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“Eye on the Horizon”  
Philippians 1:27:30  
October 9, 2016, Adrian Moskal

[2]

**Phil 1:27-30 NLT**

***<sup>27</sup> Above all, you must live as citizens of heaven, conducting yourselves in a manner worthy of the Good News about Christ. Then, whether I come and see you again or only hear about you, I will know that you are standing together with one spirit and one purpose, fighting together for the faith, which is the Good News.***

***<sup>28</sup> Don't be intimidated in any way by your enemies.***

[3]

***This will be a sign to them that they are going to be destroyed, but that you are going to be saved, even by God himself. <sup>29</sup> For you have been given not only the privilege of trusting in Christ but also the privilege of suffering for him. <sup>30</sup> We are in this struggle together. You have seen my struggle in the past, and you know that I am still in the midst of it.***

Does anybody here like watching the Olympics? I don't know what you like but I love the amazing athletes and watching sports that you would never watch at any other time. I also like the competition between nations. I love seeing the Canadian flags that fly during the Olympics. People of all ages and demographics cheering for people in sports that they would never watch any other time. Who were the Canadian heroes during the Olympics this past year? Penny Oleksiak, Andre Degrasse. For most people they will not watch another swimming race or track and field event for another 4 years until the next Olympics.

What binds us together? Do we agree on everything in Canada? Nope. In fact we have a province that often is close to leaving the nation altogether. The only thing tying all of us together is the the fact of our place of residence. Canada. Most of us have a passport. But what does it mean to be Canadian? People think of hockey but more adults in Canada play golf than hockey. Twice the number of kids play soccer than hockey. The expanse and different cultures of our country make it difficult to put our finger on what it means to be Canadian.

We know that it is a desirable place to be. In 2013 over 330,000 people applied to be Canadian citizens and almost 130,000 people were granted citizenship. If you have ever known anyone to go through the process, it is a long process. It is very desirable because of our relative peace, justice, freedom, opportunities, environment, education, etc. There are many reasons why we love Canada and people want to move here.

[4]

**Phil 1:27a**

***27 Above all, you must live as citizens of heaven, conducting yourselves in a manner worthy of the Good News about Christ.***

We must live as citizens of heaven. What does this mean? This living like you are not from here. Your home is heaven and all that represents. No matter what the storms of life throw at you, you look to the horizon. I went fishing in the summer. We went out of Port Hardy. Our guide took us out a long ways. It was a calm day but even on calm days out there, the swells are huge. You go up... and down. Up... and down. One of the tricks was to keep your eye on the horizon. No matter what was happening up close to you, you are peering where it is constant.

You think it is desirable to live in Canada, well heaven is something altogether different. This is the prize. It is more than we can imagine.

Last week, Pastor Steve shared with us verse 21. I am not going to put it up on the screen because I want to stay here but it says:

***Phil 1:21 NLT***

***21 For to me, living means living for Christ, and dying is even better.***

So heaven is better than anything we could dream up on earth. Let's keep our eyes on that during the sermon.

Let's continue on: "**conducting yourselves in a manner worthy of the Good News about Christ**".

So does this mean you need to look good and try harder? No. This is something truly deeper.

[5]

Such a life would not be legalistic or following moral laws but showing the spirit and love of Christ in every relationship.

That's right. It isn't about a checklist of do's and don'ts. It is about our heart attitude toward each relationship we have.

I was talking to Glen Bueckert this week, and he was telling me about his trip to Greece to work in a Refugee camp. Glen is one of CRBC's supported missionaries. The refugee camp was an old detention facility built for 700 people and housing over 3000 people. It was filled with people of different countries who had often been at war against people who were also in the same camp. Very tense at times.

Why were they there. Most were from war torn countries and seeking refugee status from "Christian Countries" because they have opened their doors and helping them whereas Muslim countries have not. They were seeking citizenship in a place that was welcoming and caring to them.

They see the spirit and love that Christians have to strangers.

[6]

***Phil 1:27b***

***Then, whether I come and see you again or only hear about you, I will know that you are standing together with one spirit and one purpose, fighting together for the faith, which is the Good News.***

If you remember Paul is writing this from a Roman prison cell. The church in Rome was not unified but Paul wanted to ensure that the believers in Philippi were unified. Paul is unsure if he will be seeing them or not but he wants to ensure that they are unified.

