

Keeping Christ in Focus

I. The Challenge Facing Every Christian (1:27-30; cf. 1:12-26)

A. The Nature of Suffering (1:29)

1. Suffering is a Gift of God (*ἔχαρ(σ)θη*)

- The believer has been granted, on behalf of Christ, to not only believe in Christ, but also to suffer on behalf of Christ:

2. Suffering is not a Curse but a

Privilege (Acts 5:41):

(Acts 5:41) So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for *His* name.

I. The Challenge Facing Every Christian (1:27-30; cf. 1:12-26)

A. The Nature of Suffering (1:29)

1. Suffering is a Gift of God (*ἔχαρ(σ)θη*)

2. Suffering is not a Curse but a Privilege (Acts 5:41)

3. Suffering Comes in a Battle for the Truth and Battle Scars are Inevitable:

- As much as God has chosen our lot as Christians, that lot is most often filled with fire:
- "I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction" (Robertson, p. 107):

I. The Challenge Facing Every Christian (1:27-30; cf. 1:12-26)

A. The Nature of Suffering (1:29)

1. Suffering is a Gift of God (*ἔχαρ(σ)θη*)

2. Suffering is not a Curse but a Privilege (Acts 5:41)

3. Suffering Comes in a Battle for the Truth and Battle Scars are Inevitable:

B. The Model of Suffering (1:30)

1. Struggle is Common – The one 'agona' (*ἀγῶνα*)

2. Struggle Same Theologically but Different in Circumstances:

I. The Challenge Facing Every Christian (1:27-30; cf. 1:12-26)

A. The Nature of Suffering (1:29)

B. The Model of Suffering (1:30)

C. The Manner of Suffering:

1. Suffering from Without –

Circumstances (1:12-14a, 1:20; cf. 1:28a)

2. Suffering from Within – Relationships (1:14b-17; cf. 2:1-2; 4:2-3)

I. The Challenge Facing Every Christian (1:27-30; cf. 1:12-26)

II. The Charge Facing Every Christian (2:5)

A. Christ – Singularity of Mind – Circumstances (1:21)

- "For to me" (*ἐμοὶ γὰρ*) emphatic in position, stressing that Paul's faith is unshaken regardless of circumstances:

- In the immediate context Paul is no longer mindful of the ill-willed preachers but the glory of Christ:

I. The Challenge Facing Every Christian (1:27-30; cf. 1:12-26)

II. The Charge Facing Every Christian (2:5)

A. Christ – Singularity of Mind – Circumstances (1:21)

1. Christ the Motive of Action:

2. Christ the Goal of Life:

- I Want to Know Christ (3:8)

- I Want to be Like Christ (3:10)

- I Want to be With Christ (3:11ff.)

3. Christ the Source of Power:

I. The Challenge Facing Every Christian (1:27-30; cf. 1:12-26)

II. The Charge Facing Every Christian (2:5)

A. Christ – Singularity of Mind – Circumstances (1:21)

B. Christ – Selflessness of Mind – Relationships (2:5)

- *φρονέω* it is more than a specific act of thought directed at a given point, it focuses on the underlying disposition:

I. The Challenge Facing Every Christian (1:27-30; cf. 1:12-26)

II. The Charge Facing Every Christian (2:5)

A. Christ – Singularity of Mind – Circumstances (1:21)

B. Christ – Selflessness of Mind – Relationships (2:5)

1. The Example of Christian Leaders (2:14-30)

1. The Example of Christian Leaders (2:14-30)

a) The Christ-like Attitude of Paul (2:17)

- "But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all" (2:17)

b) The Christ-like Attitude of Timothy (2:19-24)

- "For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare" (2:20)

c) The Christ-like Attitude of Epaphroditus (2:25-30)

- "your messenger and minister to my need" (2:25)

- "because he was longing for you all and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick" (2:26)

➤ **Paul (vv. 17, 18)**

- The mindedness of Christ rendered him unmindful of self:

➤ **Timothy (vv. 19, 22, 23)**

- His unselfishness of mind and spirit rendered him useful in the Lord's service and dependable on the apostle Paul's behalf:

➤ **Epaphroditus (vv. 24-30)**

- A testimony to a worthy servant of Christ:
- He combines faithfulness (v. 25) and tenderness (v. 26) in a service that is sacrificial and self-forgetful to the point of death (v. 30);
- He is loving and beloved (vv. 26-29) and a life that is a benediction in contemplation:

I. The Challenge Facing Every Christian (1:27-30; cf. 1:12-26)

II. The Charge Facing Every Christian (2:5)

A. Christ – Singularity of Mind – Circumstances (1:21)

B. Christ – Selflessness of Mind – Relationships (2:5)

1. The Example of Christian Leaders (2:14-30)

2. The Example of Christ (2:6-11)

"Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus" (NIV)

"Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus" (NASB)

➤ **Outlook determines Outcome:**

If one's attitude is selfish, then one's actions will be divisive and destructive:

2. The Example of Christ (2:6-11)

a) Christ's Attitude (2:6)

(1) His existence – He existing in the form of God (**μορφῇ ... ὑπάρχων**)

(a) **μορφῇ**

(b) **ὑπάρχων**

(c) **ἴσα**

(2) His attitude (**ἄρραγμὸν ἡγήσατο**):

- He did not consider His equality with God as "something selfishly to be held on to"

- His outlook (or attitude) was that of unselfish concern for others:

2. The Example of Christ (2:6-11)

a) Christ's Attitude (2:6)

b) Christ's Service (2:7)

- To think of others in the abstract is not enough:

- 1) He emptied Himself, laying aside the independent use of His own attributes as God;
- 2) He permanently became a human, in a sinless physical body;
- 3) He used that body to be a servant;
- 4) He took that body to the cross and willingly died:

- In the Gospels we find Jesus serving others, not being served:
(Matt 20 :28) "just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."
- Jesus Christ served all kinds of people – fishermen, harlots, tax collectors, the sick, the sorrowing:

2. The Example of Christ (2:6-11)

a) Christ's Attitude (2:6)

b) Christ's Service (2:7)

c) Christ's Sacrifice (2:8)

- Many are willing to serve others as long as it doesn't cost them anything:

- As soon as there is a price to pay they suddenly lose interest:

- Christ did not die as a martyr, He died as a Savior:

Is it costing us anything to be a Christian?

2. The Example of Christ (2:6-11)

a) Christ's Attitude (2:6)

b) Christ's Service (2:7)

c) Christ's Sacrifice (2:8)

d) Christ's Glorification of the Father (2:9-11)

- The whole purpose of Christ's humiliation and exaltation is the glorification of God the Father (2:11)

*Keeping Christ in
Focus*