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Andrew M. Davis

Sermon Notes

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A Double Gift from the Lord

Philippians 1:27-30

Granted from the King, Charles the Second of England:

March 24, 1663

Grant of North and South Carolina to eight of his cousins who helped him regain the throne

Edward Earl of Clarendon, George Duke of Albemarle, William Lord Craven, John Lord Berkley, Anthony Lord Ashley, Sir George Carteret, Sir William Berkley, and Sir John Colleton have humbly besought us to give, grant and confirm unto them and their heirs, the said country, with priviledges and jurisdictions requisite for the good government and safety thereof

all that territory or tract of ground, scituate, lying and being within our dominions of America, extending from the north end of the island called Lucke island, which lieth in the southern Virginia seas, and within six and thirty degrees of the northern latitude, and to the west as far as the south seas, and so southerly as far as the river St. Matthias, which bordereth upon the coast of Florida, and within one and thirty degrees of northern latitude, and so west in a direct line as far as the south seas aforesaid; together with all and singular ports, harbours, bays, rivers, isles and islets belonging to the country aforesaid; and also all the soil, lands, fields, woods, mountlills, fields, lakes, rivers, bays and islets, scituate or being within the bounds or limits aforesaid, with the fishing of all sorts of fish, whales, sturgeons and all other royal fishes in the sea, bays, islets and rivers within the premises, and the fish therein taken; and moreover all veins, mines, quarries, as well discovered as not discovered, of gold, silver, gems, precious stones, and all other whatsoever, be it of stones, metals, or any other thing whatsoever, found or to be found within the countries, isles and limits aforesaid.

So the Emperor of the Universe, God Almighty has given us two grants as well:

vs. 29 For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him

1) Granted to us the believe in Christ

2) Granted to us to suffer for Him

Church History is made dazzling by the behavior of its heroes against all odds... against great persecution, against great difficulties, to bring the gospel to the ends of the earth:

Colossians 1:24 Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church.

The sufferings of those who brought the gospel to the Colossians brought great joy to Paul

Paul himself “filled up what was lacking in regard to Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body, which is the church.” Nothing lacking in terms of the accomplishment of the redemption. But something lacking in regard to Christ’s suffering in the application of the redemption... the gospel had to be carried across mountain ranges, swollen rivers, along dangerous roads infested by bandits, into the territories of hostile and suspicious rulers, across tumultuous seas to bring the gospel to the island-dwelling cannibals. And the glorious and courageous church has been traveling that that perilous journey for twenty centuries.

Every drop of blood shed by martyrs, every tear of pain and sadness that has fallen to the ground, every drop of sweat shed in laborious toil to bring the gospel ever further toward its God-designed conclusion has brought great glory to Christ.

- When Paul picked himself up from a pile of rocks after being stoned and left for dead in the city of Lystra, re-entered the city and continued to preach, he brought great glory to God... a glory the angels and departed saints can not achieve
- When Peter was crucified upside-down for Christ in Rome, he brought great glory to God and advanced the gospel
- When Polycarp stood in the amphitheater of Smyrna and courageously accepted being burned at the stake rather than deny Christ... he brought glory to Christ
- When the godly women Perpetua and Felicitas faced the wild beasts and joyfully accepted death for Christ’s sake, they brought great honor to His name
- When the Christians under Decius chose crucifixion rather than burning a pinch of incense to Caesar, they glorified Christ
- When English missionaries risked their lives to bring the gospel to the fierce and terrifying Vikings that had conquered them, they brought glory to Christ
- When Raymond Lull preached the gospel in Bugia east of Algiers after the crusades to fanatical Muslims and was stoned to death in 1310, he brought glory to Christ
- When Jim Elliot and his three fellow missionaries accepted martyrdom as the price for bringing the Auca Indians to Christ, they adorned the gospel with their courage
- When in January 1999 Australian missionary Graham Staines and his two young sons were burned alive by a fanatical Hindu mob for preaching the gospel, his faith and love for Christ shone brighter than the physical flames

Church history is a glorious tapestry of heroes, men and women whose willingness to suffer even to the point of death has advanced the gospel

And Philippians 1:29 tells us this is a great gift from the Lord:

vs. 29 For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him

The word “granted” is related to the word for “grace”... literally, it is a gift of God’s grace NOT ONLY to believe in Christ, BUT ALSO to suffer for Him

I. Living a Life Worthy of the Gospel

Vs. 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 one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel 28 without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you.

A. Paul’s Concern: Daily Life that Adorns the Gospel

1. Paul turns away from autobiographical concerns to focus on THEM
2. Actually, all of this has been for their benefit anyway
3. Paul’s ultimate desire: verse 20... THAT CHRIST BE EXALTED
4. Only a daily life that adorns the gospel and makes it attractive will exalt Christ

Titus 2:10 [Christians should live in such a way] ***so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect.***

Make the Gospel of Christ attractive by how you live!!!

