

Live Up To The Gospel
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Philippians 1:27-2:11

If you were asking average people too fill in the blank...Christians are _____

How you and I as believers in Christ conduct our lives fills in the blank, Christians are...

In the book UnChristian Gabe Lyons and David Kinnaman found...

THE PERCEPTIONS OF CHRISTIANITY

Perception Outsiders, 16-29

Antihomosexual 91%

Judgmental 87%

Hypocritical 85%

Sheltered (old-fashioned, out of touch with reality) 78%

Too political 75%

Proselytizers (insensitive to others, not genuine) 70%

Question: Should we care what outsiders...unbelievers think?

"Gabe and I frequently encounter the idea that Christians should not care what outsiders think about us. After all, Jesus warned that the "world" would hate us. Scripture even promises persecution for those who follow Christ. However, before you dismiss the unChristian perception as "just Christians doing their duty," realize that the challenge runs much deeper.

The real problem comes when we recognize God's holiness but fail to articulate the other side of his character: grace. Jesus represents truth plus grace (see John 1:14). Embracing truth without holding grace in tension leads to harsh legalism, just as grace without truth devolves to compromise."

The reputation of the Christian faith should never be managed or spindoctored, but we can change how we're known by becoming more Christ-like.

<http://www.qideas.org/essays/unchristian-change-the-perception.aspx>

The first verse of our scripture passage sums up the topic of this lesson:
27 Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.

It's TRITE but the old saying still applies: "The only Bible some people read is...YOU."

One of the ways we spread the Gospel is living our lives in ways that are TRUE to the Gospel!

Philippians 1:27-30

Life Worthy of the Gospel

27 Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit,[a] striving together as one for the faith of the gospel 28 without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God. 29 For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him, 30 since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.

Verse 27: The word conduct...walk...conversation...live...from the Greek politeuomai pol-it-yoo'-om-ahee

to be a citizen
to administer civil affairs, manage the state
to make or create a citizen
to be a citizen
to behave as a citizen
to avail one's self of or recognise the laws
to conduct one's self as pledged to some law of life

- Phil 3:20 But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,
- As you and I live our daily lives do we reflect our CITIZENSHIP in Heaven?
- Citizens have both RIGHTS and RESPONSIBILITIES
- What are our rights as citizens of the United States? Life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness.
- What are our responsibilities as citizens of the U.S.? Laws, taxes, defense of freedom.
- Think about our CITIZENSHIP in Heaven as believers in Christ
- We have no problem remembering our "RIGHTS" as citizens of Heaven. What are our rights as citizens of Heaven? Eternal life...Peace...God's LOVE and guidance.

1 Peter 2:9

9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

Romans 8:16-17

16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. 17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

Galatians 4:7

7Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.

- What about our responsibilities as citizens of Heaven?
- What document tells us our rights and responsibilities as a U.S. citizen? Constitution.
- What document tells us our rights and responsibilities as a citizen of Heaven? Scripture.
- To live in light of scripture what do we need to study? SCRIPTURE!

Poem written by Paul Gilbert

You're writing a "gospel,"
A chapter each day,
By the deeds that you do,
By the words that you say;
Men read what you write,
Whether faithless or true;
Say, what is the "gospel"
According to you?

Warren Wiersbe writes:

The most important weapon against the enemy is not a stirring sermon or a powerful book; it is the consistent life of believers.

- What does living worthy of the Gospel look like?
- Verse 27: Paul says whether I come back to see you or if I just hear about you, here is what I want to hear: that you are "standing firm" with "one mind, working side by side for the faith that comes from the Gospel."
- That paints a picture of a UNIFIED ARMY defending our TERRITORY
- Verse 28: "...not being frightened in any way by your opponents."
- Get ready...this is not a PLAYGROUND but a BATTLEGROUND!
- As citizens of our country if we are going to ENJOY FREEDOM we'd better be ready to do what?
- DEFEND FREEDOM.
- Verse 29: Not only do we get to BELIEVE in Christ we also SUFFER FOR HIM
- Verse 30: The "same struggle" Paul had.
- What makes us CONDUCT our lives according to the Gospel? What would make us willing to SUFFER for it? That's our PRIORITY.

Philippians 2:1-4

Imitating Christ's Humility

- Verse 1 tells us what motivates us to live worthy of Christ:
1 Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion,
- Verse 2: How does Paul say Christians are to ACT?

