

## Part 32 – Philippians 4:10-19

### Our Contentment is Linked to our Ability to Suffer

Newsletter Quoted:

*“I heard a popular preacher the other day say that he will not accept any theology that allows for suffering. All suffering, he says, is outside of God’s will and the experiences of an obedient Christian. There are few things that are more wrong than this absurdly non-biblical statement.*

*Phil 1:27–30 is one sentence in Greek, and the flow of Paul’s teaching is important. He begins by encouraging the Philippian Christians to “conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ,” which means that they are to be unified, that they “stand firm ((stēkete) στήκετε) in one spirit. (stēkete) στήκετε is then modified by two participles, (**verbal adjectives**) telling them how to stand firm, by:*

- 1. “striving side by side (συναθλοῦντες) with one mind for the faith of the gospel,” and*
- 2. “in no way frightened (πτορόμενοι) by your opponents.”*

*Paul adds that their unity “is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you — and that from God.” In order to explain this, Paul moves to the point he (and I) want to make.*

*Translations generally are not able to bring out the nuances of this verse, nor the awkward Greek. Paul begins, “for it has been granted (ἐχαρίσθη) to you on behalf of Christ.” χαρίζομαι means “to give freely as a favor, give graciously” (BDAG). χαρίζομαι is the cognate verb for the familiar noun, (Caris) χάρις, meaning “grace.”*

*The NLT translates, “you have been given ... the privilege.” The following are gracious gifts to Christians:*

- 1.to believe in him (τὸ εἰς αὐτὸν πιστεύειν), and*
- 2.to suffer for him (τὸ ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ πάσχειν).*

*The theology of the “popular pastor” denies God’s gracious gift of suffering.*

*Secondly, the awkward Greek. I am speculating at this point, but it appears that Paul changed his mind mid-stream, as evidenced by the extra τό. Apparently, Paul was going to say, “to you it has been graciously given on behalf of Christ to suffer for him” (ἐχαρίσθη τὸ ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ πάσχειν; cf. 1 Thess 2:2; Phil 1:30). τὸ ... πάσχειν is an articular infinitive modified by two prepositional phrases, ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ and εἰς αὐτόν. However, it seems that Paul changed his mind, probably because he wanted to encourage them at the same time and so decided to add the phrase about God’s gracious gift of faith. It would have been nice if Paul’s amanuensis had scrapped the τό off the parchment, but he didn’t.*

*So with this understanding, here is the phrasing.*

*I have heard sermons on God’s gracious gift of faith to his children; I have yet to hear a sermon on God’s gracious gift of suffering. That’s unfortunate, to understate it in the extreme.*

- 1.When we suffer with Christ, we identify with him, we are joined in his suffering. He suffered for us (Phil 2:8) and in turn we suffer with and for him.*

*2.Suffering binds us together, person to person, just as suffering joins the Phillipians to Paul (Phil 1:30).*

*3.Suffering strengthens our faith as we see that our faithfulness in the midst of suffering purifies our faith, confirming that we are truly his children. Peter says that suffering comes “so that the genuineness of your faith (which is more precious than gold that perishes), having been tested by fire, may be found to your praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet 1:7).*

*4.Suffering provides us with an opportunity to “shine like stars in the universe.” As we are faithful, we show ourselves to “be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation” (Phil 2:15).*

*Grudem defines “grace” as “God’s goodness toward those who deserve only punishment” (239). Not only is belief a gracious gift from God, but so also is entering into suffering on his behalf.*

*To deny the reality and the gift of suffering is to rip out half of God’s gracious gifts to us that Paul is discussing.*

*I understand that we don’t tend to look forward to suffering as followers of Jesus. But our conversion necessarily puts us at odds with the world, and changed people will and must live changed lives. In fact, if we are not suffering, then we need to ask if we are living out our allegiance to Christ.*

*Paul has just said that our separation from the world, specifically our unity in Christ, “is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you” (v 28). That is how different we are to be from the world. What is a confirming sign of our true faith in Christ serves, at the same time, as a sign of judgment on the unbelieving world. Our unity in the face of persecution and suffering is a dual sign of their destruction and our salvation. But if we are not suffering, how are we different from the world?*

*The fact of the matter is that much of the western church knows little of suffering since we are not that different from the world. Have you heard the old saying, “If Christianity became illegal, would there be enough evidence to convict you?” We must be different. We were changed at the gate; of course we are going to live a life that is different from those on the wide-open easy street headed straight to hell (Matt 7:13–14).*

*Suffering for Christ is so essential that without it one’s salvation is in question. (And by the way, I am reformed in my theology.) As Paul tells the Romans, “The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ ...” And we love to stop the sentence here, but Paul doesn’t. He continues that we are God’s children, his heirs, fellow heirs with Christ, “provided we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him” (8:16–17, underline added). Our glorification depends on our suffering, and our suffering depends upon our willingness to be God’s special people, salt and light, standing in stark contrast to the darkness of the world.*

*Suffering for Christ as we live out our lives is a gracious gift from God, confirming and strengthening his gracious gift of faith to us.*

