

Lookout mtn.conference 1973-02 Philippians

by Stan Ford

In this sermon, Stan Ford explores how Paul's imprisonment illustrates the joy and boldness found in living for Christ, even amidst suffering and adversity.

Duration: 42:12

Scripture: Philippians 1:12-14, Philippians 1:18, Philippians 1:20-21, Philippians 1:27, Philippians 1:29, Philippians 2:14-15

Topics: "Christian Service", "Persecution"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of taking action and using all of our faculties to help those in need. He highlights how the disciples in the Bible used their legs, eyes, ears, hands, and voices to minister to others. The speaker shares a powerful story of a man who was healed and able to walk, run, and work after receiving help from believers. He also discusses the impact of persecution and how it can actually lead to the spread of the gospel. The sermon concludes with a personal anecdote about a family who loved their son and the importance of showing kindness to others.

Transcript

We're going to pick up the story, if we may be, in the Eleventh Verse, we're a lot less lost this morning in the Eleventh Verse of the first chapter, which are by view of Christ unto the glory and praise of God. For I would ye could understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel, so that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace and in all other places. And many of the brethren in the Lord, who have seen confidence in my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

Some, indeed, preach Christ even of envy and strife, some also of good will. The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely supposing to add affliction to my bonds. But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defense of the gospel, what then? Notwithstanding in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached, and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.

For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness. As always, so now also, Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death.

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labor. Yet what shall I choose? I want not.

For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better, nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your fervor and joy of faith, that your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again. 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, and in nothing terrified by your adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation and that of God.

For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake, having the same conflict which he saw in me, and now here with thee in him." That's a word of prayer. For God and Father, we feel that we could not take back a word that's on our lips than the word we've passed. We dare to ask that thou, by thy Spirit, wilt be our teacher.

We beseech of thee that this may be the case. Would thou make thy word to live here in this service tonight in such a way that we shall never forget the challenge that came to our hearts to it in this day, or Jesus' day? Amen. Just a reminder that this morning we were thinking of Paul as the pastor reflecting, and we saw a little of his gracious salutation.

We carried awhile as we thought, indeed, of his grateful heart. You will remember that as we came down that glorious chapter, we thought also of his genuine sympathy. And then, with the heart of a pastor, a real pastor, we saw something of his godly concern.

But now we're taking a further step in our contemplation of this man and of the things that he has to bring before us, and we're going to think of him as a prisoner. We're going to remember that there here was a man away there in that Roman prison, and yet the wonder of it all is, in the midst of that prison, again and again he cries, I therein will rejoice. And I do rejoice.

All here is the prisoner rejoicing. So, what is it that enables a man to turn a prison into a palace? What is it that enables a man to turn those chains that are upon his legs and hands into the very emblems of victory? I reminded you that in the beginning of the history of the church of Tel Aviv, that there came what I dare to call this band of Christian commanders. Ten years had passed since first his feet saw those streets of Athens.

Now, as he lies in prison and thinks of the faith there, he's going to set before them, as he is going by the Spirit, to set before us a plan of campaign that will bring deliverance and victory to any creed, and to any company, and to any country, and to any class of man or woman. He's going to lay before us a plan of campaign that will turn men and women into those who are not defeated Christians. Those who confide and sin shall not have dominion over me.

Oh, it's important that we shall ponder together carefully these glorious words. Would you notice that, first of all, this wonderful prisoner rejoices? And he rejoices as he dares to remind us that victory by Christ is that which can be manifest even in our bones. Would I repeat that? That victory by Christ can be manifest even in our bones.

Later, he will remind us that victory through Christ can be manifest in our body. For me to live is Christ, he's going to cry. Then he'll take us a step further, and he'll remind us that victory can not only be manifest in our bones and in our body, but he's going to remind us, in the words that we've read, of his great boldness.

It's all that's happened that the victory of Christ can be manifest in our bones. Firstly, that the victory of Christ can be manifest in our bones. Let's see this man for a moment in this prison.

It's a Roman prison. You have noticed many times, I am sure, how the Apostle Paul finds himself witnessing before the last of great men. There was a time when he stood on trial for his life and looked up into the face of the last of the Jewish king.

Jews have never had a king since that day. Let me let you know a secret that's not a secret. They won't have a king until he who's righted in the reign shall reign.

And he should have been born witness before the last of the Jewish king. And now, he bears witness before the last of the Roman Caesar. For this Caesar and Nero, who was the Caesar of this day, was the last of the Roman Caesars.

