



Under Fire

- I. Introduction. Paul was living under house arrest in Rome while awaiting his trial. In Philippians 1:21, he declared to the Philippian Christians that he would be happy to live and continue to push forward the Kingdom agenda, but death would be a great blessing for him as well. In 1:27-30, Paul concluded his thoughts by giving some advice on how to handle their adversity, both inside and outside the church.
- II. Principles for Success Under Fire
 - A. Stand firm in your identity- 1:27.
 1. “Whatever happens to me...” Paul continued to encourage them to not be overwhelmed if he wasn’t released from prison. The Philippian Christians were worried about Paul, and they were under fire themselves. In 1:30, Paul indicated that the church was enduring the same kind of suffering for their faith that Paul had been experiencing. They were discouraged and afraid.
 2. Paul reminded them of their identity in Christ. “Conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.” Some versions include the phrase, “as citizens of heaven.” In 3:20, Paul referred to believers as “citizens of heaven.” Although the word “citizens” is not in the Greek, the sentiment of identity is certainly present. Paul asked the Christians to remember their identity as Christ followers. Live a life that is in line with your identity as a follower of Jesus. You are a citizen of the Kingdom of God, not any Kingdom of man. Now let your actions, thoughts, attitudes, and motives reflect your citizenship.
 3. As believers, we must lean on our identity as Christ followers to give us the strength to stand up under the pressures of life. We stand firm in who we are in Christ. Our identity dictates our attitude, actions, and outcomes. Only when we walk in our identity can we live worthy of being a Christ follower in the midst of worldly temptations and struggles. What is your identity in Christ? Why is Satan interested in attacking your identity? How does your identity affect your daily walk with God?
 - B. Stand firm in your unity- 1:27-28.
 1. “Stand firm in one spirit.” Satan attacks believers from without and within. The Philippian church was experiencing both. As the church, we can handle the attacks from without if we stand together as one body. But when we divide from within, we are vulnerable to attacks from outside our ranks. Satan divides and destroys. If he can divide us from within, he can destroy us from without. As men, we must have other men who will hold us up and have our backs. When we attack and hurt other Christians, we give Satan a huge foothold in our own lives to attack and destroy us.

2. "Don't be frightened by those who oppose you (from without). The Greek word is "terrified." They were suffering from opposition in their culture. Paul told them not to be terrified when the world came against them. Stand together as one unit when under attack from culture. Remember the final outcome. We win the war between good and evil. In the end, the believers are saved and spend eternity in heaven with Jesus. The world hates us because we remind them of their own depravity and coming destruction. In difficult times- especially times brought on by our standing for truth- remember the end game. How important is Christian unity to the heart of God? Why is Christian unity so important in spiritual warfare? What do you need to do to be unified with your brothers in Christ?
- C. Stand firm in your belief- 1:29.
1. Paul knew that all Christians throughout history would experience struggles and even persecution for their faith. Tough times are a part of the human existence. God wants his people to handle adversity with a steadfast and stable faith; not by whimsical and emotional reactionism.
 2. Our faith is our rock in hard times. Satan always attacks with doubt. He wants to get us to doubt our beliefs and believe our doubts. If he succeeds in this ploy, he can shake our faith to its core and make us weak in the face of temptations and trials. Faith is born and grows in the presence of doubt. Doubt is a part of the human condition. As believers, we must believe our beliefs and doubt our doubts. Hold on to what you know to be true. It is our anchor in the storms of life. How would you describe your faith right now? How does Satan use doubt to undermine our faith? What does it mean to "believe your beliefs and doubt your doubts?"
- D. Stand firm in your calling- 1:29-30. Paul let the Philippian believers know this truth: as believers in Christ we will follow in Jesus' footsteps. He suffered and died for us. When we live for Christ, we will receive a calling to suffer for following him as our Lord and Savior. When suffering comes, we must stand firm in our identity and faith with the support of other believers. We must know that suffering is a part of our calling as Christians. Don't run from it or deny it or blame God for it. Accept it as part of being a disciple of Jesus and allow God to use it to refine you and give you a witness to the world. Why is suffering the calling of a believer? In what ways do we suffer for our faith in this culture? How would you describe Paul's advice about responding to suffering in these verses? What is your takeaway from this study?

