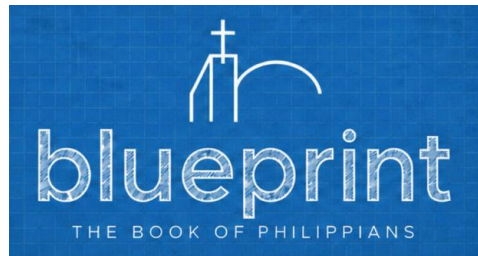




GOING DEEPER

Discussion Questions and more from Sunday's message, before we begin, here are the verses for this week's study! Open your bible to the book of Philippians 1:27-28; Ephesians 6:16; Nehemiah 4:7.

How much time have you spent this past week reflecting on Jesus and the hope of the gospel? How has reflecting on Him been of help to you? Because that is how we grow in how we think about our relationship to God and how we bring Him Glory each day, in each conversation, interaction, our work, our family. **In everything.** The gospel and the love of Christ should indwell us, and we should be burdened to share that good news with others in these last days. ***Have you shared the good news with anyone this week? Have you showed the love of Jesus to anyone this week?***



Living Worthy of the Gospel Together

Sunday's message talks about standing firm "side by side" and how our faithfulness can help protect and strengthen someone else. **It is Paul's call to church unity.**

Can you think of a time when someone's presence, encouragement, prayer, or faithfulness helped you keep going?

Stand Together When the Gospel Is Challenged

Philippians 1:27–28

27 “Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, **28** and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God.”

The Gospel changes where we belong and how we stand together.

What does it mean to live worthy of the gospel in everyday life?

Who has stood beside you spiritually when you needed strength?

What is one practical way you or your Growth Group can strive side by side for the gospel this week?

1. We should live here without “here” defining whoever we are.

Vs 27a “Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ...”

Billy’s pastor friend Dirk says “I’m an ambassador... to the Kingdom of Heaven”

Our Church/home should act as an embassy

Billy talked about visiting the American Embassy in Paris

An embassy is that country on foreign soil.

Its flag, authority, mission, and allegiance come from home.

The church/Our home should function like an embassy of another Kingdom.

...with one mind striving side by side...

2. Your faithfulness may be someone else’s spiritual protection.

Vs 27b “so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel.”

“Once “the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit,” we deliberately begin to identify ourselves with.....Jesus Christ’s interests and purposes in others’ lives (Romans 5:5) And Jesus has an interest in every individual person. We have no right in Christian service to be guided by our own interests and desires.” J. Oswald Sanders

Why do you think Paul connects gospel faithfulness with standing “in one spirit” and “with one mind”?

“How does your presence affect other Christians? Does it increase the fellowship’s joy with Christ?” Henry Blackaby

Why is unity so important when the gospel is being challenged?

Philippine couple that Billy talked about getting married :

Last week: Leian Lieza Galang and Gilbert Chico

Saint John the Baptist Church

Water up to their waists... been there a month

They were... **Side by side**

Greek “Striving Side by side”: syn = with, together

athleō = to compete, contend, engage in an athletic contest

The Roman Testudo...Strength Came From What Happened Beside You

The Roman army tortoise formation.

Soldiers locked their shields together... front, sides, and overhead.

In the Roman Testudo, soldiers survived because they locked their shields together. One shield mattered, but one shield alone was not enough for the formation. The strength came when every soldier lifted his shield in faithfulness to the men beside him.

That gives us a powerful picture of Ephesians 6:16, where Paul says, “In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one.”

The shield of faith is personal — each believer must take it up. But faith is never meant to be isolated. When believers stand side by side, our faith strengthens one another. My faithfulness may help cover a gap in someone else’s battle. Your courage may help another believer keep standing.

That is why Paul tells the church in Philippians 1:27 to stand firm “in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel.” The enemy loves exposed gaps, isolated believers, and broken formation. But when the church lifts the shield of faith together, we become a visible sign that the gospel is worth standing for.

The shield of faith is something every believer must take up, but God never intended us to hold it alone.

Whose faith might be strengthened this week because you choose to stand close instead of pull away?

We have talked about this before...

Nehemiah: Build with one hand, fight with the other

Nehemiah 4:7

Jerusalem's wall was being rebuilt... people were deliberately positioned together. Some worked; others guarded. ***It says that those rebuilding the wall "carried on the work with one hand and held a weapon with the other."***

Eventually spread out... that was dangerous.

Nehemiah's solution *when you hear the trumpet, come together.*

When God's people begin rebuilding what is broken, opposition should not surprise us — but neither should it stop us.

*Nehemiah 4:7 shows that when the wall began to be repaired and the gaps were being closed, the enemies became angry. That is a strong picture for the church today: **the enemy is most disturbed when God's people start closing the gaps.***

The enemy does not panic over scattered Christians; Satan panics when the gaps start closing.

The greatest vulnerability wasn't the enemy. It was the distance between the builders.

Rome closed the gaps with shields.

Nehemiah closed the gaps with people.

Paul tells the church: close the gaps with one another.

Here is what's interesting: Your shield wasn't primarily protecting you.

A portion of your protection came from the man standing beside you.

A soldier breaking formation didn't merely expose himself;

Baby Dedication/Deacon, Pastor Ordination

"The church is one and is to be one because God is one." Mark Dever

But it's more than that!

