

Philippians 1:27-30

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[0 : 00] So, I'm really privileged and honored to be here tonight and speak to y'all just for a little bit. So, just kind of going back to what Alex is saying and what Nathan was saying, it's like, man, it's not about any of us up here.

Like, I'm just glad that we get to really hear the word tonight, and I'm honored to study it. So, the cool thing about tonight is we're going through Philippians, and I believe that, like, man, as we're all in here, like, I know that we're all, like, some of y'all are from Truett, and some of us are from North Georgia, and we've all got, like, different walks of life.

And the cool thing is, is that, like, tonight the word is relevant to every stage that we're in. It's like, so I believe, like, man, the word has something to say to us. It has something to say to me. It's been speaking to me all week.

So, it's cool. And so, I think we're going to be kind of talking to two different groups of people tonight, and I think it's going to be, I think everyone's going to be able to take something away from tonight. And so, kind of the way that I'm following up Clay is we're doing Philippians.

So, we've been doing one, and we've been going through the text. And the way that we do it is we do expositionally, where we just go verse by verse. And that's good, because it leaves less room for me just to throw in my own opinions.

[1 : 05] The other side of that is, like, topically. So, you have, like, topical preaching where we'll talk on, like, a certain topic, and that's good. And I love that. I have no problem with it. But I'm just not that creative. So, I just get to go.

Y'all are stuck with no creativeness from me, and we just get to go straight into the text. But I think it's cool, because it leaves, it doesn't allow us to kind of insert our own opinions there.

I think it's so important that, like, Nathan's been talking about this a lot, is, you know, as we're in college, like, we're being told so many different things right now, and it's hard to decipher. Okay, so what's true? Like, there might be a little bit of truth in it, and I can add my own story to it, but it might not be completely true.

And so, as we're at college, as we're hearing so many different things to us, like, man, what the world is telling us that it's okay to live by. Man, we get to look at God's Word and be like, okay, so what does it say?

So, as we go through tonight, we're just going to go in verse by verse by verse, which is cool. I'm really excited about it. So, we're in Philippians 1, 27 through 30.

[2 : 06] And so, I'm just going to do a quick little recap of last week. So, last week, Clay was speaking. Clay's not here, so he's in Hiawassee. So, I was the last resort.

Y'all are stuck with me tonight. And so, Clay, last week, so we're just going to pick up kind of where he left off. So, he said in verse 19 through 26, he's talking about this huge section.

Like, if we get to really read the Word, and we really, like, understand what's going on, there's this huge claim that's made. So, if we just, like, sometimes I think, like, you've been stuck in church long enough to where you, like, we'll read certain texts.

And, uh... I'm kind of nervous over there. Sorry. So, we'll read certain kind of texts. And we're in this, like, Christian mode of, like, okay, like, I know how to read verses. Like, I've been reading the Bible for a while.

And so, we kind of read over text, and we're like, okay, yeah, to live is Christ, you know, or to die is Christ, and to live is... or to live is Christ, and to die is gain. So, we read over those verses, and we're like, yeah, yeah, yeah, that's cool.

[3 : 07] But, man, am I the only one here who has, like, a really hard time saying, like, amen to that? Like, yes. So, if we're translating that, Paul is literally saying, it would actually be better for me

to die because I get to go be with Christ.

But it's also okay for me to live because I get to keep sharing the gospel. And so, that's a tough text to say amen to. Like, I mean, you know, if we just think about what are all the things that, like, I really look forward to.

And I think, you know, a lot of us are in the same boat. Man, I can tell you the things that I'm really excited about. I'm really excited about getting married one day and, you know, having a family and doing life. I'm really excited about those things.

And so, what happens a lot of times is we look forward to those things so much that we, you know, start to value those things, like, above Christ. And so, you know, like, am I, I guess the question that I have to ask myself and that we all have to ask ourselves tonight is it's like, okay, would I rather, like, on the day of your wedding, like, you're ready to get married, you've been going through all the planning of everything, and you're psyched.

And that's, I'm just using this as an example. But, and then if you have this opportunity, like, okay, Christ can come back right now. Would you take it? And if we're just like, it's hard to be like, yes, I'm so stoked about that.

[4 : 16] Christ, come back right now. Like, I'm okay. This marriage is cool. I'm looking forward to it. But, and I think if we're honest, that is a hard thing to say amen to. Like, that's really hard.

And so, it's a really good litmus test of, like, how important Christ is to us. Like, how badly do we want Jesus to come back right now? And I think there's so many things that we're looking forward to that we sometimes put those on this pedestal above Christ.

So, that was last week. Really heavy. Really heavy. And then we're going into this week, which, I don't know, it doesn't get much better. It's, I mean, as far as how tough it is to say. So, I'm going to read through the text.

I'll do a quick little intro, and then we'll pray. Okay. So, he says in verse 27, he says, This is a clear sign to them of their destruction.

I think I'll just go ahead and pray right there.

[5 : 35] I think that's a good point before I really start blabbering on. Father, thank you so much for tonight. Thank you for just the opportunity to be here. Thank you for every single person that is in this room. Lord, I know you drew them here for a reason.

Not because I had anything good to say, but because we get to really come to you and just understand and hear from your word tonight. So, Father, I just pray that you would take away all my own opinions and my own thoughts and that we would really kind of understand what you're saying in this verse to us and we would allow it to change our lives.

Father, I pray that you would humble us tonight to see how glorious your gospel is and how much we need you, Father. We praise you. Just give us clarity. Give us attention tonight. We praise you in Christ's name. Amen.

