, with one mind striving together*.

This united effort is to revolve around "the faith" (τῆ πίστει). By using the definite article it refers here to the body of faith, the truth, doctrine that we are to believe and to maintain the purity and consistency of, as it was given to us. **This striving** is not against anyone or anything but is for something positive, the body of truth God gave us. For them to win against the opponents of Christianity (overt then - more covert today but its there in an ever increasing degree) they had to take a strong defensive stance - *keep on standing firm*. But also they had to exert **offensive effort**, that is to keep on contending for the faith. (Jude 1:3 appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.)

During the first generation of the C/A as during the OT period much truth was not only orally given but communicated from generation to generation orally. Out of that wider body of truth some under the principle of inspiration became a part of the permanent record, the canon of

Scripture. This is what is in view here, once, ἅπαξ adverb, describes the fact that at a point of time this revelation from God was completed and therefore unchangeable. One of the clearest marks of a cult is that they want to add to the revelation, or to distort and misapply the text, what the revelation says.

Did you notice in Jude 1:3 to whom this "the faith" was delivered? Its to the saints (τοῖς ἁγίοις) the set apart ones; i.e. the whole body of Christ.

Many times the local body of believers depends on the pastor to contend for the faith, or to look to those in leadership positions in the church. Paul here is saying that every believer has a responsibility to be involved in advancing the cause of Christ through the ministry of the local church. We should have a confident attitude or reassurance in the midst of the daily battles, that is if we stay focused on our Savior and His grace resources through the Word and Spirit for life and godliness.

Mt. St. Helens Surprises Scientists

Genesis 2:4

This is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens...

In 1980, Mount Saint Helens exploded with incredible force, leaving a sterile, barren scar on the face of the earth. Basing their expectations upon the slow pace of evolution, the scientific establishment said it would be generations before life would return to the area. Yet the US Forest Service have reported that virtually every species that lived in the area before the eruption had already returned after only five years!

In most, but not all cases, the populations were much smaller than before the eruption - but they were back. As a result, scientists are surprised at the speed at which life is returning to Mt. St. Helens.

Unexpected forces helped cause this transformation. For example, as gophers tunneled, they mixed soil into the top layer of volcanic ash. Seedling trees, protected during the blast by thick snow and the debris of larger trees, provided the basis for a nearly instant new forest which has grown over the few years since the blast. Spirit Lake was supporting fish only five years after the blast.

The return of life to Mt. St. Helens shows us that commonly accepted ideas about how long life takes to establish itself need to be revised downward drastically. And this fact helps to show us that the Bible's claims of a young earth are not at all unbelievable.

The Ever-Malleable Mr. Obama

By Charles Krauthammer

"To be clear: Barack will support a filibuster of any bill that includes retroactive immunity for telecommunications companies."

-- Obama spokesman Bill Burton, Oct. 24, 2007

That was then: Democratic primaries to be won, netroot lefties to be seduced. With all that (and Hillary Clinton) out of the way, Obama now says he'll vote *in favor of* the new FISA bill that gives the telecom companies blanket immunity for post-Sept. 11 eavesdropping.

Back then, in the yesteryear of primary season, he thoroughly trashed the North American Free Trade Agreement, pledging to force a renegotiation, take "the hammer" to Canada and Mexico and threaten unilateral abrogation.

Today the hammer is holstered. Obama calls his previous NAFTA rhetoric "overheated" and essentially endorses what one of his senior economic advisers privately told the Canadians: The anti-trade stuff was nothing more than populist posturing.

Nor is there much left of his primary season pledge to meet "without preconditions" with Iran's Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. There will be "preparations," you see, which are being spun by his aides into the functional equivalent of preconditions.

Obama's long march to the center has begun.

And why not? What's the downside? He won't lose the left, or even mainstream Democrats. They won't stay home on Nov. 4. The anti-Bush, anti-Republican sentiment is simply too strong. Election Day is their day of revenge -- for the Florida recount, for Swift-boating, for all the injuries, real and imagined, dealt out by Republicans over the past eight years.

