

“The Bottom Line” (Philippians 1:27–30)

A sword requires hard steel to maintain a sharp edge. However, swords made solely of hard steel are found to be so brittle that they often shatter in battle. In contrast, soft steel does not break, but readily becomes dull, failing to be effective in fierce warfare. The Japanese, therefore, became skilled craftsman in the art of sword making. Their swords are the finest in the world. The Japanese create swords from both hard and soft steel. They combine multiple sheets of both strengths of metal, heating, folding, and pummeling them together over and over until they have up to 33,000 paper thin laminations of metal—each layer no more than 100,000th of an inch thick. The result is a finely crafted weapon of extreme pliability with a blade that will retain a deadly, sharp edge.

Just as Japanese sword makers repeatedly hammer together layers of metal to produce a sword that will be strong enough to withstand breaking, so God allows suffering to forge character into the lives of His children. Just as a sword made of hard metal will easily break in battle, so the independent believer will break in adversity. The hard steel in our lives is God’s Word; the soft steel in our lives is dependence on God and His church. These two components are both necessary to produce vessels that glorify God.¹ Eventually, believers are shaped into beautiful weapons or models of usefulness.

Today, I hope to remind you of your privilege to *model the gospel*. Perhaps you don’t like the word model because you don’t see yourself as a particularly attractive person. I’m with you! I don’t get particularly excited about looking into the mirror either. Nevertheless, you don’t have to be physically attractive to be a *gospel* model; instead, you must be spiritually attractive. In Philippians 1:27–30,² Paul exhorts you to *model the gospel* through perseverance, unity, boldness, and suffering.³ When you excel in these Christian disciplines, the world sits up and takes notice. Unbelievers in your life may not be eager for Jesus or salvation, but if you live a godly life, they may eventually become open to the gospel. Paul provides two challenges that will enable you to *model the gospel*.

1. Stand strong for Christ (1:27–28). You can stand strong for Christ by exemplifying courage and unity even in the midst of persecution. This section begins with the adverb “only” (*monon*),⁴ pointing to a sense of urgency and priority. I can see Paul holding up his index finger to signify “only” or “just one thing”⁵ as he adamantly declares his bottom line:⁶ **“Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel⁷ of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel”** (1:27). Paul writes “conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel.”⁸ This command begins the body of this letter that runs through 4:9. Moreover, this command serves as the overarching theme of the entire book. So Paul gives the key command and then proceeds to explain and to illustrate what constitutes worthy conduct.⁹ The phrase “conduct yourselves” (*politeuesthe*) literally means “live as citizens.”¹⁰ The verb Paul uses (*politeuomai*) is related to our English word politics. It is a word built upon the Greek word for “city” (*polis*) and has overtones of citizenship responsibilities.¹¹ Paul is making a play on the Philippians’ “dual citizenship.”¹² The Philippians live in a free Roman city, and thus understand from their own experience what it means to live as citizens.¹³ Paul is picking up on that motif and elevating it to include their heavenly citizenship as well. This is especially clear by Paul’s use of the noun form of *politeuomai* in 3:20a where Paul writes, “For our citizenship [*politeuma*] is in heaven.” Paul is suggesting that you are a citizen of heaven, and while you are on earth you ought to behave like heaven’s citizen.

To live your life as a citizen “worthy¹⁴ of the gospel of Christ” means to represent Christ in all you say and do. The term “worthy” (*axios*) pictures weighing something on the scales. The idea is that your manner of life should weigh as much as the gospel you claim to be committed to.¹⁵ People are not nearly as interested in discussing absolute, objective truth claims. People are even less interested in discussing theology or philosophy, but most people are interested in the practical questions of how to live.