I've seen the worst of UNITY... What if...

Our Shield wall wasn't just meant for defense! ...It's for offense!

Barna:

20% of practicing Christians reported feeling lonely at least once every day,

48% described the feelings as intense to unbearable.

Geography...

In a five-mile radius of Ft Oglethorpe... there are 80,000 people ... Catoosa, Walker and Hamilton County.

(Catoosa and Walker population combined is 139,000)

64,000 people unchurched

16,000 church (12,000 of those people are questionable)

Maybe church attendance isn't the finish line... it's formation that is our finish line.

Vs 28. "This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God."

Where are the gaps in our church, our homes, or our witness that God is calling us to close together?

That clear sign... the cross...

Does love characterize your life and our church? How do visitors react? We should be fervent in our love for one another. Not allowing it to ever grow cold. We shouldn't just love others out of habit and really shouldn't be complacent in showing the same kindness to others around us where we go. We need to be always thinking what more we can do and how we can grow in Christ. It should be exciting for us when we have opportunities to share Christ's love to the people around us!

Where is God calling us to close the gap — and who is He calling us to stand beside this week?

LIVE IT OUT

Bible Study should ALWAYS lead to taking action with what you learned. Think of it as Vitamin A. "Application" into your day, week and interactions.

Here are some practical "live it out" ideas that fit this week's message of **standing side by side, closing the gaps, and living worthy of the gospel together:**

In Our Homes

Close the gap through intentional presence. Put down the phone, ask real questions, and listen well.

Pray together at least once this week as a family, couple, roommates, or with a friend.

Speak gospel encouragement. Tell someone in your home, "I see God working in you."

Repair one strained relationship. Apologize, forgive, or start an honest conversation.

Make your home an embassy of the Kingdom. Let your words, priorities, hospitality, and schedule show that Jesus is Lord.

In Our Workplaces

Represent Christ with integrity. Work honestly, speak truthfully, and refuse gossip.

Stand beside someone under pressure. Encourage a coworker, defend someone being criticized unfairly, or help carry a burden.

Close the gap between Sunday and Monday. Let your faith shape how you respond to stress, conflict, deadlines, and difficult people.

Be known as peaceful and dependable. A gospel-worthy life is often seen in consistency.

Look for one opportunity to share hope. Not forced, but faithful.

In Our Community

Notice the people others overlook. A neighbor, cashier, server, widow, single parent, or lonely person.

Practice visible kindness. Meet a need, make a call, write a note, invite someone to lunch.

Pray for the unchurched around us by name.

Invite someone into community. Church, Growth Group, coffee, a meal, or a conversation.

Build and guard at the same time. Serve the community while protecting your witness through humility and love.

In Our Church

Move from attending to forming. Church attendance is not the finish line; it is part of how God forms us.

Stand beside someone spiritually. Check on someone missing, discouraged, grieving, or isolated.

Refuse to let gaps grow. Don't feed division, gossip, bitterness, or distance. ***Adrian Rogers often reminded believers that the Christian life is a battleground, not a playground. Nehemiah 4 shows us what that looks like: God's people rebuilding with courage, staying alert, and refusing to let opposition stop the work.***

Join the work. Serve somewhere, pray with others, encourage leaders, help carry the mission.

Strengthen the shield wall. Be the kind of church member whose presence helps others stand firm.

This week, choose one gap to close and one person to stand beside.

What is one practical step you will take this week to live worthy of the gospel side by side with God's people?

Remember:

"We are to run the race with endurance, not in our own strength, but by fixing our gaze on Jesus. He is not only the goal of our faith—He is the source and sustainer of it." R.C. Sproul

"The gospel is not only about changing WHERE you will live for eternity, it's also about changing HOW you will live today." Shane Pruitt
And that is a heart change. So that we glorify God in all we do.

Having Jesus as Savior will cost you nothing. Having Jesus as Savior will cost you everything. How so?

Who do you say God is? You cannot "come after" Jesus unless you come to Him.

Two roads stand before us in this world today. There is the way of the divine things of our Lord, which is the way of Christ. And there is the way of human things of the world. There is a way to save your life, and you will lose it there. And there is a way to lose your life for the sake of the Kingdom, and there you will find it.

How do we follow Jesus' ways? First of all, we turn from our sin and entrust our lives to Him as our Savior and Lord. Then, we seek His will in His Word each day and put it into practice by the power of the Holy Spirit within us. We learn to deny our selfish desires and give ourselves completely to following Jesus.

This choice we have — to seek first the kingdom of God — is the fundamental choice everyone makes when they first repent and turn to Jesus Christ. Yet every day after that, our Christian life will either reinforce that decision or deny it.

Remember the gospel is personal. Your changed life shows that to others around you based on what happened at the cross. You are at a crossroads if you have not accepted Christ. Which road are you traveling on right now? Are you on God's side?



Are you in a Growth Group at First Baptist? In this isolated world, Growth Groups help people connect in a healthy way. God has created us for a deep longing for community. We grow when we are living out our faith in a small group with others and we do this by loving, caring for, and encouraging each other. If you have any questions about our Growth Groups, contact the Church Office for more information.