2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.

- Verses 3 and 4: How does Paul say Christians should NOT ACT?

3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4 not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

- Be UNIFIED because if you are IN CHRIST we should have ONE MIND because we share the same LOVE
- DON'T operate out of SELFISH AMBITION or VAIN CONCEIT...but in HUMILITY VALUE OTHERS ABOVE YOURSELVES
- Humility doesn't mean you become a "doormat" or that you have a low self worth
- Humility means you CHOOSE to put the other person first WITHOUT lessening who YOU ARE
- Who is our greatest example of that kind of HEALTHY HUMILITY? Jesus

Philippians 2:5-8

5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in very nature[a] God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

7 rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature[b] of a servant,
being made in human likeness.

8 And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!

- Verse 5: Your attitude should be the same as Jesus...HAVING THE MIND OF CHRIST
- Can we mere mortal, sinful people have THE MIND OF CHRIST?
- Our experience w/ T.W. Hunt

T.W. Hunt in his book "The Mind of Christ" writes...

Since Christ is divine, we humans cannot be like him in all ways. We cannot imitate his omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience, infinity, immutability, and the attributes peculiar to divinity. On the other hand, in the limitation of his incarnation he did demonstrate specific qualities that we also have in our new nature. We can grow in these qualities: Mercy, love, long-suffering, and even holiness and Grace. We have to look to those humanly manifested qualities that he expects us to imitate.

- Get that? Paul would not have challenged the church at Philippi and US to imitate Christ if it couldn't be done.
- Do you know your spouse well enough that you can almost read their mind?
- "Susan would LOVE that!" "Susan would HATE that!"
- How about your boss at work?

- How did you get to the point of knowing what that important person in your life would think?
- You STUDIED them.

If we want to have the MIND OF CHRIST we have study the LIFE OF CHRIST and that comes from the ONLY BOOK God ever wrote...the Bible.

- Verse 6: Being in "very nature" who? God. It was his VERY NATURE to be God
- Verse 7: But WITHOUT GIVING UP ANY OF HIS DIVINITY he did what/
- Made himself NOTHING...taking on the VERY NATURE of a servant in HUMAN likeness
- This is why you hear the phrase: VERY GOD and VERY MAN
- But, Jesus didn't just come to earth to be an EXAMPLE as a man...
- He came to earth to be what? A SACRIFICE FOR MAN.
- He HUMBLER HIMSELF BECOMING OBEDIENT TO DEATH...ON A CROSS
- Roman crucifixion was not just about DEATH it was about HUMILIATION
- It wasn't a quick, sudden ending of life...it was the most PAINFUL and PUBLIC humiliation possible in that day.
- The Romans wanted everyone to LOOK ON IT and TAKE NOTE...that's how they kept people in line.
- God wanted everyone to LOOK ON IT and TAKE NOTE...this is how He would RECONCILE himself and sinful people
- Christ SET ASIDE His rights so we could be saved

Ray Steadman recalled a story told by Harry Ironsides...a preacher of by-gone days told a story from his childhood. His mother took him to a church meeting and there was a great quarrel. One man pounded his fist and said "I just want my rights!" An old Scottish man on the front row was hard of hearing and said "You what what?" The angry man said "My rights! I just want my rights!" The old Scot replied: "Your rights brother, is that what you want, your rights? If you had your rights, you'd be in hell. The Lord Jesus didn't come to get his rights, he came to get his wrongs. And he got them."

There was silence. Then the angry man sat down and said "I'm sorry...do whatever the group decides to do."

- Jesus set aside his DIVINE RIGHTS to die for us
- Sometimes we won't even set aside our PETTY, EARTHLY RIGHTS to REACH OTHERS for Him
- Sometimes we'd rather WIN the argument than WIN the sinner

Philippians 2:9-11

9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
11 and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,

to the glory of God the Father.

So What's The Takeaway?

- If we're citizens of Heaven...do we act like it?
- Do people look at our daily lives and say "No doubt about it, that's a CITIZEN OF HEAVEN."
- More importantly, do they say "How do I get in on that?"
- How can we live like that? The mind of Christ.
- How do we have that mind? We LOVE HIM enough to learn his mind and OBEY his example