

INTRODUCTION.

TODAY WE FINISH UP THIS VERY BRIEF SECTION OF PHILIPPIANS, ~ 1:27-30, ~ WHICH deals with opposition to the gospel. ~~ A little hard to understand. ~~ Degrees of opposition.

▶▶ In verses 27-28a, ~ Paul gave us four exhortations that instruct believers on how to behave in the face of opposition to the gospel.

↳↳ 1st, ~ in the face of opposition, ~ Paul calls all believers to live in a way that brings honor to the good news about Jesus.

→→ If people oppose us, ~ let it be because of content of gospel

↳↳ 2nd, ~ Paul calls believers to stand firm in the face of opposition.

→→ I.e., ~ he urges believers to hold their ground regardless of the danger or hostility or personal cost. ~~ Together ~~ Military formation

↳↳ Helping not compromise, ~ accountable, ~ encouraging, ~ praying. ~~ Strong.

↳↳ 3rd, ~ in face of opposition, ~ calls us to work together to defend the body of God's revealed truth that Scripture contains & the apostles preached.

→→ Striving ~~ Pictures = team ~~ Teamwork

↳↳ And 4th, ~ he exhorts believers to not be alarmed or intimidated in any way, ~ no matter what our opponents do, ~ no matter how severe the opposition.

→→ And as we noted, ~ the Lord will strengthen us to stand courageously in the face of our opponents.

▶▶ In verses 28b-30, ~ today, ~ Paul turns from exhortation to explanation.

▷▷ I.e., ~ he follows up on his exhortations with some helpful information about opposition to the gospel.

▷▷ In these verses, ~ Paul explains three things in relation to opposition to the gospel.

↳↳ 1st, ~ he explains that our courageous witness in the face of opposition is a twofold sign. ~~ 2nd, ~ he explains that it is an honor to suffer for Jesus. ~~ And 3rd, ~ he explains that all believers face opposition to the gospel. ↯ 1/6

IN VERSE 28b, ~ PAUL SPECIFICALLY FOLLOWS UP ON HIS FOURTH EXHORTATION by explaining that our courageous witness is a twofold sign.

"THIS IS A CLEAR SIGN TO THEM OF THEIR DESTRUCTION, BUT OF YOUR SALVATION, and that from God."

▶▶ It's been said, ~ & I agree, ~ that these words are extraordinarily difficult to interpret.

▷▷ Following is my take on them. ~~ & I hope it helps you understand Paul's words better.

↪↪ In all seriousness, ~ after working on [verse 28b](#), ~ I'm still not sure that I understand it enough or can adequately explain it.

OUR COURAGEOUS WITNESS IS A TWOFOLD SIGN, ~ PAUL SAYS., ~~ "DESTRUCTION" and "salvation" are the two parts of the sign.

▶▶ Just a few preliminary notes before get to main point.

▷▷ As we noted last time, ~ the Lord will strengthen us to stand courageously in the face of opposition.

↪↪ And here Paul is telling us that our courageous stand is a twofold sign. ~~ To our opponents, ~ of their destruction, ~ but to us it's a sign of our salvation.

▷▷ "their destruction" points to the future judgement & condemnation of the opponents.

↪↪ So "your salvation" must point to the final stage of believers' salvation, ~ i.e., ~ our resurrection and glorification.

→→ In brief, ~ [verse 28b](#) is future oriented.

▷▷ And at the end of [verse 28b](#), ~ notice Paul adds that this is from God.

SO, ~ WHAT'S PAUL'S POINT HERE?

▶▶ Well, ~ when we boil it down, ~ with the words "from God" I believe the primary point Paul is making in [verse 28b](#) is this.

▷▷ When believers stand courageously for Jesus, ~ God will use that to somehow make it clear to our opponents that, ~ unless they repent, ~ headed for a Christ-less eternity.

▷▷ And God will use our courageous witness to somehow make it clear to us that we're headed for an awesome eternity in the presence of and in fellowship with Jesus. 🏹 2/6

THE WORDS OF VERSE 28b MAY BE HARD TO UNDERSTAND, ~ BUT WE CAN DEFINITELY see that they are encouraging words for believers and a warning to unbelievers.

▶▶ But they are also urgent and sobering words for us, ~ believers. ~~ Because people could die at any time.

▶▶ And all unbelievers, ~ not just those who oppose us, ~ are headed for hell after death.

▶▶ Ezekiel tells us that God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked (18:23; 33:11). ~~ And we have a Commission to fulfill.

▶▶ Consequently, ~ we need to rescue as many unbelievers as possible before it's too late.

AT THIS POINT, ~ IN ADDITION TO WHAT WE JUST SAID ABOUT VS. 28b, ~ WE CAN draw out three implications from what Paul says here.

▶▶ 1st, ~ despite the efforts of some to redefine or eliminate the doctrine of hell, ~ the Bible is clear that those who reject Christ await conscious eternal torment in hell forever.

▷▷ The punishment of the unsaved is not annihilation, ~ nor will they be restored after some time of punishment.

↳↳ IOW, ~ the Bible allows for neither of these. ~~ These teachings are heretical, ~ unbiblical, ~ and satanic.

▷▷ Scripture makes it clear that people who do not repent of their sins and turn to Christ for salvation prior to death will spend eternity in torment.

↳↳ Matt. 25:46, ~ "And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

↳↳ And in Rev. 20:11-15

▶▶ The 2nd preliminary implication that we can draw out from what Paul says is this.

▷▷ Since [verse 28b](#) is future oriented, ~ this tells us that we should not be looking for God's retribution upon our enemies as long as they're alive.

