

MESSAGE NOTES

Shine Like Stars Worthy Conduct

Philippians 1:27–30 (NIV)

²⁷ Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel ²⁸ without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God. ²⁹ For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him, ³⁰ since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.

NOTES:

“Conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.” (v.27a)

AXIOS!

The Greek word Paul uses for “worthy,” “axios” means balance. It was used when things were being measured on a scale, when the two sides of the scale matched, when they balanced, they were “axios” or “worthy.” So, Paul is saying “Live your life so that when your life is put on one side of the scale and the Gospel of Christ is put on the other side of the scale, they balance.”
-O’Brien, Peter T. O’Brien. The Epistle to the Philippians (Pillar New Testament Commentary). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. -Ephesians 4:1-4

I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel (v.27b)

“To become a creative minority is not easy because it involves maintaining strong links with the outside world while staying true to your faith, seeking to not mere keep the sacred flame burning but also to transform the larger society of which you are a part. This is demanding and high risk laden territory.” -Rabbi Johnathan Sacks

“The most eloquent testimony to the reality of the resurrection is not an empty tomb or a well orchestrated pageant on Easter Sunday but rather a group of people whose life together is so radically different, so completely changed from the way the world builds community, that there can be no explanation other than that something decisive has happened in history” -Will Willimon

For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him, since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have. (v.30)

“The formation of a living spirituality is a continuous process of birth, death, and rebirth.” Chung Hyun Kyung (Korean Theologian - Presbyterian Church of Korea)

Paschal Troparion
Christ is risen from the dead,
by death trampling death,
and to those in the tombs
granting life!

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

April 19, 2026

Shine Like Stars - Philippians 1:12-26

As needed, refer to the Order of Worship and Resources at solanabeach.church for sermon video, message outline, resources and small group questions print version.

CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER

Give everyone a sticky note or piece of paper. Ask: *What is one word that describes your current season of faith?* Write that word down on the sticky note/paper. Ask each person to share why they chose that word.

CONNECT WITH GOD

Holding Opposites: Grief and Joy

Adapted from David Richo, *The Five Things We Cannot Change*

This practice of Holding Opposites helps us be present with both the grief life brings us and the joy and goodness it brings. It holds us and our mixed experiences in the grace of Christ. Read through these instructions slowly, individually, taking the time you need to enter into each step or designate one person to slowly read the practice aloud, allowing time between each step for the practice to unfold.

- Take a few deep, slow breaths and ground yourself in the awareness of God with you.
- Hold both hands out, cupped, palms upward, and imagine them holding these opposites:
 - the grief of life, general or particular, that breaks our hearts.
 - the joy and goodness of life we might find in Christ or manifest in beauty, nature, love, or the presence of God with us.
- Feel the equal “weight” of both, since our hands are empty.
- Become aware that God is holding you and both your grief and joy in grace. Spend a few moments resting in that grace. Take your time.
- Consider if there is one small action or response that God is calling you to in this awareness of God’s grace and the reality of grief and joy in you.
- Relax your arms and take a few more deep, slow breaths, grounding yourself in the awareness of God with you. As you are ready, return your attention to the group.

After the practice, allow opportunity for group members to share about their practice experience.

CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER

- **Together:** Read three times Philippians 1:27-30. Alternate readers and leave space between each reading, for silent reflection.

- **Alone:** Read the passage once more individually. Reflect/Journal on the prompt below:
 - o Where in this passage do you sense God drawing you as you read? How might you linger there?
- **All together** or in **smaller pairs:** Share with one another.

CONNECT WITH SCRIPTURE

If needed, read the passage again. Then select the best questions or customize the questions for your group.

- Consider watching the BibleProject video on Philippians: solanabeach.church/042626
- Review the sermon outline.
- What are you still wanting to learn about the context of Paul and the Philippians?
- What does it mean to “conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel”?
- What words, stories, or Bible passages come to mind when you think about the word “gospel”?
- What does it mean to “stand firm in one spirit” (v. 27)?
- Has there been a time in your life where you learned what it can look like to “stand firm”?
- Consider Paul’s words about suffering in verse 29. What’s your reaction to Paul’s assertion about belief and suffering?
- How would you describe the themes and main ideas in Philippians 1?
- What feels unfinished in your reflections about this passage? What questions remain?

ENGAGE AND EXPLORE

Together: explore the quote below, in connection with the passage this week.

“The most eloquent testimony to the reality of the resurrection is not an empty tomb or a well orchestrated pageant on Easter Sunday but rather a group of people whose life together is so radically different, so completely changed from the way the world builds community, that there can be no explanation other than that something decisive has happened in history”
-Will Willimon

PRAYER

Close your time in prayer for one another and with the same Eastertide prayer as last week:

“Living Lord, you meet us in unexpected places and surprise us with the abundance of your love. Feed us by Your word and fill us with your Spirit so that we may follow you this day, and always through Jesus Christ, your son, our Savior. Amen.” (*Feasting on the Word, Liturgies for Year A, Third Sunday of Easter*)