Okay. So, the main thing I'm going for tonight, like the main question we're talking about, is he says in this first verse, he says, Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ. So, if we stop right there, that's this huge statement.

That's a huge question. Like, okay, only let your manner of life be in a way that's worthy of the gospel. So, right there, that is a huge, that's a huge thing to say. And so, I think a lot of times we can kind of miss, we can not understand exactly what this verse is saying.

[6 : 43] So, what do we mean by that? Like, what do I mean when I say, when Paul says, Let your life be in a manner that's worthy of the gospel. So, let's define that a little bit better so we understand what we're talking about tonight.

So, I want to talk about, like, okay, what are we not saying? Because, I want to, like, let's get that clear, okay? When Paul says, Only live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel.

Paul is not saying, Be a good person, do good things, recycle, and don't watch R.A. movies. But, a lot of the times, like, man, that is, I mean, let's take out, let's take out, like, a few of those hokey things.

But, it's like, man, honestly, that's what really, like, if we're to think of, like, the American Christian life, that's what it can really kind of boil down to. It's like, okay, I'm not doing these things, and I'm being good, and I'm not watching these R.A. movies unless they're violent and they're war-themed. And so, it really depends on, like, how, and so, if it's not saying that, if Paul's not just saying, Be a good person, then what is he saying?

[7 : 42] And so, it depends on how we define, like, who Jesus was. So, let's reread that verse, but let's substitute the word gospel. So, if you've grown up in church, you know that gospel means good news.

So, only let your manner of life be worthy of the good news of Christ. And so, what's the good news? Man, before, I'm not just going to spend 20 minutes talking about what the good news of Christ is. We're going to go over it, like, just for a second.

But, if y'all could turn to Romans 3. I don't think y'all will be flipping many places tonight. So, we're going to start in 21 and go through 26.

Just so that we can kind of understand a little bit more clearly, like, what is Paul talking about when he says the good news? So that we're all on the same page here. Okay, so the good news.

Man, this is awesome. Verse 21. But now the righteousness of God, so meaning, talking about Christ, has been manifested apart from the law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it. The righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, for all who believe.

[8 : 46] For there is no distinction. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith.

This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine foreparents, he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just, and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

So, in a nutshell, that's exactly what we're talking about. That's the good news of Christ, is that everyone has sinned. Like, there's not a single person, Mother Teresa, is in the same boat as us. Gandhi's in the same boat.

Martin Luther King, Jr. We're all in the same boat. Adolf Hitler has put, like, everyone in there. And the good news is that, so we've all fallen short, but it's not just that we're left to our own devices. It's that, man, God made its way through Christ.

And so, he provided an opportunity for us to be justified. So, that's through Jesus. So, that is the good news. That's what we're talking about. That's what we're defining it as. So, it's really important, and it's almost like, man, it has to be, like, really put in our heads, like, over and over again, that the gospel is not just about abstaining from certain things.

[10 : 00] Saying, like, no, I'm not going to party that way. I'm not going to watch that movie. And I'm not going to listen to that music. And I'm not going to, you know, list it off. Like, but a lot of times, that's kind of what the Christian life boils down to.

Like, we see that with people. It's like, well, they're just not doing certain things. Like, okay, is that what it's all about? Because if that's what it's all about, if it's just about abstaining from things, then, like, man, I think a lot of us here don't want a part of that.

That's not enough. That's not enough to save us. That's not enough to motivate us. And so, if we did that, we would miss out on the whole point of the gospel completely. If we just stopped there and said, let's do these good things, and let's stop doing these bad things, then we'd miss out completely.

So, this question that I'm asking, I'm like, man, so, let your manner of life, like, live it in a way that's worthy of the gospel. Why does it matter to you right here? Like, okay, we're all in this room. Like, why does it matter to us as college students?

Most of us, like, most of us here are college students. So, the reason why it matters to us is if you think about the way you've lived your life, is that our ethics are constantly changing. Okay, so, you're in middle school, and you, like, there's certain ways that you said, like, okay, when I'm in high school, I won't do this.

[11 : 08] Or maybe in high school, you looked at people, and you saw people, like, partying, or drinking, or sleeping around, or something, and you're like, oh, I promise, like, I'm never going to be that way. And so, we set this, like, standard, and so, then we get to high school, and we're like, oh, well, that's actually all right.

Like, I don't, like, that music, it's okay. Like, that's not so bad. I'm okay listening to that music. And then we get to college, and we're like, ah, that person's doing it. And so, I'm okay with that. So, our ethics, we're constantly changing.

So, even when you get married, your standards of, like, what's right and wrong, it's going to change again. And it's kind of like this cycle. And so, that's changing. And so, kind of what happens is we've

made this change from, like, our ethics, where we thought this was wrong at one point, and now we're kind of in college, and there's this whole mesh of different cultures and different beliefs, and we're making compromises.

Because Paul is saying, let your life be lived in a way that's worthy of the gospel. But the thing is that we're making compromises that we never said we would. So, we're no longer living our lives in a manner worthy of the gospel.

But the thing is that, like, as Christians, if you're in this room right now, and you're calling yourself a Christian, we're called not to be conformed by the ways of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of our mind. So, like, how do we do that?

[12:23] How do we do that? Like, how do we live our lives in a manner worthy of the gospel? That is such a huge claim. That's a huge thing to ask of us, especially as college students, since everything around us is being, we're being told different things.