At our church, we call this, “Living the Life,” which is our third vision strategy. It is not enough to just learn the Word; we must live the gospel out in every area of life, including our earthly citizenship. What type of citizen are you? Do you speak well of our President, our governor, and various political officials? Or are you critical of anyone who isn’t as conservative as you are? Obviously, this will not open doors to the gospel!¹⁶ Are you a law abiding citizen? Do you seek to have a positive attitude in your community, or are you a pessimistic doomsday soothsayer? Additionally, what type of spouse are you? Do your coworkers and neighbors see something different in your marriage? Do they come to you in the midst of their relational strife? Do those who know you see you loving your kids and spending time with them, while they are pulling out their hair and running away from their own kids? Perhaps they want to know how you can enjoy your kids so much. All that it takes is for you to live a different (notice I didn’t say odd) life before those who don’t have a relationship with Christ. Today, will you *model the gospel* before your family, friends, neighbors, and coworkers? Will you help others learn how to live the gospel? Will you help others become citizens of heaven and learn to live like the King?

Paul expects great things from the Philippians whether he is able to come see them or whether he just hears a good report. What a great comment! Paul expects that the impact of a worthy church would be known far and wide. This should be your desire as well. It is critical to believe in your church and to speak well of your church. So many people are critical of their church and their leadership. This is easy for any believer to do. It doesn’t take any skill or spiritual maturity to notice weaknesses in the church. Anyone can be critical of the church! However, self-control and godliness come into play when you choose to believe the best about your church and her leadership. When you have a high view of what God can accomplish in and through your church, you will come with expectation. You will serve with zeal! You will talk to others with optimism! Who knows? The church may just rise to your high hopes of her.

Paul yearns to hear about the church “standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (1:27b). The word translated “stand firm” (*steko*) described a Roman military formation in which the soldiers stood shoulder to shoulder and back to back with their shields up and their spears outward. It was the strongest possible defensive position. The word was also used of a soldier who defended his position at all costs, even to the point of sacrificing his own life.¹⁷ To stand firm means to hold your ground regardless of the danger or the opposition. Figuratively, it means to hold fast to a belief, a conviction, or a principle without compromise, regardless of personal cost.

You must have a military mindset and hold down the fort of your church. Impacting the world begins as Christians stand together “in one spirit.” As followers of Jesus, we need each other. Like soldiers, we too, are to join arms and hearts, offering encouragement and hope in our struggles. We are not to divide. Unfortunately, we do, often over very trivial issues. There are already too many barriers in the body of Christ—barriers of race, geography, worship style, mode of baptism, and denominational affiliation. To make matters worse, we spend far too much time squabbling over non-essential issues (e.g., the charismatic gifts, end times, the timing of the universe, divorce and remarriage, etc) and not enough time preaching the gospel of Christ. This is a scandal that hinders God’s work. When will we understand that unity makes the gospel beautiful? Jesus promised that all men would know that we are His disciples by our love for one another (John 13:34–35).¹⁸

Paul has just used political and military word pictures, now he moves to the world of athletics.¹⁹ All this in one verse! The word translated “striving together” (*sunathleo*) gives us our English word “athletics.”²⁰ Paul pictures the church as a team, and he reminds the Philippians that it is teamwork that wins victories. It’s like a coach saying to his players, “We win together and we lose together.” The local church is not made up of superstars. The church is a team in which Christ is the superstar, and we are joined together with Him to compete. In this case, we play as a team to advance the truth of God and promote His kingdom. Our proper motivation and common goal is “for the faith of the gospel.”²¹

One of Aesop's fables is about a father who had seven sons. To each son he gave a stick. Each was asked to break his stick. No problem there; it was easily done. Then the father took another seven sticks and bound them together. He then asked each of his seven sons to break the sticks. Not one of them could break the sticks which had been bound together as one.²² Similarly, on our own, you and I will be snapped in two by Satan and our own flesh. We need the accountability, encouragement, and comfort that come from being in community with other believers.

Paul concludes this section in 1:28 with some unusual words that require a bit of explanation: **“in no way²³ alarmed by your opponents--which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and that too, from God.”** Paul says that standing strong for Christ entails refusing to be intimidated by your opponents. The word translated “alarmed” (*ptyresthai*) is not found elsewhere in the entire Greek Bible (OT and NT). But it is used on occasion in Classical Greek of timid horses that shy upon being startled at some unexpected object.²⁴ It could denote the uncontrollable stampede which ensues when a herd of horses are spooked or alarmed for some reason.²⁵ It is obvious from this that these opponents were trying to throw the church into panic in an attempt to dismantle it. Yet, the Philippians were not to become frightened to the point of running from their opposition. As believers we should not go looking for a fight, but neither do we run away from it if it happens.²⁶

