

Series on Philippians – sermons 30 & 31 – 21/11 & 5/12/10 (pm)

# **Standing Firm in the Lord**

Philippians 3:15 - 4:1

*Theme: Christians are to stand firm in the Lord by replicating the example of the Apostle Paul, by rejecting the example of false Christians, and by remembering that they are citizens of Heaven.*

4:1 communicates Paul's warm affection for the Philippians.

He wants them to stand firm in the Lord.

*Today Christians must stand firm in the Lord.*

Paul gives three pointers how to stand firm in 3:15-21.

# 1. Replicate the example of the Apostle Paul (3:15-17).

*Christians are to follow Paul's example as given in 3:12-14.*

Doing this will be a sign of ***spiritual maturity*** (3:15a).

Paul is saying:

*You reached a certain point spiritually  
by following guidelines. Keep going  
forward using the same guidelines  
(3:16).*

This is a great challenge to all Christians and perhaps a stinging challenge to some!

The implication is that if we do not live as Paul urges it is a sign of *spiritual immaturity*.

*Leaders have particular responsibility  
to be examples to imitate.*

*Those who pursue Christ produce  
those who pursue Christ.*

(Kent Hughes)

Paul then touches on a not insignificant matter: 3:15b.

Christians will not all agree on secondary matters ...

... but as Christians follow Paul's example (3:12-14), the Lord will make the way clear.

## **2. Reject the example of worldly false-Christians (3:18-19).**

Paul warns about following the example of enemies of the Cross of Christ.

They were possibly professing Christians whose lifestyle spoke not of Christianity but of the world, *cf.* Titus 1:16.

- Their destiny is destruction (3:19a). Hell.
- Their God is their stomach (3:19b). *Cf.* Romans 16:18. Sensual pleasures.
- Their glory is in their shame (3:19c). They boast in their sensual excesses.
- Their mind is on earthly things (3:19d). They reverse the commands in Matthew 6:19-21.

Such a lifestyle is the opposite of pursuing Jesus.

Enemies could exert a *pull* on genuine believers to compromise their faith.

There are modern counterparts to these enemies – those who teach you can accept Jesus as Saviour without accepting Him as Lord of your life.

Such a lifestyle may seem attractive  
but it is wrong!

*Are you being tempted to live loosely  
because you see a professing Christian  
doing it?*

Don't follow that example!

*Cf.* Luke 6:46; 1 Thessalonians 4:7-8; 1  
Corinthians 6:19-20.

Rejecting the example of worldly false  
Christians is part of standing firm in  
the Lord.

### **3. Remember who you are and eagerly wait for Jesus' return (3:20-21).**

Paul reminds the Philippian Christians of two key truths:

- i. Their citizenship is in Heaven and they must reflect a Heavenly lifestyle and not a worldly one.

ii. They eagerly await a Saviour from Heaven. Eagerly implies continual holy living while waiting! Their enemies face destruction but they face glory and a new body.

By remembering who we are, where our citizenship is, and the glory that awaits us, Christians stand firm in the Lord.

# **Conclusion— Are You Standing Firm?**

*How are you standing?*

*Are you replicating the example of the  
Apostle Paul?*

*It is a sign of spiritual maturity.*

*Are you rejecting example of worldly  
false Christians?*

*Are you remembering who you are in  
Christ, and the glory that lies ahead for  
you?*

God grant that we who have been bought with the precious blood of Christ will stand firm in the Lord and that by doing these things we may develop in our knowledge of Him and shine like stars in a crooked and depraved society.