It got me thinking of CRBC. We have many people from different walks of life. If you look around, you will see people of different ethnic backgrounds, different socioeconomic backgrounds, and different ages.

What binds us together? What are we fighting for because we are very diverse group on the outside. If you want to take it a step forward, what if you included the people from the last 60 years of CRBC's existence. What binds us all together.

We can look at each time period of CRBC's existence and if you had the facts, you would say, why did they do things like that? I wouldn't do it this way. And you would be right. You wouldn't do it that way. You weren't called then by God, to plant a church in Campbell River. Lloyd Gregory was called and he planted it and he used the gifts and experiences that God had given him. I got to meet his grandson at our last newcomers lunch. What an honour. I can tell you, planting a church 60 years ago is different than today. Culture was different.

What about the staff and church board of the 60's-70's. Do you think the church leaders prayed for wisdom and direction. I will bet they did. They had a Sunday School outreach where they would send buses out and pick up kids and bring them into the church for Sunday school (we used this approach for soccer camp). Sometimes their parents would follow and families found Jesus. It may not work now but are we to say that God didn't know what he was doing.

What about through the 80's and 90's? What about the last 16 years? Think about all of the people that met Christ, that were baptized, and that had their lives changed by Christ.

I am a product of God's work in the lives of those who he used before at CRBC. I accepted Christ here. I was baptized here. I was disciplined here.

Have methods changed from the time that Lloyd Gregory planted the church? Yes, but Christ has not. We stand on the shoulders of those who came before and sacrificed for Christ before us.

[7]

As time goes on, culture changes, people change, our methods change, but it doesn't mean the message changes.

What binds us together here, no matter our ethnicity, finances, experiences, or our age, is the same as what binds us together with those that came before us. We fight together for the faith, which is the good news.

We have one spirit and one purpose. Jesus Christ is the good news. Amen.

We have kids hearing about Jesus in Christ Kids, Powerhouse, Soccer Camp, Island Adventure Camp, and River Kids. Should it look different than in our single mom's group? Freedom Session? Single moms group? In our growth groups, in our Young at Heart group? Yes, it will look different because how they learn, hear, embrace things is different at each age and cultural group. This is why we have 2 services - a traditional and contemporary worship service. We wanted a service that everyone would feel confident in being able to invite a friend to. I talked to someone in August that moved into the apartment building behind us partly because of our traditional service. Our thinking is that she is more likely to invite a neighbour if the music touches her heart.

[8]

The methods we use to reach different people groups will change because of age, experiences, and cultural differences but the message and spirit and love with which it is shared, will be the same.

We have one spirit and one purpose. Let's continue

[9]

***Phil 1:28,29 NLT***

***28 Don't be intimidated in any way by your enemies. This will be a sign to them that they are going to be destroyed, but that you are going to be saved, even by God himself. 29 For you have been given not only the privilege of trusting in Christ but also the privilege of suffering for him.***

Paul is sharing with the Philippians the stakes of the game. It is a battle. We need to know this and not be intimidated by the flesh or by forces of evil. Keep your eye on the horizon. Keep your eyes on Jesus.

It is a privilege to trust in Christ and to suffer for him. Do not gloss over this. We often recognize the privilege to trust Christ for our place in heaven. We trust in who he is and how he has died for us. What about the privilege of suffering for him? How do you feel about that?

How do we start to see it as a privilege to suffer for him? I started the sermon talking about citizenship and how Paul is calling us to live a life as a citizen of heaven.

Paul explains why we are here in a letter to the church in Corinth:

[10]

**2 Cor 5:19-21 NLT**

***<sup>19</sup> For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup> So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!" <sup>21</sup> For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin,\* so that we could be made right with God through Christ.***

This is what we are doing here. This is why we count it as a privilege to suffer for him. It is in Christ that the world has the opportunity to be reconciled to God. Our sin separates us from God because God is holy and abhors sin. Jesus sacrifice was the payment and his resurrection was means by which we are saved from our sins.

It is this message of reconciliation that we carry. Our citizenship is there but we live here as his ambassadors. God chose you and you and you to share this with them out there. Yes it is a privilege to trust Jesus but it is also a true privilege to suffer for him. We are his ambassadors.