So, man, verse 27, back to Philippians. So, he says, you know, only let your manner be worthy of the gospel of Christ.

And so, this word manner can also translate to conduct. So, the Greek word for that is, Paul's actually kind of talking about something a little bit deeper than just your conduct. So, background on Philippians is that this is the book of Philippians, and sometimes we don't understand exactly what that means.

Because what's going on is that Paul is, like we said at the very beginning of Philippians' study, is that, like, Paul is under house arrest, and so he's writing this letter to the Philippian church. And so, what would happen a lot of times is, like, you'd have these people in this room, you'd have, like, the whole Philippian church.

And so, Paul would write this letter, and so there's a guy, literally, like, what we're reading right now, there's a guy standing up there, and he's like, okay, so the elders are reading it out to the church. So, they're reading this to the church in Philippi. And so, Philippi, like Paul, like Clay has talked about, is actually under Roman rule.

[13:33] So, they're considering themselves Roman citizens. And for them, that's a good thing. They're like, okay, I'm a Roman citizen, I can have claim to this, and to this, and this. Like, Rome took really good care of their cities.

And so, a lot of these people, like, they pride themselves on, oh, I'm a Roman citizen. Like, here, maybe not as much, but we're like, I'm an American. Unless you're saying that in a sarcastic way. You know. So, they're really proud of their Roman citizenship. It's like, okay, they consider themselves as a Roman. And so, Paul is saying, let your manner be worthy of the gospel of Christ. So, he's actually calling them to something even greater than that. We can kind of know that for certain by going to, like, just flipping over a page and going to Philippians 3.20.

So, he says, in Philippians 3.20, he says, But our citizenship is in heaven. And from it, we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. So, Paul is actually saying, you're not, yeah, you're a Roman citizen, you're here.

[14:32] But you're really a citizen of the kingdom. And so, Paul is kind of, like, asking them, like, just kind of forget about your Roman citizenship just for a second. And remember that you're called to an even greater citizenship, which is in heaven.

And so, as we kind of go on with this, like, I'm just kind of reiterating that Paul is calling them away from that and to this heavenly citizenship.

And so, I'm just kind of reiterating, like, and this is, there's just, like, we're not called in the gospel just to abstain from certain things. It is not a life of just not doing certain things.

It's so much more than that. And so, I'm just coming back to that main question of, are you tonight living your life in a manner that's worthy of the gospel? Like, so, as an individual, are you, am I living my life in a manner that's worthy of the gospel?

So, there are two categories. So, you're in one category and you're in the other tonight. So, I think there's, the first category is people who, okay, yeah, you once did live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel.

[15:34] Okay, you, like, maybe in high school, we were, like, you know, if, as anyone grew up in the Bible Belt, you were in church, you were involved, you were a part of your church body, and then something happened to where we came to college and we made one compromise after another, and then we're no longer, we can no longer, like, put ourselves in this boat of, well, yeah, I'm living my life in a manner worthy of the gospel.

We're actually far from it, and we've actually run from that, and we're making so many more compromises than we ever thought we would. And then, or, you're kind of in this other boat where Paul's in, and he says in 3.12, he says in this next chapter, he says, not that I've already obtained this, so all these things that we're talking about, he says, not that I've already obtained this, or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. And so, you're either in this boat of, okay, well, I've left the time that I was walking, like, in a manner worthy of the gospel, and now I don't even know where I am anymore. Or, you're kind of with Paul, where you're like, man, I'm not perfect, and, I mean, yes, I can say, like, yes, I'm living my life in a manner worthy of the gospel, but I kind of, I think the things that we're going to go through tonight are, okay, well, do you have the right motivation?

What is, like, motivating you to live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel? Are you in the right motivation, or are you burnt out? Like, have we been doing this, and we're not actually doing it for the right motivation anymore? We kind of need to have, like, a heart check of, well, why am I actually doing the things that I'm doing?

Are we doing it because that's the right thing to do, and we know that it's going to make our parents happy, and it's going to keep us safe, and it's just the thing that we've been doing since we've been in middle school, and we never really asked why.

[17:16] So, that's kind of the direction that we're going for tonight. And so, I'm just going to go back, and so we're going to start, and we're just going to kind of go down. I promise I won't take that long. Okay, so, I kind of want to go deeper into this point of, like, okay, so why is this question of living your life in a manner worthy of the gospel, why is that, like, so hard to live?

Like, I say that it's hard to live out, like, yeah, it's hard to say, you know, to live is Christ and to die is gain. Like, that's a hard thing to say, but why am I saying that to live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel, that's a hard thing?

Well, I think the reason why that is, because unless you live in a commune, somewhere that I don't know about, and you're in your holy huddle, and we're just hanging out with Christians all day, and we're not really listening to the world, we're not paying attention to the world, then, unless you're there, well, we can talk afterwards, maybe, but, like, unless you're in a commune, then you are in this college environment, or you're just in the world, like, as soon as we get out of college, we're going to still kind of be under this extraordinary pressure to make compromises.

And we need to realize, like, we are under this extreme amount of pressure to not live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel. Actually, we're called to live our lives in a manner that's worthy of culture.

And so if we don't believe that, first of all, we need to wake up to that, and, like, I pray, like, let's wake up to the fact that culture is saying, live your life in a manner that's worthy of what we're saying. And so the things that we're going to find, what the world tells us to live our life in a manner of, it would be how much money you make.