*As Fee writes (quoting Lightfoot), “suffering should not surprise or overwhelm them; it is rather evidence that ‘God looks upon you with favor’” (171). I am convinced that if the modern church actually was unified, “standing firm in one spirit,” and if it actually did “strive side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel,” then we would be living in sharp contrast to the world, suffer for it, and we would be joined with Christ through it.*

*Anyone who teaches otherwise is teaching false doctrine and is robbing God’s children of the joyful benefits of suffering.*

*(Grove Bible Fellowship does not necessarily agree with all that is quoted above.)*

**Romans 8:1** There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

### **Romans 8:4-9**

<sup>4</sup> in order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in **us**, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

<sup>5</sup> For those who are according to the flesh **set their minds** on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

<sup>6</sup> For the mind set **on the flesh is death, BUT the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,**

<sup>7</sup> because the **mind set** on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able *to do so*;

<sup>8</sup> **and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.**

<sup>9</sup> However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.

### **Rom 1:6-7**

<sup>6</sup> among whom you also **are the called of Jesus Christ;**

<sup>7</sup> to all who are **beloved of God** in Rome, **called *as saints***: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Galatians 5:18-26**

<sup>18</sup> **BUT IF you are led by the Spirit,** you are not under the Law.

<sup>19</sup> Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality,

<sup>20</sup> idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions,

<sup>21</sup> envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you **that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.**

<sup>22</sup> **BUT** the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

<sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

<sup>24</sup> **Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.**

<sup>25</sup> **IF** we live by the Spirit, let us also **walk by the Spirit.**

<sup>26</sup> Let us not become **boastful**, challenging one another, envying one another.

### **Ephesians 3:16, 21**

<sup>16</sup> that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, **to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man;**

<sup>17</sup> **so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith;** *and* that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

*(Philippians 4:8 "dwell on these things".)*

<sup>18</sup> **may** be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,

<sup>19</sup> and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you **may** be filled up to all the fulness of God.

<sup>20</sup> Now to Him who is able to **DO** exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, **according to the power that works within us,**

<sup>21</sup> to Him *be* the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

**Philippians 4: <sup>13</sup> I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.**

Back to verse 17:

<sup>17</sup> **so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith;** *and* that you, being rooted and grounded **in love,**

### **Philippians 4:11-12**

11 **Not that I speak from WANT,** for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. **I know how to get along with humble means,** and **I also know how to live in prosperity;** in **any** and **every circumstance** I have learned **THE SECRET** of being filled and going hungry, **BOTH** of having abundance and suffering need.

**We deserve little,** therefore we **should really be expecting the same...little.** That is true humility.

### **1 Peter 5:5-10**

<sup>5</sup> You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, **clothe yourselves with humility toward one another,** for God is opposed to the proud, **but gives grace to the humble.**

<sup>6</sup> **Humble yourselves,** therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you **at the proper time,**

<sup>7</sup> **casting all your anxiety upon Him,** because He cares for you.



<sup>8</sup> Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

<sup>9</sup> But resist him, firm in *your* faith, knowing that **the same experiences of suffering** are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.

<sup>10</sup> **And after you have suffered for a little while**, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself **perfect, confirm, strengthen *and* establish you.**

<sup>11</sup> To Him *be* dominion forever and ever. Amen.

### **1 Peter 5:6-7**

<sup>6</sup> **Humble yourselves**, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you **at the proper time**,

<sup>7</sup> **casting all your anxiety upon Him**, because He cares for you.

Net Bible:

### **1Peter 5:6-7**

<sup>6</sup> And God will exalt you in due time, **if you humble yourselves** under his mighty hand

<sup>7</sup> **BY casting** all your cares on him because he cares for you.  
(NET)

Footnote: <sup>12</sup> **tn** Or "throwing on"; "loading." Some scholars take the participle to function imperatively, or as attendant circumstance - thus, "cast." See below for discussion.

**sn Casting.** According to *ExSyn* 630, "Although treated as an independent command in several modern translations (e.g., RSV, NRSV, NIV), the participle [*casting*] should be connected with the verb of v 6, ταπεινώθητε [*tapeinōthēte, Humble yourselves*]. As such, it is not offering a new command, but is defining *how* believers are to humble themselves. Taking the participle as means enriches the understanding of both verbs: Humbling oneself is not a negative act of self-denial per se, but a positive one of active dependence on God for help."<sup>13</sup> **tn** Or "anxiety, burden," but using a word from the same root as the verb "cares" in the last part of the verse.

- a. Indicative – statements of fact
- b. Imperative – commands or requests
- c. Subjunctive – statements of possibility or purpose
- d. Optative – statements of wish or potentiality
- e. Infinitive – verbal noun

#### **f. Participle – verbal adjective**

#### **1 Peter 2:24**

<sup>24</sup> and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might **die to sin** and **live to righteousness**; for by His wounds you were healed. So we cannot live to righteousness until **HAVING** Died to our sin.

#### **1 Peter 5:6-7**

<sup>6</sup> **Humble yourselves**, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time,

<sup>7</sup> **casting** all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you.

**Casting** is the Participle : HUMBLE is the main varb.

A Participle is a verbal adjective, sharing characteristics of both a verb an adjective.