There, as he witnesses to a great people that have left its mark upon the history of mankind, those Jewish people, as he stood before their last king, now he witnesses before the last Nero, the last Caesar. What a death thought that Nero was. I don't need, really, to take you back to your school days to us.

But you will remember that it was said of this man Nero, that when taught by the philosopher who was his great teacher, to read and to write, there came a time when he wrote his signature on the first death sentence, and it is said of him that he wept, crying root to God, that I had never, I had never learned to write. Yet, within a very few brief months, he had signed more death warrants than any Caesar that Rome had ever known. This was the man, you will remember, that first of all poisoned his own stepbrother.

And I mean put him to death. He divorced, and eventually killed his own wife, and took to himself to be his empress, a slave girl who loved him so much, that he thought a period of nine months, and then was kicked to death. This was the death thought who took Christians and dipped them in oil, and then tied them to posts that had been driven in the ground, set them alight, that at the right time he could have his favorite sport, and by the light of burning Christians, drive his chariot. The records of his deeds have been left in the history of mankind.

Yet, this apostle Paul dares to bear witness to him. He dares to cry that it is his thoughts that will enable him to witness. He was to witness to the soldiers of that day, for every morning there was chained to his body a Roman soldier.

And I know not the hour the soldier stood on duty, but if it was twice a day, two times a day, his audience would change. Two times a day he preached the same old sermon to a new congregation. He dared to say these psalms, all these psalms, and yet it is through these psalms that I have been enabled to manifest in the palace and in all places the message of the Christian faith.

I wonder why it is when you and I find the going hard, I speak of myself. I wonder why it is when we find the going hard that we're so apt to trot on our knees and ask that the Lord will take it away from us. Maybe I'm not speaking to you, I'm just speaking to myself.

I only know that here was a man who was every inch of him a man. This man, although somewhat feeble in speech, and there seems to be little doubt on that which he said in the epistles of the Galatians, somewhat feeble of body, yet in a state like this, in prison, he was prepared to rejoice. Did he look back over his days and remember that these psalms had walked great congregations that stand before him? Is there a man or a woman here who would really believe that Ananias, the high priest, would ever have sat in one of the services of those early churches? Yet there came a time when Paul was put in chains, and the people that came out to bear witness against him had an option, Ananias, the high priest, and he had to stand and listen to Paul preach.

Praise God for those bonds! Shall I tell you something, brother? Ananias will never stand before the great white throne, say no one told him. Is there a person here this very evening who would imagine for one moment that Felix, the Roman governor, would ever have sat down in a gospel hall to listen to the great all-preach? Because I think that's not what a high priest is, but that, by the way, I only feel is. I only feel that there, if he passed, he never would have gone there of his own free will, but there came a time when they put chains on the legs and hands of this man, Paul of Tartus, and Felix, the Roman governor, sat, listened to him preach, and I say, what a sermon! What a sermon! He shook his fist at him, and I said, hold on to those chains, brother.

Oh, indeed! But he said, as it were, do you really believe that Tertullus, the orator, would ever have gone to listen to this defied Jew? Why, Paul himself confessed that he was feeble of speech. You, Tertullus, the orator, if you want to know what orators and lawyers are apt to do, you go and read the story in the Acts again, and you'll see him how he starts off by flattering the person he's talking to, and saying that stand before you, because, under your rule, we enjoy great quietness. Liar that he was! Great quietness, the hardest people they'd ever conquered were the Jews.

Well, he tried to catch his ear. Do you think that man would have ever listened to the gospel, that they put chains on Paul's hands? He said, thank God for my bonds. I preached to Ananias, I preached to Tertullus, I say, there came a time when they took me before the last of those Jewish kings, and before Crippler, I bore witness and testimony, and before his wife, Bernice.

Brothers, sisters, is it not a fact that when tragedy comes, and the bonds are placed on our hands and feet, it's then that God, in his mercy, enables the gospel to come out to others, and we rejoice? Brother Hurley, would you mind me telling you? Most of you know that Brother Hurley and his wife lost their boy. Well, it's a very tragic circumstance. These days, day by day, just this very meal time, I sat at the table, and heard Hurley and his wife say, I had a greater opportunity, but you didn't give it to me.

The neighbors came, and were amazed, and stood with tears running down their faces. They were able to witness it, and that man who came to you, that's Brother Tom. Our dear brother, who stood in front of us, and said a little word of God's grace in his confidence.