Normally, flip-flopping presidential candidates have to worry about the press. Not Obama. After all, this is a press corps that heard his grandiloquent Philadelphia speech -- designed to rationalize why "I can no more disown [Jeremiah Wright] than I can disown my white grandmother" -- then wiped away a tear and hailed him as the second coming of Abraham Lincoln. Three months later, with Wright disowned, grandma embraced and the great "race speech" now inoperative, not a word of reconsideration is heard from his media acolytes.

Worry about the press? His FISA flip-flop elicited a few grumbles from lefty bloggers, but hardly a murmur from the mainstream press. Remember his pledge to stick to public financing? Now flush with cash, he is the first general-election candidate since Watergate to opt out. Some goo-goo clean-government types chided him, but the mainstream editorialists who for years had been railing against private financing as hopelessly corrupt and corrupting evinced only the mildest of disappointment.

Indeed, the New York Times expressed a sympathetic understanding of Obama's about-face by buying his preposterous claim that it was a preemptive attack on McCain's 527 independent expenditure groups -- notwithstanding the fact that (a) as Politico's Jonathan Martin notes, "there are no serious anti-Obama 527s in existence nor are there any immediate plans to create such a group" and (b) the only independent ad of any consequence now running in the entire country is an AFSCME-MoveOn.org co-production savaging McCain.

True, Obama's U-turn on public financing was not done for ideological reasons, it was done for Willie Sutton reasons: That's where the money is. It nonetheless betrayed a principle that so many in the press claimed to hold dear.

As public financing is not a principle dear to me, I am hardly dismayed by Obama's abandonment of it. Nor am I disappointed in the least by his other calculated and cynical repositionings. I have never had any illusions about Obama. I merely note with amazement that his media swooners seem to accept his every policy reversal with an equanimity unseen since the Daily Worker would change the party line overnight -- switching sides in World War II, for example -- whenever the wind from Moscow changed direction.

The truth about Obama is uncomplicated. He is just a politician (though of unusual skill and ambition). The man who dared say it plainly is the man who knows Obama all too well. "He does what politicians do," explained Jeremiah Wright.

When it's time to throw campaign finance reform, telecom accountability, NAFTA renegotiation or Jeremiah Wright overboard, Obama is not sentimental. He does not hesitate. He tosses lustily.

Why, the man even tossed his own grandmother overboard back in Philadelphia -- only to haul her back on deck now that her services are needed. Yesterday, granny was the moral equivalent of the raving Reverend Wright. Today, she is a featured prop in Obama's fuzzy-wuzzy get-to-know-me national TV ad.

Not a flinch. Not a flicker. Not a hint of shame. By the time he's finished, Obama will have made the Clintons look scrupulous.

Quote: Dennis Prager

"With a few exceptions... when youth get involved in politics in large numbers, it is not a good thing... Having been a young person [in the late 1960's and early 1970's] and having watched as my university (Columbia) had its classrooms taken over and teaching interrupted by fellow students; having watched the sexualization of society that followed the 'Make Love Not War' generation; having watched America become obsessed with youth rather than wisdom as a result of the 'Never Trust Anyone Over 30' mantra of the '60s young people; having seen the myriad speech codes that arose, ironically, out of the 'Free Speech' movement at Berkeley and elsewhere; having watched pacifist-like doctrines decimate America's moral compass; having witnessed a selfish preoccupation with an ever increasing number of inherent 'rights,' with a commensurate devaluing of inherent moral obligations, I, among many others, am not enamored of the '60s and '70s youth movement... [and] am not encouraged by the ecstatic reaction of young people to Barack Obama. The track record of politically excited youth movements in modern Western history is not a good one. And I see no reason why

this will prove to be the first major exception."

Quote: Linda Chavez

"There is only one way to drive down the rising cost of gasoline for the long term: significantly increase the domestic supply of oil. We are the only nation in the world with access to known oil deposits on our own land or off our shores that essentially refuses to tap those resources. The main stumbling block is a lack of political consensus, which is in especially short supply in an election year. Instead of coming up with real solutions to our growing energy crisis, the Democrats in Congress would rather rail against the oil companies. But oil company executives don't set the price of oil—and taxing their companies more won't do anything to lower the cost of gasoline at the pump... It's time Congress put election-year politics aside and get serious about allowing domestic oil production to solve this crisis."