5. “Live” = conduct yourself as a good citizen... live like a citizen
 - a. word would have had significance to Philippians
 - b. proud of their status as citizens of the Roman empire... a special status accorded them by the Emperor himself
 - c. Paul is appealing to their patriotism... but not as citizens of Philippi, an earthly Greek city

Philippians 3:20 But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ

d. Paul is saying, “Walk in your daily life together according to the laws of the commonwealth, of the city of which you are citizens... THE HEAVENLY CITY

B. “Whatever Happens”: Paul May or May Not Be Able to Assist Them

Vs. 27 Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel

1. Paul deeply desires to be able to assist them in their struggles
2. He yearns to go on living for their benefit
3. However, the Lord may not ordain that
4. BUT their successful living for the gospel is NOT ULTIMATELY DEPENDENT on Paul being with them again!!

A Christian should never say “I can’t live without you!” No human being is absolutely indispensable to our life in Christ

Illus. Conversation with Nathaniel about my death: God has ordained for much grace to flow into your life through me... I am like a large pipe, a large conduit of blessings that God has ordained for a time to use to bring those blessings flowing into your life. But if God should ordain my death, God will still be the source of all your needs and wants... He’ll just choose to give you what He feels you need some other way!

5. Paul wants to know that they will carry on whether he lives or dies

Vs. 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 one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel

- a. wants his life to count for eternity
- b. living on through his disciples
- c. he wants to know that they will be faithful for the Lord’s sake, not for his

C. Four Aspects of a Life Worthy of the Gospel

- Standing Firm in the Struggle
- United in One Spirit
- Contending for the Faith of the Gospel
- Courageously Facing Persecution

II. #1: Standing Firm

A. Image: A Great Struggle in Which Christians Must Take the Battlefield and Stand Firm

Vs. 27 I will know that you stand firm in one spirit

Philippians 4:1 Therefore, my brothers, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, that is how you should stand firm in the Lord, dear friends!

1. The Gospel advance is NOT a peaceful journey through the countryside
2. The Gospel advance is contested every inch of the way by the devil, the demons, and human enemies of the gospel
3. Much advance occurs by simply standing firm in the midst of a great onslaught
 - a. the devil will come at you in waves
 - b. trying to get you to yield on some point of doctrine or some matter of sin
 - c. stand firm

B. Taking Your Stand in the Struggle

1. Stand firm in your personal faith

Colossians 1:21-23 established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel.

2. Standing firm in a great struggle

Hebrews 10:32-34 Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you stood your ground in a great contest in the face of suffering

3. Stand firm in the spiritual warfare

Ephesians 6:11-16 Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, 15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

C. Martin Luther: Here I Stand

At Diet of Worms, April 18, 1521

"My conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise, God help me. Amen."

In the same way, Paul was charging these Philippian Christians to take their stand for Christ and for the gospel

To make it public... to not be swayed from the truth of the gospel

III. #2: United in Spirit

A. First Priority: Unity in the Church

1. If it doesn't work at home, why export it abroad?
2. Whole section from 1:27-2:18 a call for unity in holding out the gospel to a lost and dying world
 - Philippians 2:1-4: Be like-minded, having the same love, being ONE in Spirit and purpose
 - Philippians 2:5-11 Be Christ-minded: selfless servants, putting others' needs ahead of your own
 - Philippians 2:12-18 Grow in your salvation, stop complaining and arguing with each other, shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life
3. Philippian church had divisions, factions, and conflicts

Philippians 4:2 I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to agree with each other in the Lord.

4. Paul calls them to total unity

Vs. 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 one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel

- a. "one spirit" : not so much the Holy Spirit
- b. one spirit = one focus of morale, one way of looking at things, totally united, pulling in one direction
- c. "as one man" = united in mind... in outlook... not merely a surface agreement

vs. 27 (NASB) with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel

1 Corinthians 1:10 I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.

Illus. College tug of war... one of the most grueling sports events I've ever been part of... every single fiber of my being was totally concentrated on one thing: moving the flag across the line and winning the victory; so it was also for the minds of all my teammates

B. Unity Among Christians Essential to Gospel Advance

1. Practical issues: if world is beating you up outside, and the church is beating you up inside, where can you go for refreshment?
2. If Christians are constantly bickering, how does that make the Gospel look to outsiders?
3. Christ's priestly prayer: the theology of unity and evangelism

John 17:23 I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

C. Practical Manifestations

1. Unity through understanding the Body of Christ: When one suffers, all suffer together

1 Corinthians 12:26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

2. Unity through prayer

Romans 15:30 I urge you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me.

Illus. I frequently pray for brothers and sisters arrested in China, imagining their beatings at the hands of the Communist government... I pray that God would lift their spirits, appear to them by angels, miraculously deliver them from prison, get Scripture into their hands, etc. I am praying as if I were their fellow prisoner

3. Unity through side-by-side suffering

This is one of the main reasons Christ sent out His apostles two by two... so they could stand side by side in suffering for the gospel

Hebrews 10:32-34 Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you stood your ground in a great contest in the face of suffering. Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. 34 You sympathized with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions.

