

Living for Christ

Fellowship in the Gospel:

“Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete [it] until the day of Jesus Christ; just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace. For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ.” (Philippians 1:1-8 NKJV)

Philippians is about the Christian experience. Paul begins his letter to them by remembering the role they played in spreading and living the Gospel message. Will you notice in the first eight verses three important aspects of your life in Christ? Fellowship in the Gospel means continuance in the Gospel, fellowship in the Gospel means suffering for the Gospel, and fellowship in the Gospel means receiving the grace of the Gospel.

Means Continuance in the Gospel

When a man has received the Gospel of Christ, and is regenerated by the Holy Spirit of God, he will never fall away. Christ's saints persevere in faith until the end. Paul understood this and said that he was confident that He who had begun a good work in the Philippians would complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.

The Gospel has suffered many attacks because would-be disciples have left the way. However, it is clear that those who leave Christ never were in Christ. “Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but [they went out] that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.” (1 John 2:18-19 NKJV)

Many depart the faith because of persecution. This was not the case for the Philippians for they, as Paul, partook of God's sustaining grace during the time of Paul's imprisonment and defense of the Gospel. It will be so for all who seek to live Godly in Christ Jesus (2 Tim. 3:12), because fellowship in the Gospel means suffering for the Gospel.

Means Suffering for the Gospel

Suffering is the way for the believer. Now many never suffer because they refuse to live Godly in which case they will leave this world with a fearful expectation. Long-lived sin will leave a man uncertain of his salvation. If sin is not conquered, how will that man discern whether he suffers the anguish of un-mortified sin or the dominion of sin? A regenerate man cannot live under the dominion of sin, but how shall he know the difference? He will not, and the result will bring terror to his soul.

However, most will suffer for Christ in some measure, and the grace of God will sustain them. Paul and the Philippians were able to face their fears, and risk their lives because of the grace of God.

Means Receiving the Grace of God

Those who have received the grace of God have the fruits of that grace. Faith is clearly one of those fruits. "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; [it is] the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:8-10 NKJV)

God will not call you to do something without giving you the grace to accomplish what it is He called you to do. Well He has called all of us to live holy before Him and the world. You have the grace to live as such unless of course you prove to be illegitimate children.

Remember, Paul started by saying, he had confidence that God would continue to do the good work He had begun in them until the day of Jesus Christ.

Ever believer should walk by faith that this is true. Expect God to sustain you. It won't be easy. That is why it is called suffering. However, God's grace is more than sufficient for the soul that longs for righteousness looking forward to His appearing.

Father, we need to be sustained in this dark hour. Many are distracted by the things of the world. In many ways, we are like the Laodiceans who thought they were rich and needing nothing, but were poor, wretched, blind and naked. God, please be gracious to us. Will sinners be converted while your people languish in sin? Revive us that your Word might go forth, and that many may be converted to the praise of your glory, amen.