[18:49] So when you get out and you get a job, how much money are you making? What about the car that you drive? The person that you're married to? The family that you raise? These are kind of long-term, like, down the road, because we're not really there yet.

But it's like, man, or even just right now in college, like, okay, what fraternity are you a part of? Like, what sorority are you a part of? Like, how involved are you in campus? How much money are you making right now?

Like, man, culture is bombarding us with, like, just different ideas of, okay, this is how you live your life in a manner that's worthy of us. So, I kind of think that what happens to a lot of us is we say, well, okay, maybe I'm not living my life, like, in a manner worthy of the gospel the way that Swanson's defining it.

But, I mean, yeah, okay, I'm not, like, reading my Bible daily, I'm not, like, involved in the church, and I'm not, like, disciplining myself in, like, godliness or whatever, like, they'll say. So, maybe I'm not, like, going ham on the gospel right now, but, man, I'm not, like, sleeping around, like, as much as that person, or, like, I'm not drinking as, like, that guy really drinks a lot.

Like, man, and we hear it all the time. Like, you hear people constantly comparing themselves, like, well, I'm not as bad as that person. And so, kind of what happens is we believe that we're in this place of neutral ground.

[20:05] Like, I talk, I think it's the most, it's the scariest thing, because, like, I talk to a lot of my friends, and they're in the same boat of, like, well, they believe that they're in this neutral territory.

Okay, I'm not doing this.

I'm not going and sharing the gospel all the time. I'm not reading my Bible. I'm not, I'm not going crazy with the gospel. But I'm not, like, straight up, like, you know, doing drugs and snorting cocaine or something like that. So, they just kind of, like, believe, like, well, I'm neutral.

Like, I can stay in this neutral area of the territory where I'm not really, like, going forward, but I'm not really, like, taking steps back. And so, what happens is we believe this mindset, and then three years later, like, where we thought we would never be, we wake up, and we're like, how did we even get here?

Like, we have this, like, aha moment. We're like, I don't even know what I'm doing anymore. Like, how did I get from such a place where I thought that I wasn't ever going to be, and now I'm here? And so, I don't think it's, I don't think anyone here would be like, okay, yeah, I just woke up one night, and I just decided, I woke up one morning and just decided, I'm done with this gospel thing. Like, I'm done with church.

[21 : 04] Like, I'm walking away from it. Like, this isn't, this isn't meaningful. Like, I really, sometimes, but for the most part, I believe that no one's going to, like, really make that much of a conscious decision to be like, what you got, world?

Let's do this. Like, I just don't think that's going to happen. And so, what happens, though, what I believe, is that we have this neutral territory where we're like, yeah, I'm not really doing these things. And so, we just start taking really slow, subtle, like, inch by inch steps back.

And we wake up, and we just realize, like, man, what has happened? I wanted to give a shout-out to Clay, because he let me, he, he, well, he ran out of options, and so he had to let me speak. But, so Clay's like a huge history buff, so I have to give him a history shout-out. So, generals believe that if their soldiers were not advancing towards enemy lines, like, if they weren't taking ground, that they were actually losing it.

So, so generals were constantly advancing their armies, like, saying, okay, keep going. It's not, like, they, they rarely had them just, like, camp out and just, like, stay a certain place. It was kind of, like, always, like, trying to figure out, okay, well, let's wait for these reinforcements to come so we can finally take this.

[22 : 11] It was kind of, it wasn't, it was never this, all right, well, we got that hill. Like, man, we stormed Normandy. Let's, Normandy, let's just, like, chill here for a while. This beach is great. Like, that's not, like, man, we just kept advancing.

That was for you, Clay. So, so you're in that boat. There's one group of us that's in that boat of, like, okay, the compromises and slowly, we're not taking ground.

We're actually, like, I mean, even, I'm really kind of more of a real world example of, like, divorce. I don't, I rarely think that anyone, like, you know, gets involved in a marriage and they're, like, this thing's gonna be great.

I'll probably give it three years of my best shot and then we'll call it quits in about five after we have kids. Like, no one, no one's gonna marry that person anyways. It's kind of this, like, and so, I mean, it's like, how do we, so the question is, like, how do we, how, how, if we're all susceptible to it, if we're all sinful and we're all fully capable of the same thing, like, I'm so capable of divorce just as much as the next guy is.

And so, I think what happens is that we believe that we're not. We believe that, well, I'm not going to ever get a divorce. I've seen the way it's wrecked. Like, my life or my friend's life. And so then we get in this marriage and we're not really advancing the marriage either.

[23 : 25] We're just kind of like, you know, like, I mean, I'm married now and, you know, she's cool, like, we'll talk. And then there's things kind of, you get distance and it's just like, day by day and you just don't even really know where you are anymore. So I think that kind of happens, like, spiritually and then also, like, man, in our marriages.

So that's kind of like an example if y'all can, if that makes sense to y'all as far as what I'm talking about. Or, and so I'm kind of going a little bit more to, like, man, how do we get burnt out or low on fuel?

So we agree with Paul where he says, you know, not that I'm perfect or that I've already obtained these things, but I'm making strives towards it. But then at the same time, like, man, we have this huge view of Paul.

But, man, Paul struggled with sin just as much as the next guy did. If we're going to look at Romans 7, 15 through 25. Okay.

So I'll pick up in verse 15. So Paul's, like, talking to the Romans, kind of the same thing with, like, the Philippian church of, like, reading the letters so the Romans are reading this letter and Paul says to them, for I do not understand my own actions.

