

MARKS OF A FAITHFUL CHURCH (Phil 1:27-30)

(originally prepared by Boyd Jennings, Green Meadow church of Christ)

I. Introduction

- A. When travelling, do we work to find a "faithful church"?
 - 1. What questions do we ask
 - 2. What things do we look for
- B. Paul suggested in Phil. 1:27 three marks of faithfulness
 - 1. Conduct worth of the Gospel
 - 2. Standing Fast in one spirit
 - 3. Patience in suffering

II. CONDUCT WORTHY OF THE GOSPEL

- A. The word "conduct" (*politeuomi*) means *to be a citizen*.
 - 1. What are the marks of a good citizen in society?
 - a. Obedience to the law
 - b. Mindfulness of the community?
 - 2. Marks of good Christian citizen's are similar
 - a. We are Kingdom citizens (Phil 3:20).
 - b. We observe the purposes which we were created - Eph 2:10
 - 3. We need to be obsessed with our righteous conduct

CONCLUSION: A faithful church believes that righteous conduct on the part of the members is necessary and proper to maintaining the faithfulness of the church

III. STAND FAST IN ONE SPIRIT

- A. To "stand fast" means *to stand firm, to hold one's ground*.
 - 1. Example - Col. Chamberlain at Gettysburg; "hold the line"
 - 2. We are to fight for the faith - Jude 3, I Timothy 6:12
- B. Notice that we are to "stand fast in *one spirit*, with *one mind* striving together."
 - 1. the key to this is unity (doctrine and purpose) 1 Cor 1:10
 - 2. Obsessed with being like minded

CONCLUSION: A faithful church believes that Unity is of vital importance. True unity can only be reached by agreeing on an independent truth.

IV. COURAGE IN SUFFERING & CONFLICT

- A. We suffer as members and as a congregation
 - 1. Tribulations
 - 2. Even persecutions, although far less than our 1st century brethren
- B. But we are not to be afraid of our adversaries; rather, we are to be courageous.
 - 1. Persecution (putting to flight) is a sign that the persecutors are doomed to destruction (28).
 - 2. Persecution is also a sign (indication) of our own salvation from God (28).
 - 3. Persecution is a privilege (Acts 5:41; 1 Pet 4:16).
- C. Enduring persecution ourselves will strengthen other Christians when their time comes (30).

CONCLUSION: A faithful church experiences difficulties and pushes through them, growing in Grace as they do so.

V. CONCLUSION

- A. Three things that a congregation needs to be faithful:
 - 1. RIGHTEOUS CONDUCT
 - 2. UNITY
 - 3. PERSEVERENCE
- B. Do we present all three?