

“ . . .walk worthily . . .” from the Book of Philippians

Scripture Block: Pp 1:12-30

Theme: TO LIVE, IS TO ACCOMPLISH THE PURPOSES OF GOD.

Life verse: Pp 1:27 Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the Gospel of Christ.

Today's passage: Pp 1:19-20

Notes

Interpretation

We have talked about the “means” of prayer and the work of the Spirit—now what is the result? Deliverance! In our minds, this often means getting out of a jam. However, in Paul’s mind, this means faithful service in the midst of opposition.

- Look at verse 20, Paul wants the courage to exalt Christ in all that he does.

- Notice in vs. 21, deliverance is not related to whether he lives or dies.

At this point, we need to be very clear—what is it that comes from prayer and resting in the Spirit? It is a confident expectation in the provision of God (the meaning of the Greek word “hope” in vs. 20), which in turn will lead to faithful ministry. If you would like an example of this, look at 2Cr 3:2-f. This is what we want with our lives—those we have ministered to in turn become a witness to others; and at every step of the way, we stay focused on the Lord, trusting him to work through us. This is how we magnify the Lord.

Application

The above idea: prayer and faith, leading to a confident expectation that God is at work, leading to faithful ministry perpetuated through time—this is the true concept of the “perseverance of the saints.”

1. Let’s consider further this idea of perseverance:

- “To run with perseverance” (Heb 11:1, is to steadfastly walk by faith in the face of difficult circumstances.

- Real perseverance cannot be developed apart from testing (Jas 1:3).

- God desires perseverance on the part of the saints as part of our character development (Rm 5:3-5).

2. This concept has been abused by a number of theological systems which use it as a test of conversion. In other words, if a person does not persevere in the faith, than they weren’t really saved to begin with. This is a subtle form of works-salvation, in that works are used as a means to

prove, or keep, salvation. It also is a means of transferring credit for living the Christian life from God to ourselves, i.e. I can claim that I have persevered. See if that fits with Gal 2:20.

3. Of course, all it takes is one example of a believer who did not persevere to disprove this false theology. Consider David in the OT and Mark in the new. Both turned from an upright walk, at one point in their lives, and yet were clearly used and approved by God. (Arguments about how long or to what extent they didn't persevere, and then later returned to persevere, are just an effort to "adjust" an otherwise bankrupt theological system.)

4. Now there certainly is something at stake with respect to our faithful perseverance—it is just not our salvation. Paul makes it perfectly clear in 1 Cr 9:24-27 and 2Tm 4:6-8 what it is, as he encourages both himself and us to persevere in the Christian life—for after having done so, there is an expectation of reward in eternity. And to put this into perspective—God has provided both the means to live the Christian life, and then amazingly enough, will reward us for faithfully appropriating what He has provided. That's why we call it grace.