[24 : 42] For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law that it is good. So now it is no longer that I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.

For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.

Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. And he says, so I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand.

For I delight in the law of God in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.

Wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of death?

Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin. Okay, so Paul says this and we're kind of in the same boat.

[25 : 53] If you're not in this other boat that we just kind of talked about, you're in this boat where we have this internal struggle and we're just like, man, what am I even doing here? Like, I want to live out the gospel in a manner that's worthy. I want to live my life in a manner that's worthy gospel, but I have such a hard time doing it because I still see sin creeping close at hand.

Okay, so we come back again to the main question. We're about to, but I'm not going to be one of the four flights and then we'll actually be done. So I'm glad. So the question is, how does a college student in the United States of America live this out?

I will not be answering this. I think Paul will be able to do a good enough job to where I won't actually have to say much. Okay, so let's pick it up in 27. He says, Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm.

So, okay, so the first reason, if you're taking notes tonight, the first reason that we're not living out our lives in a manner worthy of the gospel is we have the wrong motivation. So let's pay attention to that verse.

He says, So whether I come and see you or I'm absent, I may hear that you're standing firm in the gospel. And so I think a lot of the times what a lot of us have allowed to happen in our lives is that, well, I mean, Paul is first of all saying, okay, if I'm there, please, like, like, stand firm in the gospel.

[27 : 13] But if I'm not, also stand firm in the gospel. Because Paul does not want their motivation to be the fact that he's there. And so, man, either us or, like, a friend that we know or somewhere along the line, like, some of us, like, we let our motivation for living our lives in a manner worthy of the gospel be because our pastor, our youth pastor was, like, super, like, he had a lot of charisma.

Or he was, like, man, he was a great guy. Like, he always made me laugh. He was really cool. Or, like, man, it pleased our parents or our friends. And, like, okay, so we'll go on mission trips. And we know that it's really, really good.

And so we have this motivation of, I'm going to live the gospel because my friends are doing it. My pastor loves me. My parents are proud of me. And we have this wrong motivation the whole time.

And Paul's saying, like, no, no, no. Like, that cannot be the reason why you're living your life.

Like, that cannot be it. It's not enough. So we mistake this manner of life. We mistake this manner of life that's motivated by people seeing us.

And we mistake that for actual salvation. We're like, okay, people are seeing us. I'm a good person. I've got my Jesus swag going. I've got it all, man. And we're so proud of ourselves. But we don't know that, man, we're actually really, really hollow.

[28 : 23] Like, on the inside, we're so hollow because this relationship with Christ has not been based off of him at all. And so the thing is that we have to be motivated by grace.

Like, I don't know what else is going to motivate us. Guilt can motivate you for a little while. Like, I can get up here and say, like, man, we need to live our lives in a manner worthy of the gospel

because of this reason and this reason and this reason.

And I can guilt trip every single person of y'all into it. Y'all have been there where it's like, okay, even with just, like, giving to, like, you know, poverty or something like that. Like, that's a huge motivator. And so what happens is it gets money out of our wallets because we see that Tamrat in Ethiopia doesn't have, like, food to eat.

And so we're like, oh, I feel terrible, so I'll throw him some money. And so, but that's, but then we just lose motivation, like, a week or two later. And so we have to be motivated by grace. Like, we have to, and Paul wants that too.

Like, yeah, he wants them, he wants to see them, he wants to see this happen, but he can't, he doesn't want that to be the motivator. So we have to let that be the motivator instead of us being in high school and singing songs and going on youth group mission trips and missing the gospel completely.

[29 : 34] I think that'd be the scariest thing in my life is to think that I could get to Christ and he could look at me and just be like, Daniel, you missed it completely. You were doing all these things, you were singing these songs and you were raising your hands, but you missed me completely.

I think that's honestly one of the things that I'm terrified of the most is running this race and God not being right there with me. So I'm going to ask a question with each point kind of something like for y'all and for me.

What motivated you in the past to follow Christ that you aren't following him anymore? Was it the fact to please your parents or your pastor or so on? What motivates you now if you are standing firm in the gospel?

Is it the gospel? Is Christ motivating you? Are you still, like, do you still wake up and when you think about sharing the gospel with someone or living your life in a manner worthy? Is it because you're like, Christ, you are so good and I cannot believe that, like, after all the crap that I've done, you would still let me breathe?

Like, that hat, like, is that the motivator? What is it? Okay, second point. Verse 27, the second part of it, he says, so that whether I come and see you where I'm absent, I may hear that you are standing firm in one spirit with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel.

[30 : 53] Second reason, we're not in church anymore with community. Not that we're going to church, but we're not in community anymore. There's a difference between going to church and being in community. So, this is huge, especially for college students, where there's a million different things, like, saying, okay, come to this youth ministry, or come to this ministry that's going on in college, like, come to this.

Like, everything is trying to grab our attention right now. And so, the idea of being a covenant member of a church, and being a part of a church, and laboring with a church, and serving a church, is not on the top list of things for us to do.

You know? I mean, honestly, there's a million other things that are grabbing our attention. And so, he says in this verse, he says, one mind and one spirit. So, what Paul's saying is not that we're going to agree on everything, but that we'll be harmonious.

He says, strive together, which is a really cool verse, because in Greek, that actually means wrestle. So, it doesn't mean just, like, oh, come on, you got it. It means, like, wrestle. And so, I think he says that because, like, I think the reason why he says wrestle together is because the gospel is something really hard to obtain.