There has been a lot of ink spilled on exactly who these opponents are, but ultimately no one knows with any degree of certainty.²⁷ The point that Paul is making is: Make no mistake, if you open up your mouth about Jesus Christ, you will have enemies. When you say “Jesus is the only way,” people will call you arrogant. If you declare, “You must be born again,” someone is sure to call you a fanatic. If you say the Bible is the Word of God, someone else will think you're an ignorant hick. If you say, “I know I'm going to heaven,” you'll be accused of thinking you're better than everyone else. Finally, if you dare to call adultery wrong and homosexuality sinful, someone is bound to call you a narrow-minded, judgmental bigot. And so it goes. If you're a bold Christian, you will annoy the world precisely because you are a citizen of heaven and live by different principles.

Nevertheless, your bold witness in the face of persecution serves two purposes. First, your bold witness is a sign to your opponents that they will be destroyed. How is it a “sign” (*endeixis*) to them? Because when they see you stand firm, deep in their heart they know it's not natural for someone to stand against the ridicule or hostility of a group. Deep in their heart they know that when a group begins to browbeat and threaten or attack, people cave in. They know the normal human response is that when you see you're going to be rejected for a view, you find some way to back off from it. When they see you continue to stand without being intimidated, it makes a disturbing impression on them, because something inexplicable is happening. They see a quiet strength inside you that they don't have. They see a certainty and strength that can only be explained as coming from somewhere or Someone else. And deep in their heart a convicting voice says to them, “He's right, she's right, and unless you change, you'll be under the judgment of the God who is in them.” When you stand for the truth and are not scared off, a profound impression is made on them that unless they change, they'll be under the judgment of God. Although most people deny and suppress the still small voice of the Holy Spirit, He still beckons them to consider spiritual realities. Knowing this, you and I must seek to *model the gospel*.

Your bold witness serves a second purpose—it's a sign of salvation for you. Salvation from what? Whenever you come across the noun “salvation” (*soteria*) or the verb “save” (*sozo*), it is important to ask: What is the context of this rescue or deliverance? In Phil 1:27–28, Paul is likely referring to believers triumphantly glorifying Christ through temporal difficulties, whether they escape them or not. The salvation also points to our future hope of reigning with Christ. Throughout the New Testament, suffering is often connected with reward (e.g., Matt 5:10–12; Rom 8:17; Heb 10:32–35; 11:24–26). Thus, it is critical that you and I endure so that we experience the fullness of Christ's reign (2 Tim 2:11–13).

One of the important questions in this passage is: What does the word “that” (“**but of salvation for you, and that [touto] too, from God,**” 1:28b) refer to? It seems clear whatever “that” is it comes “from God.” At first glance, it seems that Paul is referring to “salvation” as “that” which comes from God. This makes biblical and logical sense. Salvation is from God and the closest referent to “that” is “salvation.” However, in the Greek language, terms are given genders—masculine, feminine, neuter—so terms that belong together can be matched up. When the gender of the relevant terms in 1:28 is considered, it becomes clear that the neuter “that” does not refer to the feminine “salvation”²⁸ but to the whole concept of striving and suffering in the preceding context (1:27–28a). What’s the point? Somehow, suffering comes from God. I’m not saying evil comes from God. But it is God who allows you to suffer. This principle will be fleshed out further in 1:29–30.

[If you want to live a worthy life and model the gospel, you must stand strong for Christ. Paul’s second challenge to live a worthy life is to...]