It's not just the tragedy preaching, but there comes times of tiredness, dread, pain, and out of those bonds we cry, I rejoice in my suffering. Not rejoice because of it, but rejoice in it. And there is manifest, there is manifest, the very victory of Christ in our hearts, for it enabled us as it did all the great people of the world.

But it not only enabled him to preach the soldiers, you know, it enabled him to preach the saints. Sometimes that's the hardest thing to do. Sometimes soldiers will listen and say, quote you, but here were saints, and this is what the apostles said, many of the brethren in the Lord, resting confident in my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word with fear.

It is a contradiction of courage, I mean bold and fear. You don't talk about people who are afraid to get their hold. Ah, but you see there are all sorts of fears, isn't there? It's possible to be afraid of God, but that's not it.

It's possible to be afraid of men, but that's not it. There is a fear of God that every believer should know. I hope my children fear me.

I hope my grandchildren fear me. You know, I believe I'm right in saying that never once in their life have they ever shown any evidence of being afraid of me. But I hope they fear me.

I hope they fear doing anything that would disgrace my name. I hope they love us so much that they would seek to live their lives out that we would not be disgraced. I hope that you and I love the Lord Jesus so much that it is not because we're afraid of him, but because we fear bringing disgrace to his name, that we would do those things that are wrong.

I hope that we fear with a love even those that hate our Christ. Fear them with a love which says, I'm afraid that I'll never take the gospel to them. I must get a message.

I must tell men and women of Jesus. As you know, I have just, maybe that is a slight exaggeration, but a few months ago I returned from Athens. There are some things I can tell, there are some things I can't tell, and Mr. Wilson would have told you much more than ever I could, and he being in the middle of it would have known it so much better.

But I went up with dear Walter Gammon, and we stood in Bas Manach, and we stood at the end of a little path leading into the bush. Dear Walter Gammon, with a tear almost in his eyes and a break in his voice, he said, Sam, do you see that? There were a thousand graves, and almost every one of them it was. 1961, when what the African called a freedom fighter, and what the Portuguese called the terrorists, when the fighting started, they brought over from Portugal a large contingent of young militiamen who could neither speak the Chukwi or any of the languages of Angola, and could understand not a word of the so-called Portuguese that the Africans spoke.

One day they came into a mission station. On the Lord's Day morning, 250 and more brethren and sisters and their children were gathered around a table on which a loaf and a cup had been placed. And they marched into that mission station.

That assembly, maybe I should call it. They saw no evidence. All of them were Catholic.

They saw no evidence of burning candles or robes upon men who were priests. They saw no evidence of images that people found before, or saw no jars in which holy water had been placed. And all they saw were a crowd of Africans gathered in a hall, so desperately frightened were these young militia boys.

They brought it with a terrorist meaning that they just mowed them down with a machine gun. And I stood in Shillonga, and I saw an African brother across his boob's body, another Christian of course, who, as he scoffed at him, was taken by the soldiers. I saw him in the young day, and his chest to it, and his body was covered in those awful scars that were probably an inch of flesh that was not scarred.

We could see them on his face, but we weren't sure whether they were ceremonial scars, but his body was covered. He told us how they bought him, demanded that he should tell them where terrorists were, and he said there are no terrorists, we were just watching his face. And they drove the babies to him.

They said they'd kill him, and in his broken Portuguese, he said, will you let me pray? And being driven to his feet, he started to pray, and he didn't pray that they'd let him go, he prayed that God would save those soldiers. An ignorant African! Gee, I've got a feeling, no ignorant African at all, a saint of God. He allowed me to pray, and he prayed that God would save the soldiers, and the moment I came up, we could understand he spoke in Portuguese, and it's flattering to cope with.

He kicked him to his feet, literally kicked him to his feet, and told him to go, go out into the bush, and he said, if you ever come back, for no man could pray like that and be guilty, but if I were to come back, we'd kill you. And two years went by, and in the darkness of the night, completely naked, with all his clothes that come off him, he makes his way into the little mission station, goes through his hut where his wife is, and calls her name. And she thought he was dead, and it was some spirit in the night, and she cried in the tongue of her voice, and the village gathered around, and he found the greatest tragedy that his wife, thinking he was dead, had married someone else.

And I saw that dear brother, and he left that area of Beulah, and has walked hundreds of miles now on his own, with scars that will bear forever his love for Jesus. I saw him in Sholanda, as an elder in the meeting, seeking to help God. And I tell you, when I did, brethren, and I'm not ashamed of any one of them, I went back into the little hut I was staying in, and I wept.

