No Longer a Slave to Fear
Philippians 1:27-30 (NKJV)

- Paul penning this letter in prison, where fear could have gotten the best of him, took the higher road of faith.
- Believing that the God he served was in complete control of his life and in every situation he faced in life.
- That’s why he could say, “My prison time has actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel.”
- Those of the palace guard were coming to Christ.
- It was his faith in the Lord that also gave him the ability to say…

Vs.21 –“For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”
- Paul knew his life was hidden in Christ. He had turned over the pink slip of his life many years ago, and with confidence and experience he could encourage the church to do the same.
- In doing so they would overcome one of our worst enemies, fear.
- Read verse 27-30, and then we will come back and finish up chapter one.
- Notice Paul’s exhortation here to the church…

Vs.27 –“Only let your conduct be worthy of the Gospel of Jesus Christ…”

Conduct = (Greek): to live as a citizen.
- Paul was exhorting the church to live as citizens of the Heavenly Kingdom; it’s what he would say in chapter 3…

“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ…” Philippians 3:20 (NKJV)
- Knowing that your home is eternal, it’s in heaven; let your conduct and your behavior reflect that.

“Behave the way that citizens are to behave.” Warren Wiersbe

If you have ever traveled outside of the country you know how it works. You show your passport before entering into another country, they ask you why
your visiting, and you may even pay a small fee, the reason? You’re an alien, you’re from another country.

- Which is true for every believer, we are aliens, this is not our home, our citizenship is in heaven. That is why we are not to get too comfortable here; it’s also why it’s not all that comfortable here; because this is not our home.
- As long as we are here, we are here for the purpose to live out and to proclaim the gospel.
- That’s why Paul said, “Let your conduct be worthy of the gospel.”
- It could be said this way, conduct yourself like a citizen of the kingdom. He goes on and reminds us of what this will look like, the conduct of a citizen of heaven…

Vs.27 –“…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…”

1. Citizen’s Promote Unity in the Body of Christ

- If you’re a citizen of heaven then your conduct should be that of unity.
- Notice the phrase here, “Stand fast in one Spirit…”
- Unity is a spiritual deal it doesn’t happen naturally, we naturally compete with one another, and we naturally pick at each other. The natural man is not a selfless man, but a selfish man.

How many of you remember when you were a kid and you fought over the front seat? We called it, “shotgun” very rare day when we said to our little brother you take the front seat; if we did, it was because he paid us off somehow, it was not natural for us to give away the front seat.

- So unity has to be a work of the Spirit in our lives, it’s really one way you can see if you are growing in maturity. “Are you promoting unity, or do you create disunity?"
- The Spirit of God is going to give us the ability to endure with one another, to grace one another, and to see beyond the flaws and shortcomings that we all have with each other.
- Paul in Ephesians challenged the church in this area of unity.
- It is part of our calling…
“I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” Ephesians 4:1-3 (NKJV)

- Notice the words lowliness, gentleness, longsuffering, and bearing with one another in love.
- What’s the fruit of the spirit? Love.
- So unity is a work of the Spirit of God, and it’s an endeavor we should all be asking the Lord to work in our lives. One of the things we want to pray for is thinking right when it come to unity.
- Notice what Paul points out next in this area of unity…

Vs.27 –“... with one mind…”

- Speaking about thinking in our lives, Paul would remind the church of Corinth…

“God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. 1Corinthians 1:9-10 (NKJV)

- Perfectly joined together in the same mind…

“What we believe determines how we behave; wrong belief will ultimately mean a wrong life.” Warren Wiersbe

- What we think will totally effect how we live, whether we live in unity as believers, or not.
- There are some things that we are just not going to agree about, but at the end of the day we are family, we are citizens of heaven, and we may have to agree to disagree.

Whether or not to baptize forward or backwards; who cares? There is nothing in scripture that gives us direction on this. Whether or not to serve communion to people who are of different denominations, if they are a believer in Jesus Christ, come on. Whether the baptism with the Holy Spirit can be given at the time of salvation, or it comes after salvation. The bible teaches both; with Cornelius it happened all at once, in Samaria it was two
separate experiences. Whether or not we should teach verse by verse or topically, God uses both, we just prefer verse by verse; that way we cover the topic in context. We can argue all day about God using creation, the law, prayer, or your testimony as a means for evangelism. Guess what? God uses it all; the key is that you share the gospel, that’s the power of God unto salvation.