2. Suffer well for Christ (1:29–30).²⁹ In order to suffer well for Christ, you must recognize the nature of suffering and observe positive examples of suffering. Paul states, “**For³⁰ to you it has been granted for Christ’s sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,³¹ experiencing the same conflict [agon]³² which you saw in me, and now hear to be in me**”³³ (1:29–30). Paul explains that suffering is “a grace disguised.”³⁴ The word “granted” (*echaristhe*) is built off the Greek word for “grace” (*charis*).³⁵ Paul’s point is: God gives two grace gifts—salvation and suffering. Of course, every believer wants the gift of salvation, but the gift of suffering is the “gift that nobody wants!” We’re tempted to look for the receipt. Like a Christmas gift we don’t want, we’re tempted to try and return this gift! But God says: “There’s no receipt. The gift of suffering is too important and too significant.”³⁶ Suffering is a gift of God’s grace!³⁷

Paul doesn’t just offer up some pious platitudes; the man is a practitioner. In fact, in 1:30 he uses himself as an example and indicates the Philippians have seen him suffer. Nearly ten years earlier they had seen Paul thrown into a Philippian jail and then run out of town for his faith (Acts 16:19–34). And now at the time of this writing he is in prison in Rome.³⁸ Yet, Paul counts suffering for the gospel a grace gift. The reason: Suffering changed his life and shaped his eternal perspective.

Indeed, nothing will facilitate growth quicker and better than suffering. I hate to be the bearer of bad news but it’s true. From a human perspective, suffering stinks; but from a godly perspective, suffering is for your good. God wants to sanctify you. Like Jesus, we must be perfected through sufferings (Heb 2:10). Today, will you begin to see your problems as privileges? When you are rejected at work, at school, or in the neighborhood, will you rejoice that you have been counted worthy to suffer with Christ? When your spouse, your children, or your relatives call you a fanatic or a freak, will you bless the Lord and continue to exude love and compassion? Through your suffering, God will permit you to *model the gospel* to those who need a witness.

Victor Frankl, a Jewish psychologist, lived during the Holocaust and was a prisoner in a Jewish concentration camp during WWII. While seeking to survive the horror of this imprisonment, Frankl began observing his fellow prisoners in the hope of discovering what coping mechanism would help him endure this horrendous existence. What Frankl discovered was this: Those individuals who could not accept what was happening to them and could not make their present suffering fit with their faith, or couldn’t find its meaning in their world view, despaired, lost hope, and eventually gave up and died. Those prisoners who found a meaning from their faith, were then able to find hope for a future beyond their present suffering, and so could accept what they were enduring as a part of their existence. It was these prisoners who survived.

You may not find yourself in a concentration camp right now; nevertheless, you may be suffering for Christ. If so, ask God to enable you to have His perspective. Pray for the supernatural ability to receive suffering as a gift that God will use to grow you in Him and allow you to *model the gospel* to a hurting and confused world. Remember, the book of Philippians is about changing your mind. Words related to the mind, to thinking, and to remembering occur almost three dozen times! This is the most prevalent idea throughout the letter. Today, God wants you to encounter Him anew and afresh so that you see your need to depend upon Him and His church. He wants you to maintain courage and perseverance in the most difficult circumstances. As you do so, He will use you in ways that you never thought possible. *Model the gospel* and see what Jesus Himself will do in and through you.

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Scripture References

Philippians 1:27–30

Acts 2:42–46; 4:32

2 Corinthians 11:23–29; 12:7–10

Job 1–2; Job 38–39

James 1:2–4

1 Peter 1:6–7

Hebrews 2:10

Study Questions

1. How does my church exemplify the gospel (1:27)? What specific strengths in the areas of unity, courage, and perseverance can I cite? What would people in the community say about my church? In what ways am I helping my church be a model to my community? How am I currently holding back my church from becoming all that she could be? Is there a pattern of behavior (e.g., laziness, carnality, bitterness) that I need to confess so I can make spiritual progress both individually and corporately?
2. What impresses me most about other Christians? What excites me most about a church? How do my answers differ from Paul's perspective? How can I begin to change the way I define a successful Christian life or church? Why does it matter how I judge a successful Christian or church? How will this change my perspective and behavior?
3. How do I "strive together for the faith of the gospel" with other believers (1:28)? Do I seek to maintain unity in the body of Christ? If so, how? In what ways do I exhibit love for the body of Christ? Would those who know me say that I love the church and uphold unity? Read Ephesians 4:1–6 and John 17.
4. Am I currently intimidated by an unbeliever (1:28)? If so, why does this individual intimidate me? What is the worst thing that this person can do to me? Read Matthew 10:32–33 and 2 Timothy 1:7–8. How can I overcome the fear of man? Is there a bold believer I respect who can help me courageously witness for Christ?
5. When (if ever) have I suffered for Christ (1:29–30)? What was this experience like? What has God taught me through the persecution that I have endured? Read 2 Timothy 3:12; Acts 14:22. How has suffering been a gift in my life? How can I begin to see the positive fruit that only occurs through suffering?