↳↳ But how comforting to know that they will be held accountable if they don't repent and turn to Jesus for salvation. ~~ They will not get away with what they do to us.

→→ Over in [2 Thess.](#), ~ Paul tells us that "God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict" us. ↴↴ 3/6

▶▶ And the 3rd implication that we can draw out from what Paul says is this.

▷▷ Since [verse 28b](#) is future oriented, this reminds us that our suffering is for this life only and that a glorious future awaits us.

▷▷ As we noted a few weeks back, ~ at the end of things, ~ there is for us a magnificent eternal future.

↳↳ At the end of things, ~ there is for us everlasting life and joy with our Savior.

→→ For believers, ~ persecution, ~ trouble, ~ and affliction are not the end. ~
Beyond these, ~ there lies eternal glory.

IN VERSE 29, ~ PAUL FOLLOWS UP ON HIS EXHORTATIONS BY EXPLAINING THAT it's an honor to suffer for Jesus.

"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."

I.E., ~ believers have been given not only the privilege of trusting in Christ for salvation ~ but also the privilege of suffering for him.

▶▶ I think we would all agree wholeheartedly with Paul that it is indeed a privilege to trust in Christ for salvation.

▶▶ But I think we might hesitate a little in agreeing wholeheartedly with Paul that suffering for Jesus is an honor.

BUT THAT'S EXACTLY HOW THE APOSTLES VIEWED IT.

▶▶ In [Acts 5:41](#), ~ Luke writes, ~ "Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name."

BUT WE COULD ASK, ~ "WHY OR HOW IS IT A PRIVILEGE TO SUFFER FOR JESUS?"

▶▶ Most likely because of the benefits suffering bestows on us.

▷▷ E.g., ~ problems and trials help us develop endurance. ~ Endurance develops strength of character. ~ And character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. ~ **That's the point Paul makes over in Rom. 5.**

▷▷ In [2 Cor. 4:17](#), ~ Paul writes, ~ "For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison." ↯↯ 4/6

▷▷ And let's look at [James 1:2-4](#)

↳↳ The point is not to pretend to be joyful when we face "trials of various kinds" ~ but to have a positive outlook.

↳↳ "Count it all joy" could be paraphrased, ~ "consider it an opportunity for great joy."

↳↳ We can have a positive outlook because of what trials can produce in our life.

▶▶ Seeing all of this, ~ now we might not hesitate to agree wholeheartedly with Paul that suffering for Jesus is a privilege. ~ ~ **Means of spiritual growth.**

LET'S LOOK AGAIN AT PHIL. 1:29. ~ ~ IN THIS VERSE PAUL REMINDS US THAT FACING opposition to the gospel is part of the Christian life. ~ ~ **So expect & not surprised**

▶▶ Jesus told us to expect it.

▷▷ In [Jn. 15:20a](#), ~ Jesus said, ~ "Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If ~ [**Since**] they persecuted me, they will also persecute you."

▶▶ In [2 Tim. 3:12](#), ~ Paul also shows us that opposition to the gospel should be expected in our lives.

▷▷ "Indeed, ~ all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus ~ will be persecuted."

▶▶ And in [1 Pet. 4:12](#), ~ Peter writes, ~ "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you."

▷▷ "fiery trial" here refers primarily to suffering for Jesus.

▷▷ Basically, ~ Peter is telling us, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ "Dear friends, do not react to opposition to the gospel by being surprised in a way that suggests that you think something strange or unusual were happening to you."

▷▷ The implication here is that persecution in our lives should be expected, ~ not treated as something out of the ordinary.

▶▶ Definitely, ~ facing opposition to the gospel is very much a normal part of the Christian life.

▷▷ And when we encounter opposition, ~ our reaction should be, ~ "Ah, ~ yes, ~ I've been expecting this." ¶¶ **5/6**

IN VERSE 30, ~ WHICH WE'LL LOOK AT VERY BRIEFLY, ~ PAUL FOLLOWS UP ON HIS exhortations by explaining that he and the Philippian believers are in this struggle together.

I.E., ~ THEY ALONG WITH PAUL WERE EXPERIENCING OPPOSITION TO THE GOSPEL.

▶▶ The Philippian believers were not alone in suffering for Jesus. ~ Nothing unique was happening to them.

THIS IS AN ILLUSTRATION OF A MUCH LARGER PRINCIPLE.

▶▶ Specifically, ~ that the whole family of God throughout this world are undergoing opposition to the gospel to one degree or another.

▶▶ Peter states the principle in [1 Pet. 5:9b](#), ~ where he reminds us that other believers all around the world are experiencing "the same kinds of suffering."

▶▶ Opposition to the gospel to one degree or another is to be expected, ~ wherever believers take the gospel and their commitment to God seriously.

▶▶ Until Jesus returns, ~ the battle between good and evil will persist, ~ and suffering for our faith in Christ will be the norm for all believers all over the world.

▶▶ Every believer shares in this experience to one degree or another ~ and is not alone in this.

CONCLUSION.

TWO BRIEF THOUGHTS IN CLOSING ABOUT ALL BELIEVERS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD experiencing "the same kinds of suffering."

▶▶ Temptation to focus on self

▶▶ And the last thought.

▷▷ Perhaps in sharing this principle, ~ that we're not alone in facing opposition to the gospel, ~ Paul and Peter want believers to draw encouragement, ~ strength, ~ ↴↴

↵↵ and courage from this truth in order to help us endure when we experience opposition to the gospel.

▶▶ So let's draw ~ and also pray for our brothers and sisters around the world.

LET'S PRAY 6/6