My youngest daughter Ryann gets braces on Wednesday. A few weeks ago, to prepare for the braces, she had to get 2 teeth pulled. She had been a little apprehensive going into the teeth pulling. I had the opportunity to sit down and chat with her as a dad gets to in those cases. I told her that getting her teeth pulled was not going to be fun. It was going to hurt a little bit but I asked her to keep her eye on the horizon. Would it hurt for a short period of time, yes. Was it worth it? Yes. For the rest of her life, she would get a nice set of straight teeth. By the way, she was super brave and got those teeth yanked out. She is still keeping her eye on the horizon. We will she gets the braces and then they come off.

And the last of our passage:

[11]

**Phil 1:30 NLT**

***<sup>30</sup> We are in this struggle together. You have seen my struggle in the past, and you know that I am still in the midst of it.***

Paul shares that we are in this struggle together. The church in Philippi have seen his past and present struggles for Christ and the joy that he has exhibited.

We are in this together. We struggle together. We sacrifice our time, treasure and talents for God do expand his kingdom here. We struggle as they did before us, because that is how good news is spread, it has to be shared. We are here because someone sacrificed for us. It started with Jesus but others followed him.

[12]

**Paul said:**

**1 Cor 11:1 ESV**

***Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.***

**Jesus said:**

**Mark 1:17 ESV**

***17 And Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men."***

So how do we do this through suffering? Follow Jesus. Trust in him.

There is a 5 minute documentary on Youtube called "A Czech Widow's Embassy of Kingdom of Heaven". It chronicles an 82 year old widow in the Czech Republic (the most atheistic place in Europe). She has a brass plaque outside her door that says:

[13]

**Embassy of Kingdom of Heaven**

She says when people come to her home, she wants them to find help if they need it. She wants them to experience peace and hope. When people come by, she puts everything else aside and prepares room for the Holy Spirit in their conversations.

What if we lived our lives this way? What if we lived like we were ambassadors for Christ with his love, grace and joy? With our eye on the horizon but our work boots firmly planted on the ground.

Let's pray.



Eye on the Horizon  
Philippians 1:27-30  
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**Objective of this Study:** To grow and understand how we need to keep our eyes on our destination and our boots firmly on the ground.

[Remember, the main goal of each Growth Group is to allow God's Word to change your heart so that others would see Jesus in you and be likewise changed to be like him. He wants to change the world through us]

### **Worship (5 – 10 minutes)**

1. Sing a song or two of praise and thanksgiving to God.
2. Spend five minutes in silence asking God to prepare your heart for how he wants to speak to you.
3. After the five minutes have someone interrupt the silence and read Psalm 8 meditatively to the group. Pause after each phrase letting God speak to you.

[It's really important when doing this study that we each think about ourselves specifically and ways we need to grow, not how Christians in general need to grow. Do the hard work of letting the Holy Spirit speak to your heart.]

### **Welcome**

On this Thanksgiving week, what are you thankful for?

### **Word (30-45 min)**

- What stood out from the sermon?
- **Read Philippians 1:27-30.**
  - What stands out from these 4 verses?
  - Does the fact that Paul was writing from jail impact his message?
- **Read 2 Cor 5:19-21**
  - What are the similarities between the 2 passages?
  - What is Paul calling the church in Corinth to? What is the message they are to carry
  - Why is it important to understand our future to step into our present mission that Jesus has given us?

### **Work (30-45 min)**

**Sermon quote:** "The methods we use to reach different people groups will change because of age, experiences, and cultural differences but the message and spirit and love with which it is shared, will be the same."

- Do you believe the above quote? Why or why not? Can you think of any examples where you allowed personal preference to get in the way of unity?

**Sermon quote:** “What if we lived like we were ambassadors for Christ with his love, grace and joy? With our eye on the horizon but our work boots firmly planted on the ground?”

- Name one change that would happen if the above was more true in your life?
  
- When you dream of a preferred future, does it differ from Paul’s vision (citizen of heaven)? If so, how does it differ? Name one heart change that Jesus is working on you that will help you conduct yourself as a citizen of heaven.
- **Read verse 29.** When you have faced/facing a struggle are you able to see it as a privilege? Give an actual example and how. You might want to pray for wisdom on this question.
  - What things in your life or in the world affect how you experience struggles? Or how you experience triumphs?
- Is your home an “Embassy of the Kingdom of Heaven” or a “Fortress from the World”? What is stopping it from being an embassy?
- How can the group pray for you today about anything you discussed or realized today?