- At the end of the day we all have our opinions, everyone has them, but the key is that we don’t let them divide us; this is not something to be divided by.
- Paul will even remind us to strive together for unity…

Vs.27 – “…striving together for the faith of the gospel…”

- It’s where we get the English word athletics.
- Paul saw the church as a team, and a family.
- When the team or the family is working towards the same goal; promoting the kingdom, pointing others to the king, we will be a powerful force in our communities.
- There is nothing good about a community of believers fighting amongst each other. The only impact that will make is a bad one.
- Nobody wants to join a team like that.
- Paul will even point out in the letter two women who were creating division…

“I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord.”

Philippians 4:2 (NKJV)

- These two women were fighting over something; not sure, Paul didn’t tell us, so I won’t speculate, but it was affecting the church, probably splitting the church, as people were forced to take sides.
- Think about this, we are reading about it 2,000 years later.
- How would you like your name written down in scripture as the one who was splitting the church, better yet, how would like to stand before the Lord in that?
- Not good, that’s how bad division can be.

Let me ask you, “Are you promoting unity among the church, or are you promoting disunity, in what you say about others, or how you live before others? What does your speech say about where your citizenship is?”
• Notice the next thing Paul points out here about the character of those who are citizens of the kingdom…

Vs.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.”

2. Citizen’s are no Longer Slaves to Fear.

• Because we are citizens of Heaven our lives should no longer be marked by fear, but faith.
• That doesn’t mean we won’t ever deal with fear, it just means that we are no longer slaves to it.
• Before we came to Christ we lived in fear of death.

I remember getting life insurance and the agent kept saying to me, “God forbid if something happened and you died.” He had to of said that twenty times, I finally stopped him and said, “hey, that day will come, but it won’t be death, it will be life, my name is written in the Lambs Book of Life.”

• As a citizen of Heaven I no longer fear death, Heaven is my home.
• That gives me confidence, it gives me faith in the one who owns me and watch’s over me.
• It’s not faith in faith, but faith in one that is greater than anything created, that’s what overcomes.

“For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? 1John 5:4-5 (NKJV)

• We are over comers because we are connected to the over comer.
• And so we are confident that we are a part of the eternal kingdom, serving an eternal king that can overcome anything.
• In Acts chapter five, we read about the religious people using intimidation as a tactic to keep the apostles in fear.
• But it didn’t work, notice what Acts five tells us…

“…and when they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.” Act 5:40 (NKJV)

• Notice they beat them hoping to shut them down.
• But then we read…

“So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.”

Act 5:41-42 (NKJV)

• Beaten they kept preaching, rejoicing that they were given the opportunity to suffer for the name of Christ.
• They were no longer slaves to fear because they were citizens of heaven. They knew they were in the hands of God.
• Paul would even remind the church…

Vs.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…”

3. Citizen’s Have an Eternal Perspective on Suffering.

• Notice the word granted…

Granted = (Greek): as a favor.

• I bet you never looked at suffering that way? It may have come because the enemy wanted to take you out; but God allowed it to make you stronger, as favor, so that you could understand his grace and power on earth; also so that you could stack up treasures in heaven.

“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed—always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then death is working in us, but life in you.” 2 Corinthians 4:7-12 (NKJV)

“Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.” 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 (NKJV)
• Notice Paul calls it a light affliction in comparison to the eternal weight that it brings for us in glory.
• As believers we have the promise that God is working, His power and His presence in the trial, in the affliction, but He is also stacking up treasure for us in heaven.
• It is working for us for a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.
• Let’s finish up…

Vs.30 –“... having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear is in me.”

4. Citizen’s are in Conflict Together

• The same conflict, we are all in this together, so let’s stick together, because we are children of God, in the family of God.
• Don’t believe the lie that you’re the only one in the conflict, you’re all alone in your struggle, you’re struggle is not unique. It may seem that way, but it’s not, and moving churches, moving to another city or another state will not change anything but the scenery.
• Paul was in Rome, and the church of Philippi was hundreds of miles away and the conflict wasn’t any different.
• As long as we are here we are in conflict, the key is to remember you’re a citizen of Heaven, now live like it, in unity, without fear, with an understanding of suffering and most of all together.
• Let me finish with this tonight…

“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?” Romans 8:31 (NKJV)