Notes

¹ William Yates: www.sermoncentral.com.

² Phil 1:27–30 forms one extended sentence in the Greek text.

³ In this short section, Paul moves from information (Phil 1:12–26) to exhortation (1:27–30). Richard R. Melick, Jr., *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*. The New American Commentary, Vol. 32 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1991), 88.

⁴ It is unfortunate that the word “only” (*monos*) is omitted from the NIV text.

⁵ The HCSB renders *monos* as “Just one thing.” What a great translation!

⁶ Fee states that *monos* controls Paul’s argument from Phil 1:27 to 2:18. Gordon D. Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*. New International Commentary on the New Testament series (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 161.

⁷ In Phil 1, Paul uses the word “gospel” (*euaggelion*) six times: 1:5, 7, 12, 16, 27 (twice). He also alludes to it in other terminology several more times: “to speak the word of God” (1:14); “preaching Christ” (1:15); “proclaim Christ” (1:17); “Christ is proclaimed” (1:18); “Christ shall even now, as always, be exalted” (1:20); “to live in Christ” (1:21).

⁸ Thielman writes, “Beginning with 1:27, verbs in the imperative mood are scattered evenly throughout the letter (2:2, 5, 12, 14, 29, 3:1, 2, 15, 16, 17; 4:1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 21).” Frank Thielman, *Philippians*. NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 90 n. 1.

⁹ Swift writes, “A ‘worthy walk,’ then, means specifically the achievement of true Christian unity among themselves, and steadfastness against enemies of the gospel.” Robert C. Swift, “The Theme and Structure of Philippians,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 141:563 (July–Sept 1984): 243.

¹⁰ The noun form of *politeuomai* is used in Phil 3:20: “For our citizenship [*politeuma*] is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.”

¹¹ The verb *politeuomai* only occurs elsewhere in the NT in Acts 23:1.

¹² Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, 161.

¹³ This word is especially appropriate to use in a letter to people who took great pride in their Roman citizenship (cf. Acts 16:12, 20–21).

¹⁴ Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, 162, suggests the adverb “worthily” points to a metaphorical interpretation.

¹⁵ The early Christians were first called “the Way” (cf. Acts 9:2; 18:25–26; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22). These believers were called to live worthy lives (cf. Eph. 4:1, 17; 5:2, 15; Col. 1:10; 1 Thess. 2:12).

¹⁶ We must remember Paul’s words: “Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, *as though* seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person” (Col 4:5–6).

¹⁷ Hawthorne suggests that *steko* “conveys the idea of firmness or steadfastness, or unflinching courage like that possessed by soldiers who determinedly refuse to leave their posts irrespective of how severely the battle rages.” Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians*. Word Biblical Commentary, ed. Ralph P. Martin, vol. 43 (Waco: Word, 1983), 56. Paul uses the term *stekete* seven times in his letters (Rom 14:4; 1 Cor 16:13; Gal 5:1; Phil 1:27; 4:1; 1 Thess 3:8; 2 Thess 2:15). In most cases it means to “stand firm” according to one’s conviction regarding their faith (i.e., belief in the Lord) and with the power the Lord provides (cf. Phil 4:13).

¹⁸ Ray Pritchard, “Joy in the Trenches” (Phil 1:27–30): www.keepbelieving.com/sermon/1998-10-04-Joy-in-the-Trenches/.

¹⁹ Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 57; Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, 90. It is also possible that *sunathleo* carries the imagery of the military campaign (BDAG s.v. *sunathleo*) or a gladiator’s fight in an arena (O’Brien, *Commentary on Philippians*, 150–1).

²⁰ *Sunathleo* is found elsewhere only in Phil 4:3.

