

Living as Worthy Citizens

Philippians 1:27-30

“Let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ.”(Philippians 1:27, ESV)

“Just one thing: As citizens of heaven, live your life worthy of the gospel of Christ.” (Philippians 1:27, CEB)

*“As Philippi was a colony of Rome in Macedonia, so the church was a ‘colony of heaven’ in Philippi.”
(Gordon Fee)*

*“The keys of the kingdom of God – are given in this age, by the King, to the church! It’s not to the government, nor to any king or pope or any other ruler, but rather to the church – to this ragtag bunch of argumentative, self-centered, struggling-for-holiness but gloriously forgiven sinners – that the keys of the kingdom of God are given. To put it another way, the church acts as a sort of embassy for the government of the King. It is an outpost of the kingdom of God surrounded by the kingdom of darkness. And just as **the embassy** of a nation is meant, at least in part, **to showcase the life of that nation to the surrounding people**, so the church is meant to manifest the life of the kingdom of God to the world around it.” (from The Mission of the Church by Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert)*

*“The church is a powerful picture of a unique community that is not defined by ethnicity, color, age, preference, tradition, or opinion. The local church is **an outpost of God’s kingdom** designed for the spread of God’s gospel and the display of God’s glory.” (David Platt)*

“John Calvin said it is the task of the church to make the invisible kingdom visible. We do that by living in such a way that we bear witness to the reality of the kingship of Christ in our jobs, our families, our schools, and even our checkbooks, because God in Christ is King over every one of these spheres of life.” (RC Sproul)

What does it look like to live as citizens of the kingdom of God who live and serve in a way that is worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ?

How do we display that Christ and His gospel is truly worthy?

1. **By Standing Firmly Together in Authentic Spirit-Given Gospel Unity:** *The gospel is honored when God's people who are united by the Spirit of Christ through the gospel are willing to stand together for the sake of the gospel of Christ alone.*

John 17:23 "... that they may become perfectly one, **so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.**"

Ephesians 4:1-5 *"I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, **eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.** There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all."*

"It is in the midst of a difference that we have our golden opportunity. When everything is going well and we are all standing around in a nice little circle, there is not much to be seen by the world. But when we come to the place where there is a real difference, and we exhibit uncompromised principles but at the same time observable love, then there is something that the world can see, something they can use to judge that these really are Christians, and that Jesus has indeed been sent by the Father. (Francis Schaeffer)

2. **By Striving Vigorously Together for Gospel Fidelity:** *The gospel is honored when God's people who have been saved through the hearing of the gospel are willing to strive to preserve the integrity and purity of the gospel that alone can save.*

"Only by the total cooperation of Christians striving unitedly together with each other in this fierce contest for the minds of men can the true gospel be preserved against distortion or destruction by its opponents." (Gerald Hawthorne)

"A distorted church usually coincides with a distorted gospel." (Mark Dever)

"Heresy is not so much the total denial of the truth—as a perversion of it. That is why half a lie is always more dangerous than a complete repudiation. Hence when the Father of Lies enters the pulpit—it is not his custom to flatly deny the fundamental truths of Christianity, rather does he tacitly acknowledge them, and then proceed to give an erroneous interpretation and a false application." A. W. Pink

Some common examples of what the Gospel must be preserved from:

1. *Religious Moralism (Works religion – Galatians)*
2. *Religious Materialism (Health & Wealth gospel – 2 Corinthians)*
3. *Religious Nominalism (Antinomianism – James, Jude, 2 Peter)*
4. *Religious Pluralism (Many Paths to God – Gospel of John)*

Jude 3 - "Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints."

"The distinction Jude wants to make is not between Christians and non-Christians, but the battle between Christians and false Christians. Furthermore, as one continues to read Jude, the problem is not even the problem of false Christians in the pews, but the battle to overcome false Christians in the pulpits." John Neufeld

3. **By Persevering Fearlessly out of Gospel Loyalty:** *The gospel is honored when the people of God are willing to stand unwaveringly for Christ in the face of the strong winds of cultural hostility.*

"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus." Acts 4:13

"the body they may kill; God's truth abideth still; his kingdom is forever." (Martin Luther)

"the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment," 2 Peter 2:9

The inability of the enemy to destroy not only Christ but his people signals their just doom because this could only be an act of God. God is real and you must face Him.

4. **By Suffering Gladly for the Ongoing Progress of the Gospel Ministry:** *The gospel is honored when we are willing not only to believe in Christ personally but we are honored to suffer for Him so that others may yet come to believe in Him also and be saved.*

"If you are not prepared to suffer, then just forget about being a Christian." Ray Stedman

*"For it has been **granted to you** that for the sake of Christ, you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake." (Philippians 1:29)*

"Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus." 2 Timothy 2:3

"Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name." 1 Peter 4:16

"For my own part, I have never ceased to rejoice that God has appointed me to such an office. People talk of the sacrifice I have made in spending so much of my life in Africa. . . . Is that a sacrifice which brings its own blest reward in healthful activity, the consciousness of doing good, peace of mind, and a bright hope of a glorious destiny hereafter? Away with the word in such a view, and with such a thought! It is emphatically no sacrifice. Say rather it is a privilege. Anxiety, sickness, suffering, or danger, now and then, with a foregoing of the common conveniences and charities of this life, may make us pause, and cause the spirit to waver, and the soul to sink; but let this only be for a moment. All these are nothing when compared with the glory which shall be revealed in and for us. I never made a sacrifice." (David Livingstone)