

LIVING WORTHILY

Philippians 1:27-30

Paul has just stated his confident hope that his imprisonment will end and that he will enjoy the privilege of visiting again his friends in Philippi. However, his trial before the emperor had not yet been brought to an issue, and no one could be sure what Caesar might do. At best, the decision was being delayed. Paul was not yet free. So he had to content himself with writing. He therefore urged his friends to continue in their consistent Christian life. Under any circumstances, he exhorted them to conduct themselves in a manner worthy of their Christian profession.

"Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ." "Only"--never mind what happens--the one matter of chief moment is, that their "walk as citizens" of the heavenly state be worthy of the Gospel of Christ. He was anxious that their conduct be marked by moral steadfastness which is at once united and undaunted. It was to be united in its relation to fellow Christians. It was to be undaunted in the face of foes.

God's Word has much to say about Christians living worthily. Paul repeatedly emphasized the importance of walking worthily as a Christian. "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." Ephesians 4:1; "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." Colossians 1:10; "That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory." I Thessalonians 2:12. Christ said: "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me." Matthew 10:37. "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy." Revelation 3:4.

"Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ." Thus it is commanded, urged, and expected that Christians shall live worthily. Let us, therefore, consider the characteristics of any Christian who is living worthily.

I. He Is A Worshipping Christian.

Worship is one of the first acts which every Christian should cultivate in order to be worthy before God. "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." John 4:23-24. In Revelation 11:1 John said that the angel commanded him to "Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein." God's measure of a worthy Christian is how, when, where, and in what spirit he worships God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

A worthy Christian worships in prayer, in praise, in spirit, with a clean and sincere heart, and because of a real love for God. Love for God expressed in word and deed is after all the highest form of worship. True worship implies an attraction to Christ.

"O worship the King, all glorious above,
And gratefully sing His wonderful love;
Our Shield and Defender, and Ancient of Days,
Pavilioned in splendor, and girded with praise."

In his psalms David had much to say about true worship. Therein he gave us many modes, words, and attitudes of the soul in worship. Let us pattern after them, and seek to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness, for it really means showing our appreciation and the "worthship" to our God and His Son, Jesus Christ.

II. He Is A Walking-with-the-Lord Christian.

"That ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." This means to walk so that we are a credit to the Lord and not a liability. This means walking before the Lord in this world so that we honor and glorify the Lord. It means to walk with the Lord, not behind Him nor before Him. It means to walk in love, in faith, in prayer, in wisdom, in truth, in victory, and in constant fellowship with Him. It also means to walk with Christ in lowly service and win others to Him. It means to follow Christ, to be a friend of Christ, and to be in communion with Christ.

III. He Is A Witnessing Christian.

Christ said, "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me." The worthy Christian bears witness to the saving, satisfying, and sanctifying powers of Christ. A worthy Christian bears witness to the grace, teachings, death and resurrection of Christ. A worthy Christian witnesses to the deity of Christ, and worships Him as co-equal with God. A worthy Christian witnesses to the presence and the preeminence of Christ in the heart, in the life, and in the service rendered. A worthy Christian witnesses because the world needs the testimony and many will be saved because of it. He witnesses by lip, by life, and by letter.

A witnessing Christian witnesses in spite of opposition and even rejection, leaving the results with God and the Christ who called him.

IV. He Is A Working Christian.

He works in love and in faith, and because he has been called to do that particular work. True Christians cannot succeed if they stagnate in their daily service for God. Paul says, "We command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread. But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing." II Thessalonians 3:12-13.

This also means to work with the Lord, not ahead of Him or behind Him. It means a cooperative service with God. It means a fellowship in service which is done gladly and freely as unto the Lord and not unto men.

The work is God's and the worker should reckon that he is under the Divine supervision of the Master-workman, Christ Himself. There will be a reward for faithfulness, but none seeks to earn or merit salvation, if he understands the teachings of God's Word.

V. He Is A Watchful Christian.

"But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry." II Timothy 4:5. "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Matthew 26:41. The watchful Christian is careful and not taken unawares by the devil. He is observing and also takes into his life the Word of the Lord which warns him even by the Voice and Word of the Spirit. He watches his tongue, his thoughts, his temper, and his outward walk before mankind. He watches the workings of Satan in order to beware of him, flee from him, or resist him.

A watchful Christian is worthy because he seeks to avoid the things which tend to unworthy living and even sinful deeds. The watchful Christian is prayerful, careful, considerate of others and of the will of God for himself. A watchful Christian studies to know the will of God and then strives to do it faithfully. He allows God to direct him and to detect his dangers for him, lest he should become a castaway so far as service is concerned before God and in the church.

VI. He Is A Wise Christian.

He is wise with the God-given wisdom which is precious because it is a real asset to Christian living. "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." Ephesians 5:17-18. The wise Christian surrenders all to God and then receives his wisdom and grace from God for daily living and service. For "the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." James 3:17.

Christ is the wisdom and the power of God, therefore, if we have Him we may be wise with His wisdom and able with His ability. A wise Christian avoids needless disputes and quarrels. A wise Christian avoids the appearance of evil and never courts sin or compromises with it. A wise Christian follows his Guide and the guide Book--The Bible. A wise Christian can be corrected, and will be wiser and better for it.

VII. He Is A Waiting Christian.

Paul admonished the Corinthians "to wait for His Son from heaven." In his letter to Titus he used the expression, "Looking for that Blessed Hope." Not only does the worthy Christian wait for His coming, but he also waits upon God for help in time of need, that is, he prays to God and patiently awaits the answer. "Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord." Psalms 27:14. "For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry." Habakkuk 2:3. While we watch and wait for His Coming we should also be working in fulfilling His plan and program for calling out His elect people. God waits to answer our prayers and to be gracious to us, and will send His Son from heaven a second time without sin unto salvation. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Hebrews 9:28.

May we, therefore, fulfill this measurement of a real and worthy Christian by being a worshipping Christian, a walking-with-the-Lord Christian, a witnessing Christian, a working Christian, a watchful Christian, a wise Christian, and a waiting Christian.

"We'll work till Jesus comes,
We'll work till Jesus comes,
We'll work till Jesus comes
And we'll be gathered home!"