I don't know what it means to be a Christian. And as we went, as some of you read in your magazines, we went into areas where there had been no missionaries since 1961. Are you listening? There had not been a missionary since 1961, but some of the brethren that had come from your district, some that had come from my country, had laid a foundation that was good, and without exception, every place we went, and we went into areas where no one had been since 1961, without exception, the assemblies had more than trebled in numbers.

More than trebled. Out of our homes, we rejoiced. We rejoiced.

Is it possible to know victory, you young Christians here? What are you doing with your lives? Are you knowing something of victory, even in the difficulties of high school, and even junior school? It's possible. For here, he stands and he bears his witness to the soldiers and to the faith. The witness goes to those other Christians, that the work of God might go on, the church of God might be proved to be the result of the seed of The apostle says, I've got bonds on me, I'm in chains in a prison, but there are many a Christian as the result of what I'm going through.

They are what's incompetent in my bonds, and are much more bold to speak the word with fear. Then he witnesses not only to soldiers, and he witnesses not only to saints, but he witnesses to sinners. And this thrills me.

You know, I'm going to shout hallelujah right at the beginning, because I don't know what I'll do at the end. Really, I am. I wonder how many of us would preach this stage, brethren and sisters, that the apostle there, he looks at his bonds, and he says, why these bonds have enabled me to preach to soldiers, and preach indeed to saints, and it's enabled sinners to hear the word, not even to my lips, because there are some people that sin me.

They hate me so much that they decide, in the city of Rome, that they'll start preaching the gospel, so that my authorities will say, it's all that man's fault in prison. We'll put more bonds on him. We'll make him suffer more.

They go out in contention to preach the gospel, and the apostle Paul says, listen, I don't mind if the gospel's preached of contention. Seeking to add to my bonds, I'll rejoice. Oh, brethren and sisters, what a lovely saviour we must have.

What a wonderful lord we must have, to enable anyone to say, look, you can go and say what you like, I like thee, you can do what you like, I don't mind how much I suffer, as long as my lord's talking about it. Or do not, mate? Sarah, forgive me, but I was reading this, preparing for these few days with you, and I was in a home not very far from here, where a certain, a main nameless, a certain evangelist had been having a city-wide crusade. And I'm always interested on how people preach the gospel, you see, because I hardly ever hear anyone else.

And I was asking about him, and I was hearing of some of the things that he'd been doing, and I was minding them as well. And however God can bless that. Do you know what I've been doing? I've been reading the press, the Philippines, preparing for this, for this conference.

And I get down and ask God to forgive me. Oh, I don't see the way other people do things that in my way. I wouldn't do many of the things these others do, but God give me the grace to rejoice that Jesus is spoken well of.

And that Christ is being upheld, and Paul said, even if it's preached of compassion, this is the road to victory. Oh, brethren, sisters, we need this, don't we? We need it even in the day in which we live. God has had to teach me this lesson, and take me up big steps strategically as well.

But I want to praise God that something's going on for God. And I want to walk the path he had me walk. Though it may be a narrow path for me, that's the path I want to walk, but I'm not going to be critical of those that don't walk that path.

I want to praise God, praise God, that the gospel's being preached. So we will see how this glorious victory of Christ enabled him to rejoice in his bonds. And then not only in his bonds, but we find that the victory by Christ was manifest in his body.

And this is a very real thing, isn't it? Verse 20, Christ shall be magnified in my body. He goes on, verse 21, for me to live is Christ, and to die, hallelujah, it's more of Christ. It's gain.

In my body, he says, Christ is going to be, not manifest here, but magnified. Magnified. We sang, did we not, that little chorus, wasn't it this morning, Mr. Songleader, sir? Magnify the Lord with me? Oh, a little after I talked about that, didn't I? We forgot to look at that, but we did sing it, didn't we? Magnify the Lord with me.

No, we didn't sing it. Oh, you ought to sing it. Blessed man of Calvary.

Do you know, we were teaching the chorus to the children on the sands of Hoylake, where I've been growing up for many years. And at the end of the gathering, a boy came up to me and said, understand, that chorus we sang, magnify the Lord with me. I'd never heard that one before.

Oh. Well, Jimmy, what does it mean, do you think, to magnify the Lord? Do you know what he did? Standing on the shore. Well, he said, understand, you know what it means.

He put all those fingers in his hand and he goes, magnify the Lord. Magnify the Lord. He's going with sections later.