Man, it's the treasure in the field that we have to sell everything for. And it is the narrow road that is hard to find. Few find it, but it leads to life.

[32 : 15] Like, the gospel is something that we have to work for. Not work for as in to earn, but, I mean, it is difficult to obtain because the world is throwing us so many different things. The other cool thing is that, I mean, we're supposed to strive together, so wrestle together.

And I think a lot of us find ourselves in this boat where we're like, okay, well, I like this about the church. Like, their music's good, and their teaching is good, but I really don't like the leadership, or there's not really, like, a good ministry for me to put myself in.

So, I'm really just going to, I'll go there occasionally. I'll go to that church. And so we kind of start this idea of, like, we start dating the church, and we're not actually planting ourselves in a church. And so, what Paul's saying is, like, okay, you can have those objections.

Like, we have this list of critiques of, like, this is wrong, this is wrong, and this is wrong. But he's saying, wrestle with that church. He's saying, like, man, like, we're going to have to wrestle with

each other. Like, okay, I don't agree with the way you're doing this.

Um, and it's like, okay, well, you know, a good church that loves Christ is going to say, I completely agree, man. I see it differently, but let's work this out. Let's pray through it together. Let's work through this. Um, we're also called to wrestle alongside one another.

[33 : 23] We need one another so badly. Because I am such an imperfect person, and I need someone like Alex, uh, to wrestle with me and catch me when I'm not living my life in a manner worthy of the gospel.

Like, we need one another. Um, so, uh, the cool thing is that he says, side by side for the faith of the gospel. So, if we read that again, um, in one spirit, with one mind, striving by yourself for the faith of the gospel.

That's not what it says. It doesn't say, by yourself. It says, side by side. Um, and that's a difficult mindset for us to understand, I think, because if you live in the U.S., like, the way the U.S. is built is on rugged individualism.

Um, you know, we came here, we started things, and we got our independence and our freedom. Think about the pioneers going out west. Um, think about everything going on right now.

Like, just, even just capitalism and the way that this economy is set up. It is for you as the individual. You can do it, make the best of your life. And, and, and so it's, it's understandable that we have a hard time understanding that we need to come side by side with one another.

[34 : 31] But, God's kingdom does not work in the same way that a lot of our U.S. mindsets are. God's kingdom is based off his church. He's not, he's not doing work just through individuals.

Um, even parachurches, like churches, like, like, you just youth ministries. Like, churches that are not multi-generational. Like, man, that can't be a church, and it's hard to strive side by side with a group that isn't committed to each other.

Um, so he's kind of calling us to something more than that. And, and that's not even really a plug for Christ's family. I love this church, but I think there's also really great churches in the area. I think Creekstone's an awesome church. I think Christ's church is a cool church.

And, like, I, I, I'm really encouraged by the stuff that's going on. And so, um, but I think Paul is just saying be invested with other people. Um, so my question on that before I move to my next point is, okay, so that's an awesome point, but are you as an individual, am I as an individual, are we invested in the local church?

Are we looking and seeking out, okay, how can I be a member of, of, of such and such church?

How can I run together with them in a wolf pack and not just as a lone wolf? Um, so are you running with the wolf pack or are you running as a lone wolf?

[35 : 40] Um, okay, third point. Uh, verse 28. He says, and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation and that from God.

Um, okay, so this is one of the tougher points of the night. Um, I think the third reason why we don't live our lives in a manner worthy of the gospel, that Paul is urging us to, is we don't want to suffer. Um, and your first thought is, uh, duh, Swanson.

Like, uh, and, and so, uh, I'm just gonna read Acts 42 to y'all. You don't have to, 14, 22. You don't have to turn there. Um, but I'll take forever to get there. Um, okay, so 14, 22.

Um, this, man, this strength, this challenges me in so much. So, um, in 21 he says, but when they preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith and saying that through many tribulations, we must enter the kingdom of God.

Um, okay, so if we're gonna define suffering really quickly, um, there's a difference between American suffering and closed country suffering, suffering. Kind of like, um, uh, with the guy that Clay's having speak this weekend in Hiawasi.

[37 : 03] Um, he's from, uh, Kazakhstan, I believe, and it's a completely different world of suffering over there. So we've got our American suffering where none of y'all are going to be thrown into prison or beaten or anything like that.

Like, it's a completely different world of suffering from, from anywhere else. Um, and so what do I mean by that? I don't, I'm not gonna say a million different specific things for us as, as Christians, but I will say this.

Specifically what this looks like is that when we read the word, like, when we read this book and we take off, like, the church lenses that we have, and we're like, that's a sweet verse. That's really

encouraging, brother. Like, when we really read the Bible, like, just that verse that we just read of, through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom of God.

That is so hard. Like, I, I know I'm not the only one who believes that. It's hard. Like, I don't say amen to that. Um, but the second that we start reading the Bible and start applying what it actually says to say about what we spend our money on, how do you, what, like, let's look at your bank account.

How do you spend your money? What about the person that you're dating, um, or you, you marry one day? The things we stand for and the things that we stand against. When we start applying the Bible to those things, we will not be popular.

[38 : 18] And so we don't have to, I don't have to go into specifics for every single person tonight, but when we start following this, man, like, we're not going to be popular. Um, so the question is, why should we have opponents?

Why, why would we even have opponents? Um, the apostle Paul, like, he has opponents that he speaks about in his letters and in Acts. Um, why? Why does Paul have opponents? That's, that doesn't sound like a very loving thing to say, that, like, Paul would have opponents.