Philippians 4:2-3 I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to agree with each other in the Lord. 3 Yes, and I ask you, loyal yokefellow, help these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

4. Unity through full use of spiritual gifts

encouragement... to lift drooping spirits

mercy... to bind up bleeding bodies and feed empty stomachs

teaching... to keep perspective on why the suffering is going on

giving... to make up financial loss when houses and business have been destroyed

faith... to keep focus on the spiritual power of God at work in this trial

IV. #3: Contending for the Gospel

A. "Contending" = "sunathleo"... Greek root word where we get the word "athletic"

Picture the intense struggle of an Olympic wrestler...

Every sinew of his muscles straining against a powerful opponent... this is the "athleo"... the great contest of faith

Contending against Satan and all his temptations, discouragements, and losses

Contending against human persecutors and all their insults, whippings, and destructions

B. Contest is the Advance of the Gospel

Rescuing the perishing

Preaching to lost people and lost nations

Bearing up under the strain of trying to lead them to faith in Christ

This is the intense spiritual and physical struggle needed to cross barriers and bring people to Christ

It is putting up with their attacks and their anger... it is pleading with them to save themselves from this sinful generation

It is facing closed countries with their hostile governments, facing poor food and disease, facing grueling physical travel, facing deprivations of every kind so that you can win people to Christ

C. Contest is Also the Defense of the Gospel

Philippians 1:7 *It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart; for whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me.*

NASB Jude 3 *Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.*

Greek root: from which we get English word “agonize”

Standing up for the faith once received

Transmitting it intact to the next generation

Illus. J. Gresham Machen’s courageous stand against liberalism in the Presbyterian Denomination in the early 20th century; wrote the classing *Christianity and Liberalism...* article after article written, slanderous attacks, false scandals

Every generation has to face an intelligent, concerted attack on the word of God

In the Garden of Eden, Satan asked “**Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’**” He has been questioning the word of God ever since, because this is not an idle word for us... it is our life!!!

Therefore, we must earnestly contend for the faith once for all committed to all the saints... we must **DEFEND** and **CONFIRM** the gospel by vigorous arguments for truth... we appeal to the mind and the heart with truth

We stand in the Marketplace of Ideas, and we take every thought captive to Christ... we defend the gospel against the attacks of liberalism, atheism, false gods, feminism, humanism, sensual hedonism... anything that lies In order to do that, we must be willing to suffer greatly:

Martin Luther: “If I profess with the loudest voice and the clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God except precisely that little point which the world and the devil are at that moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Christ. Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved. And to be steady on all the battlefield besides is mere flight and disgrace if he flinches at that point.”

V. #4: Courage in the Face of Persecution

Vs. 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.*

A. Some Suffering is Granted to All the Faithful

Vs. 29 For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him,

2 Timothy 3:12 In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,

B. Unique Suffering is Granted to Some of the Faithful

Acts 5:41 The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.

C. Suffering Alone is Insufficient... We Must Suffer with Supernatural Courage

D. Supernatural Courage Is a Sign from God: of Damnation and Salvation

VI. Application: Have You No Scar?

A. No Advance is Possible Without Suffering

1. Paul speaks of a twin grant from Christ

a. granted to us to believe in Christ

b. granted to us to suffer for His name's sake

2. Two Journeys: Internal and External

3. No Progress is Possible Without Suffering

a. no growth in personal holiness without frustrating the flesh

b. no growth in evangelism without

B. Scars from Battle: Mr. Valiant-for-Truth

After this it was noised abroad that Mr. Valiant-for-truth was taken with a summons by the same post as the other, and had this for a token that the summons was true, "That his pitcher was broken at the fountain." Eccl. 12:6. When he understood it, he called for his friends, and told them of it. Then said he,

I am going to my Father's; and though with great difficulty I have got hither, yet now I do not repent me of all the trouble I have been at to arrive where I am. My sword I give to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage, and my courage and skill to him that can get it. My marks and scars I carry with me, to be a witness for me that I have fought His battles who will now be my rewarder.

C. Amy Carmichael: Have You No Scar?

Hast thou no scar?
No hidden scar on foot or side or hand?
I hear thee sung as mighty in the land.
I hear them hail thy bright ascendant star.
Hast thou no scar? Hast thou no wound? Yet I was wounded by the archers, spent,
leaned Me against a tree to die and rent
by ravening beasts that compassed Me. I swooned.

Hast thou no wound? No wound? No scar?
Yet as the Master shall the servant be,
and pierced are the feet that follow Me.
But thine are whole.
Can he have followed far who has no wound or scar?"

- Amy Carmichael (1867-1951)