²¹ The phrase “the faith of the gospel” can mean one of three things: “the faith that is the gospel” (genitive of apposition), “faith in the gospel” (objective genitive), or “the faith that originates from the gospel” (genitive of source). The final option is the best. See also O’Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, 152.

²² Quoted in Sam Gordon, *An Odyssey of Joy: The Message of Philippians*. Truth for Today Commentary Series (Belfast, Ireland/Greenville, SC: Ambassador-Emerald International, 2004), 64.

²³ Paul makes a strong point by using a Greek emphatic double negative *me...medeni* (“in no way”).

²⁴ Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 58, quoting the Liddell-Scott-Jones *Greek-English Lexicon*.

²⁵ O’Brien, *Commentary on Philippians*, 152; Martin, *Philippians*, 89.

²⁶ Gordon, *An Odyssey of Joy*, 65.

²⁷ The opponents could be (1) local Jews, although there was no synagogue mentioned in Philippi; (2) traveling Jewish opponents, as in Acts 17:13, or like the Judaizers of the Galatian churches (Phil 3:2–6); (3) local pagans (Acts 16:16–21); or (4) local civil authorities (Acts 16:21–40).

²⁸ The antecedent *touto* (“that”) in the phrase “and that from (or by) God” cannot be “sign” or “salvation (or saved)” both of which are feminine in the Greek text. This is a similar construction to Eph 2:8–9 where the *touto* (“this”) refers not to “grace” or “faith,” which are also feminine, but to the whole process of salvation.

²⁹ Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, 173, aptly writes, “One of the reasons most of us in the West do not know more about the content of vv. 29–30 is that we have so poorly heeded the threefold exhortation that precedes...”

³⁰ Silva, *Philippians*, 83 writes, “Verse 29 begins with the causal conjunction *hoti* (“for, because”), and it would be a mistake to ignore its significance. The conjunction *gar* (“for”) is used frequently as a transitional particle and thus one cannot always assume a causal function. Paul’s use of *hoti* rather than *gar* makes clear that 1:29 is intended as the reason or explanation for the surprising statement in 1:28, particularly the emphatic clause at the end, ‘and this from God.’”

³¹ The suffering that Paul has in mind “is specifically suffering ‘for the gospel,’ and not the more general ‘slings and arrows that flesh is heir to.’ (For Paul’s thoughts on that see Rom 8:17–30.)” See Bonnie B. Thurston and Judith M. Ryan, *Philippians and Philemon*. Sacra Pagina (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2009), 71.

³² The term “conflict” (*agon*) occurs in Paul’s letters four times (Col 2:1; 1 Thess 2:2; 1 Tim 6:12; 2 Tim 4:7) and the cognate verb *agonizomai* six times (1 Cor 9:25; Col 1:29; 4:12; 1 Tim 4:10; 6:12; 2 Tim 4:7). He uses it to refer to an intense struggle or wrestling, including both inner conflicts and outer pressures as well.

³³ People sometimes want to know why it ought to be considered a privilege to suffer for Christ. For starters, we might consider that he suffered for us. We might also think about the glory of entering into the sharing of His experience. But one of the reasons that is most important is that God uses sufferings in our lives to perfect us. For more, see C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (HarperCollins, 2001).

³⁴ See Jerry Sittser, *A Grace Disguised: How the Soul Grows Through Loss* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998). This is an outstanding book that chronicles the story of a Christian college professor who loses his wife and young daughter in an automobile accident.

³⁵ Here, to grant means “to give freely and graciously as a favor.” See BDAG s.v. *charizomai* 1.

³⁶ Don Sunukjian, “Where’s the ‘Gift Return’ Receipt?: How to Appreciate the Gift of Suffering” (Phil 1:27–30): www.preachingtoday.com.

³⁷ See also O’Brien, *Commentary on Philippians*, 158; Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, 71; Thielman, *Philippians*, 100–1; Silva, *Philippians*, 83.

³⁸ Paul describes his life during the time between these two imprisonments in 2 Cor 11:23–28: “Are they servants of Christ?—I speak as if insane—I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine *lashes*. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. *I have been* on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from *my* countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; *I have been* in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. Apart from *such* external things, there is the daily pressure on me *of* concern for all the churches.”