

Philippians 1:27

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

Analysis

Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ (Μόνον ἀξίως τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τοῦ Χριστοῦ πολιτεύεσθε, Monon axiōs tou euangeliou tou Christou politeu esthe)—Monon ("only, above all") gives priority. Politeuesthe ("conduct yourselves as citizens") is political language, especially potent in Philippi, a Roman colony proud of its citizenship. Paul redefines citizenship around gospel allegiance, not Roman identity. Axiōs ("worthily, in a manner worthy") demands conduct matching gospel values.

That whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel (ἴνα...στήκετε ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι, μιᾷ ψυχῇ συναθλοῦντες τῇ πίστει τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, hina...stēkete en henι pneumati, mia psychē synathlountes tē pistei tou euangeliou)—Stēkete ("stand firm") is military. Synathlountes ("striving together, contending as athletes") combines athletic imagery with gospel mission. Unity (en henι pneumati, mia psychē) is essential for effective witness.

Historical Context

Philippi's status as Roman colony (colonia) granted citizens ius Italicum—they were legally Romans living abroad. Paul subverts this by calling them to gospel-

citizenship (cf. 3:20, "our citizenship is in heaven"). First-century churches faced external persecution and internal division; Paul's call to unified witness addressed both. *Synathlountes* evokes Greco-Roman athletic contests and military drills—shared struggle for common cause.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does your 'citizenship' conduct reveal whether Rome (or your nation) or heaven is your ultimate polis?
2. What would 'striving together' for the gospel look like practically in your church or community?
3. Are you living in a manner 'worthy of the gospel' when Paul (or your pastors) are absent?

Interlinear Text

Μόνον ἀξίως τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τοῦ Χριστοῦ
Only as it becometh of the gospel of Christ
G3440 G516 G3588 G2098 G3588 G5547

πολιτεύεσθε ἵνα εἴτε ἐλθὼν καὶ ιδὼν ὑμᾶς εἴτε
let your conversation be that or I come and see you or
G4176 G2443 G1535 G2064 G2532 G1492 G5209 G1535

ἀπὼν ἀκούσω τὰ περὶ ὑμῶν ὅτι στήκετε ἐν μιᾷ
else be absent I may hear G3588 affairs of your that ye stand fast in one
G548 G191 G4012 G5216 G3754 G4739 G1722 G1520

πνεύματι μιᾷ ψυχῇ συναθλοῦντες τῇ πίστει τοῦ
spirit one mind striving together G3588 for the faith G3588
G4151 G1520 G5590 G4866 G4102

εὐαγγελίου
of the gospel
G2098

Additional Cross-References

Ephesians 4:1 (Parallel theme): I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

2 Peter 3:14 (Parallel theme): Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

1 Corinthians 1:10 (References Christ): Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

Colossians 1:10 (Parallel theme): That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;

Jude 1:3 (Faith): Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

Philippians 2:12 (Parallel theme): Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

1 Thessalonians 4:1 (Parallel theme): Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.

Acts 4:32 (Faith): And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.

Psalms 133:1 (Parallel theme): Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

2 Corinthians 13:11 (Parallel theme): Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.