Come on, he's finding the clue. I don't suppose it means that, or maybe it does, does it? Magnify. We couldn't magnify the Lord, could we? We can't make Christ any bigger than he is? He's the Eternal Son of the Eternal Father, glory to God.

We can't make him any bigger than he is. But I say, he can have more of us, can't he? That men and women see more of him in us. Oh, that we might be as a magnifying glass.

That Christ in us may shine out to others, and men and women may see a God magnified. Oh, he says, for me to live is Christ. No, just in case, I don't know, just in case there's a person here tonight that's never got life in Christ.

Let me remind you, he's not saying this, but it's still true. He's not saying, for me to have life is Christ. Not for me to have life is Christ.

That's true, but that's not the verse. You want life, you can have life in Christ. But if there's someone here tonight that's never bowed your knee to Jesus Christ, do you know what the Bible says about you? Please don't come to me afterwards.

Don't put a question in the question box. I don't know what to do if you disagree with it. Get on your knees before God and tell him you don't believe him.

This is what God says of you, you're dead in trespasses and sins. If you don't know Christ, you're dead in trespasses and sins. And a man is condemned already because he believes not.

But isn't it wonderful that there is life in Christ? Do you remember that silly story? I expect I told it here the last time I was here. Here we go, I've told it around the district over the years. Do you remember that silly story I tell of a man who read the newspaper like my wife reads it? Like your wife does as well, I think.

No, no, always starts the same way, birth, death, and marriage. And the man was reading down the birth, death, and marriage column, you remember. And as he looked down, oh, oh, Harry, oh, that kind is.

Oh, a little boy, oh, very nice. Oh, a little girl, not bad, you know the sort of remarks you pass. And then having looked at the marriage in the birth column, he suddenly looked at the death column, and his eyes nearly popped out of his head, and he read, We regret to announce that we have passed the death law.

And there was his name. Suddenly he asked, and there was his address. But he wasn't there.

Off he went for the newspaper. And after going to this one and that one, eventually you remember, the assistant editor came down, full of apologies, sir, we don't know how it happened, we printed it in good faith, sir. But don't you worry, we'll put it right, sir.

Put it right? What are you going to do? We'll put your name in the birth column tomorrow morning. And I'll tell you something. Oh, we've smiled at brethren, sisters, that's what Jesus does.

He's written our name in the death column, dead in transgressions and sin. And hallelujah, he wants to write our name in the Lamb's Book of Life. He wants to give us a new life, and do you want to know how you can get that life written? Here it is.

1 John 5 and 1. Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. You trusted your life to the one whose name is Jesus, the one who is the Christ. You come to him, oh listen, we can get life in Christ.

But that's not what Paul's saying. Paul is not saying I can get life in Christ. He says, for me to live is Christ.

For me to live is Christ. Day by day, to live a life that took thunder, a life with a capital L, to use the words of Vincent Clegg, for youth with a capital Y, to have life and then abundance, then Jesus Christ needs to dwell within us. And he says, I tell you what I'll do, brethren and sisters, I will magnify the Lord in my body.

I'll allow him to live his life out to me day by day. How can that happen? There's school, there's college, there's work, there's home. Allow Jesus Christ to live his life out to me.

Yet is not this a possibility? Come with me for a moment, will you? See the miracle that was performed that day at the gate, that beautiful gate of the temple. There was a man who could neither walk nor run, seated outside of the beautiful gate, so near the blessing of God, just a gate between him and all that was bespoken in that temple. But there he sat, begging by the roadside.

Do you remember a few men, Ted? They didn't have any gold, they didn't have any school, and as far as human education is concerned, they were not academic. But I tell you what they did have. They had a pair of legs, and so they used those legs when they walked towards the temple.

And they had a pair of eyes, and they saw a man in need, and they looked at him. And they had a pair of ears, and they said, well, if we listen to what he's saying, I wonder what it means. And they had hearts, and their hearts went out to him.

And they had hands, and they stretched their hands towards him. And they had voices, and they spoke to him. Silver and gold had we none, but such as we have, did we believe.

In the name of Jesus, have us stand up to you. And they used their eyes, and they used their ears, and they used their hands, and they used their feet, and they used their legs, and they used their voice, and they used their heart, and they used all they had. Shall I tell you something? That night, man who could never walk, and now could walk, never run, now could run, never walk, work, now could work.

I've got a feeling that that night that man would say, I've never seen Jesus. They did it in his name, but they used their hands for him. For me to live is Christ.