I would say Paul's probably doing something wrong if he has opponents. But, if we look all throughout Acts and we trace everything throughout the New Testament, we see that every major character in the New Testament did not have a pretty ending.

You could be like, oh, well, John actually had a pretty good ending. He was just exiled on an island of Patmos. That was actually after they tried to boil him alive and couldn't do it. And he kept preaching the gospel. It's like they decided the only way to actually get rid of him was to exile.

So, it's hard to find someone and you're like, and you read it, and Timothy died at a ripe old age on a good 401k retirement. Like, we don't find that in the New Testament.

[39 : 20] So, but why? Why is this if the gospel is good news? It's good news for our souls if we desire to walk in a manner worthy of the gospel. But, if you're trying to walk in a manner worthy of culture, that is bad news for them because the gospel is counter-cultural.

It says to lose your life so that you can find it. Man, that naturally is going, like the gospel is saying that we, that you, this is the message of the gospel is saying that you are broken and you're a sinner and you need Christ because Christ is the only thing that can give us salvation and real joy. But, that's not a very popular message if you want to follow your own ways. And so, I wanted to differentiate between rejecting the message of Christ versus the messenger. There is a huge difference.

This, like, what I don't want us to take out of this is that, okay, well, I need to go get opponents. I need to go get opponents for the gospel. And so, if y'all know anything about, like, some of the churches, like, like, I'm not going to say specific names, but, like, some of the churches that, like, boycott, like, funerals and, like, picket, like, like, like, anti-gay protesting, like, that's, like, yeah, they're getting opponents, trust me.

But, trust me, those guys are, are hating them and not the message of Christ because it's not being shared. So, it's really important that, yeah, like, we do everything we can to love this person who does not have the gospel.

[40 : 41] Like, man, we pray for them. We share the gospel with them. We tell them, brother, I love you. Man, I love you so much. Like, I want to invest my time, my money into you, but you need the gospel. Um, and if they reject, if they reject the gospel, like, yeah, they're going to eventually reject you, too, because you care about them.

But, we cannot allow this message to affect us and say, I'm going to go out and acquire opponents by sharing a very unloving and hate-filled gospel. Um, so, um, the cool thing is that, man, the second part of the verse, he says, he says, uh, this is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God.

So, my question is, if suffering is a clear sign of our salvation, what is it a clear sign of if we aren't suffering? Um, are you sharing the gospel?

Um, I think, I think that is going to do it enough. Um, I think even if we look at Luke 6, 22, he says, woe to you when all men speak well of you, for that is how their fathers treated the false prophets.

Uh, I don't even know what to do with that verse. Um, so, I guess the question is here, is, are you suffering for the gospel by being true to what it says to you about how you spend your money, the people you date, and how you live your life?

[42 : 06] Or do you look, like, just like everybody else? Like, there's literally no distinguish between you and everyone else. Um, I can give a huge testament of this as, like, Greek life. Um, and I'm involved in Greek life, and I think a lot of people go into Greek life with, like, these really good intentions of, like, well, I'm going to meet people, I'm going to, like, have good friends, I want to be a good influence on people, like, I want to grow as an individual.

And even if it's, like, some of those people will, like, say, you know, I want to meet people, but I also want to share the gospel with people. Like, so how true are we still to that original plan? Um, are we still doing that?

Or have we been influenced by, not just Greek life, but, I mean, just in general, like, have we made compromises? Um, are we just hanging out with people and putting it under the banner of sharing the gospel?

We're not actually doing anything. Um, and so that's my challenge to us in that section is, you know, are we sharing the gospel, or are we going to uncomfortable places?

Sometimes, like, even for me, like, I can give a testimony to it of, like, man, I will, I love Sigma Nu. Like, I love the guys in Sigma Nu. Um, and, man, my intention was to get out of my own Christian bubble and, man, share the gospel with people, too.

[43 : 18] Um, and I think, I think what happens is we go from this area of, like, okay, I'm really, really lukewarm, and then I get in this really, really hot water, and you're like, oh, this is really, really uncomfortable, and then that becomes lukewarm, and you're like, yeah, I can really get used to this.

And then God's, like, saying, like, no, I want to take you further into a place of even hotter water. Um, because we're constantly battling against our flesh, and my flesh says, be quiet, shut up, don't talk about Jesus.

Um, okay, so fourth point, um, is in verse 29. It says, 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, engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had, and now hear that I have.

Um, so the fourth point is, we don't want to be actively engaged in the gospel. Um, we don't want to actively engage it. So, I want to take this second and make fun of Christian marketing culture.

Um, and so y'all know, if you've been in, around Christians at all, you see that we like to have these really, really comfortable, warm verses on coffee mugs and blankets, and if you listen to 91.5 or 104.7, you hear, like, these really sweet verses, like, love is patient, love is kind, and those are true, those are great, but we will never find this verse on a coffee mug.

[44 : 36] You won't find it. Um, no one is going to sit down and just like, man, I'm really discouraged, and then someone just walks up to them and says, or someone's like listening to them pour out their heart and like, brother, I just want to, I just want to encourage you with this verse.

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. And they're just like, I'm so encouraged right now.

That is exactly what I needed. Like, that, we're not going to find that, and whoever does, that business is going to burn, and like, it's going to crash and burn. No one's going to buy those coffee mugs.

Um, but we're really biased with our scripture. Um, so, that is a tough word, granted to you. Like, what?

