



Part 7: Standing Firm Together

Philippians 1:27-2:2

We will stand firm together or not at all.

Additional Historical Context for Philippians

Paul wrote Philippians to the church in Philippi while he was imprisoned in Rome. Not knowing what the future held for him, he was concerned with writing to the churches to make sure that their faith could stand the testing that he himself was enduring. The desperation and urgency of his burden for these congregations is heard in his tone throughout the letter.

Philippi was actually the first church to be planted in Europe by Paul during one of his missionary journeys. It was a Roman colony populated primarily by veterans. It was common in this time for non-Roman citizens to enlist in the military in order to achieve the great honor of citizenship and the rights and privileges that came with it. This means that many in this congregation had fought for the sake of their citizenship and had sacrificed much for this goal. Paul uses this experience as a metaphor for standing firm in the gospel. The church should see themselves not as a colony of Rome, but a colony of heaven. They should live out their citizenship (the word for “conduct yourselves”, *politomai*, literally means “live as a citizen in the Greek) not to Rome, but to the kingdom of God.

Furthermore, Paul draws on military imagery to describe the importance of unity. If there is in-fighting in your ranks, you will never stand firm against the enemy. Paul exhorts them to have this same mindset in their battle of their faith. Protect unity: your witness as citizens of heaven and success in spiritual battle depends on it.

What is Unity?

What unity is not:

What unity is:

What is at stake?

Our witness to God's kingdom

Our perseverance in the battle

How do we live in unity?

Questions for Reflection

- Where do I need to reject false unity for the peace of Christ?
- What have I given my loyalties to above Christ?
- What community disappointments do I need to bring to Christ for his healing?

Discussion Questions

1. What stood out to you from the sermon or Philippians 1:27-2:2?
2. What forms of false unity are you most prone to?
3. In the past, what have been your greatest struggles in maintaining unity?
4. What do you think the threats to unity in our small group are?
5. What practices could we implement in our small group to protect our unity without promoting false unity?
6. Is there anything you want to share from the reflection time at the end of the sermon?