If you'd like to come to me afterwards and discuss minor theological points, oh, I'll tell you a dozen other things it means, but I'm not interested at the moment in minor theological points. I'm interested in a body that's going to manifest and magnify the Lord. Is not this what the Apostle meant when he wrote to the church in Rome and tell? I wonder how many of those Christians in Rome knew what he wrote to the church in Rome.

But is not this what he meant when he dared to say in his proud chapter, present your body, the living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service, and do not conform to this world? Don't let the world press you into its mould, says the Apostle. Don't let the world press you into its mould. Do not conform to this world, being transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may be... Oh, I say, brethren, I wonder if those Christians at Rome knew what he'd written to the church at Philippi, what I'd exhorted you to do, saying, I've a pastor.

That, I speak for myself, you remember the words of my old friend Bill Patterson, you remember what Billy used to say, every time you point your finger at anyone, point three fingers at yourself. Let me point three fingers at myself and say, that no preacher has a right to stand in the restroom and preach. Well, he himself would not do it.

The Apostle lies in prison. He said, my body? Oh yeah, he's been magnified in my body. You Roman Christians, present your body.

You Christians in Philippi, don't forget to use it. And for us here, the people. And then he goes further.

He said, for me to live is Christ and to die? Hallelujah. It's gay. He's that one.

He's gay. He's more or less. I don't know very much about heaven, do you? Oh, you wouldn't tell anyone, would you? No, I'd hate to be able to be tried for excursions on heaven, but I don't know much about heaven.

I know lots of things that are not there. You know, there's no death there. And hallelujah, there's no distress there.

And there's no danger there because they keep the gate open. There's no one in heaven who says, shut the gate, someone might come in. No, no.

I say, there's no danger there and there's no distress there and there's no death there, and I'll tell you something else, there's no disease there. Some of you were talking to me today about the arthritis. Praise God, it won't be up there.

Finished with there. And I'll tell you something more, there's no devil there either. You need to shut up.

I say, brethren, for me to live is Christ and to die. More or less. Absent from the body, at home.

At home a little. Just this week, just this week, it's early then, someone came to me, and don't ask me how they haven't heard, but someone came to me and said, Sam, the last time I heard you, you were over here with Phil Patterson. Well, that was 1950, 51, wasn't it? You know what this man said to me? He said, how is it? Well, what is that? I said, he's never been so well in his life.

What happened? Never been so well in his life. Oh, my Lord. For me to live is Christ and to die is more.

Oh, brethren and sisters, victory by Christ will be manifest in our bones. It will be manifest in our body. I must rush to the club, for my time is up.

The victory in Christ will be manifest in our boldness as well. Our boldness as well. Oh, how the Apostle drives it home with all his heart.

As in verse 26 it says, that your rejoicing may be more abundant in Christ Jesus for me by my coming to you again, only let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ. Would you note it, praying? Pour in that boldness. Would you note it, first of all, that boldness was seen in their conduct, verses 26 and 27, and seen in their cooperation in the closing portion of verse 27.

It was seen in their conduct, your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ, your conversation be as becometh the gospel. It's not necessary for me to remind you that the Greek word translated in our

Orthodox version, conversation, is a peg word for your manner of life. What's your manner of life? Of course, that incurs a harness and clothes.

A manner of life. You can tell how a man lives by what he says. Of course you can.

Oh, that we might boldly conduct ourselves in this way, that men may rejoice, then by their cooperation. Verse 27, stand fast in one spirit, one mind, striving together, striving together for the faith of the gospel. When one speaks of striving, one thinks indeed of something where two folk are striving one against another, but it's not one against another, it's striving together.

Brethren, sisters, if you will pardon me for saying this, if you know the congregations, I doubt it. I don't gather with them because they're the nicest of folks, but sometimes they're not. I don't gather with them because they're the most hospitable of folks, but sometimes I don't want you to stay in hotels.

I don't gather with them because they're the nicest of people, or the kindest of people, or the most hospitable of people. I don't gather with them because they're the only Christians that I can say to. I gather with them because after thirty-five years of the daily reading of the word of God, I love them with all my heart.

I want to spend my life in seeking to serve Christ and serve them. I love them with all my heart, but I make no apology for that. I only know this, and that must be a Christian that I love.

If only we would strive together for the work of the gospel more than striving against it. If only we could dare, dear folks, if only we could dare, if I let this alone, if it means long marital, in my body I'll allow you to live your life as you mean, and I promise it will be all for thee, for the purpose of the gospel is God-made. Lord, I am sure to say that Christ is God-made.

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