It's been granted to you that, like, like, and so the Greek is saying that you've actually been done a favor, um, that you've been gratuitously in kindness, been given the opportunity to believe in Jesus, but also suffer for his sake.

[45 : 40] Um, Matthew 5, 12 says, rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven. For so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. So we read that verse a second ago, saying, woe to you who they speak well of.

Like, man, like, be, be on, he's basically saying, like, be on guard when people are just speaking really, really good things about you, because they did the exact same thing about the false prophets. And then he's saying, man, um, rejoice, because if they're persecuting you, they persecuted Isaiah, and they persecuted Jeremiah.

And they persecuted all these prophets, so it's a huge, it's supposed to be this huge encouragement. So if we disagree, we need to look again at the outcome, again, of every major character in the New Testament. If we say, like, well, Swanson, I'm following you, I'm with you, but right up until now, I'm actually not anymore.

Like, I, I, I really don't agree, like, I don't agree that we're supposed to call, that we're called to suffer. I was like, man, please, I would encourage you, read the New Testament again through the lenses of, man, Christ is actually calling, everyone, like, calling us to suffer for his sake.

And so, the cool thing is that Paul does not divorce belief and obedience ever in his letters. He usually will say something like, man, thank you for, like, I, like, I'm so glad that you believe in the gospel and that you obey it.

[46 : 57] And so a lot of times our tendency is to want to say, well, I believe in the gospel, like, I believe in Jesus, and he's my savior, and I'll follow him to the ends of the world. And then our obedience is so opposite of that.

Like, our lives are so different from it. And because it's really easy just to lay claim to that and be like, man, I believe in Jesus, but it's so much harder to be obedient to him, especially if that entails suffering.

So, Paul is engaging in conflict, and as a result of that, he's suffering. He's engaging the gospel. He's sharing the gospel all the time. And as a result, this guy is not rolling up in a Mercedes Benz or a Rolls Royce, and he's actually in prison, and all of his friends are starting to desert him, like people who he stood by, and he's sharing the gospel with those people actually end up deserting him.

And so Paul is suffering, and he's saying, don't run from that. That's a good thing. That is a good indicator that you're saved. So, my question with this is, are you engaged in the gospel, or do you still believe that you can live in neutral territory?

That we can live in this comfortable bubble of not engaging, but not really falling back. So, I'm wrapping it all up right here. How do all these things relate?

[48 : 21] If we're going back to that question of, are you living your life in a manner worthy of the gospel, or have you drifted far off? Or, man, are we not even in it for the right reason anymore? And we're not actually a part of all those things.

We don't have the right motivation. We're not in a church community. We're not suffering for the gospel, and we're not actively engaging the gospel. So, how can we do this practically?

What do you do with this? The thing that I don't want is for us to say, okay, man, I will start being involved in the church.

Yeah, I'll start suffering for the gospel, and I'll start engaging and sharing my faith. So, we set this huge to-do list, this huge to-do list of things to do, of like, as long as I do those things, man, I will, like, I'm good, and I can get back on track.

Like, if we do that, we're missing it completely. We're missing the point of the gospel. And so, I just beg you, that's not what I'm trying to say tonight. I'm not saying that at all. I think where we start is humility.

[49 : 24] I think we say, you know, God, I've fallen short of this so much. Like, I've fallen short completely. Or, God, I don't even know what my motivation is anymore. Or, like, tomorrow, I'm just doing things for the sake of doing them.

And I'm not motivated by your grace. And I'm not involved in the church body. I'm not sharing the gospel. I have a terrible motivation for why I'm doing this. And I'm not suffering at all. But, um, so I think this starts with your own heart.

Um, of, and that's what's, what's tough for the church because it's like, I want to, you want to see results, you know? You want to see people change. But that starts with your own heart.

And that does not start tomorrow morning. It's not, like, an instant, like, I'm just going to change my actions. It's this thing with, like, man, Christ has to really transform your heart. And so, what I would beg you all to do is, tonight, like, yeah, like, we're going to leave here.

We're going to keep talking. We're going to, like, we're going to get on with the night. We're going to, we have homework to do. We have the world to get back to at college. But I just ask us to take a moment and really examine our own hearts and say, like, man, Christ, why do you have me doing the things that I'm doing?

[50 : 28] Um, am I doing with this right motivation? We need to start praying to God and say, God, I fall so short of this. Like, I fall so short of this. Like, even today, I cannot handle ultimate frisbee, I realized.

I get way too competitive. And I am not a non-confrontational person. So, I just, and it's like, I realized just even in that, how sinful I am today.

It's like God was knocking me down on the notch. He was like, man, you think you're all that. And I just realized, I'm so sinful. I care about a stupid game of frisbee more than this guy here.

Um, so, again, I'm just saying, wrestle with this truth. And then finally, like, man, like, if God is doing something in your heart, man, and you don't know where to go with this.

Like, I think Nathan and Chris in the back, and even, you know, if you won't, if those guys are busy, I'm a last resort. Come talk to me. Um, that kind of seems to be the pattern of tonight.

[51 : 27] Um, or the guy you read with, or the girl that you read with. Like, like, I just pray that, like, this really would just affect just, just our conversations on the way back.

So, in the car tonight, maybe just take a second and just be like, you know, what did that mean to you tonight? Let's, let's really kind of go deep. Let's not just change actions. Let's have our hearts changed.

Um, I'm going to pray us out, and then Alex is going to come up.