

Sunday 23 Sept: Royalty Series, Part 1

How can we embrace the call of the King and take steps that will produce a harvest?

Intro

Grooms advice to his future bride - I might appear unconventional, but trust me when I tell you that there is a plan.

Read Matt 13: 1-43

Gives us 3 perspectives on the Kingdom and provides an explanation concerning the use of parables.

Firstly

Use of parables.

¹⁰ *The disciples came to him and asked, “Why do you speak to the people in parables?”*

¹¹ *He replied, “**Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them.**”* ¹² *Whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them.* ¹³ *This is why I speak to them in parables:*

*“**Though seeing, they do not see;
though hearing, they do not hear or understand.***

¹⁴ *In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah:*

*“You will be ever hearing but never understanding;
you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.*

¹⁵ *For this people’s heart has become calloused;
they hardly hear with their ears,
and they have closed their eyes.*

*Otherwise they might see with their eyes,
hear with their ears,
understand with their hearts
and turn, and I would heal them.’*

¹⁶ ***But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear.*** ¹⁷ *For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.*

There was a blindness in the hearts of the people, and in particular the Jewish leaders - they were wanting to see messiah come all guns blazing to boot out the Romans and affirm their hierarchy. They weren’t expecting the hearts first and physical kingdom second approach of Jesus.

(Jesus had engaged in direct preaching — Sermon on the Mount etc..)

Parables require a more sensitive or submissive heart, open to possibilities, rather than bound by expectations. The disciples had in their “follow me” moments evidenced that they were open to possibilities hence the comment in v11 re secrets or mysteries depending upon translation.

Parables allow alien concepts to be appreciated by the hearer through the use of day to day situations of which they are familiar. In this instance, Jesus is using the hearers’ familiarity with farming to explain some characteristics of his Kingdom.

So what is his Kingdom?

— The redemptive rule/reign of God in Christ —

we read in Luke 17:20-21

Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, ‘The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed,²¹ nor will people say, “Here it is,” or “There it is,” because the kingdom of God is in your midst.’

“Visit us with Thy salvation, Enter every trembling heart” as Charles Wesley puts it in the hymn Love Divine.

We’ll pick the Kingdom’s first and second coming up again when we look at the Parable of the Weeds.

Parables normally communicate a central truth. They contain symbols, but don’t get carried away in trying to interpret every last detail else you miss the point.

Parable of the Sower

The players:

Sower - Jesus, and by proxy those who subsequently preach the Gospel message

Seed - message of salvation — life, death & resurrection of Jesus.

Note that the ‘seed’ is spoken and requires to be heard.

CSI “like unto” rather than knowingly sown on to unproductive soil

The degree to which it is heard is the subject of Jesus’ classification system of the human heart - 4 varieties:

Hard

Superficial

Divided

Good

Note the use of the word 'understand' in v 19 and v 23 contrasting the Hard and Good hearts. In contemporary English we associate 'understanding' with intellectual appreciation - knowing about something, but the underlying meaning in the text is richer than this:

blue letter bible: strong's

συνίημι *syníēmi*, soon-ee'-ay-mee; from G4862 and ἵημι *híēmi* (to send); **to put together, i.e. (mentally) to comprehend; by implication, to act piously:—consider, understand, be wise.**

it is associated with action.

So what are we to make of the 4 conditions of the heart?

From the perspective of a sower:

- you can craft the finest message, but you can't account for the condition of the listener's heart
- so don't make yourself responsible for the seed germinating, you can try and prompt 'soil improvement' but the work is all out of reach - at most you can pray for the hearer's change of heart
- you don't know what sort of soil (heart) you are sowing on to, so don't try and discriminate
- spread the Word widely and liberally
- note that that crop is judged by its fruit, i.e. at harvest, whereas 'conversion' counters count when the first green shoot breaks the ground.
- look after seedlings - discipleship

From the hearer's perspective:

Aside - all the hearts could be religious (impersonal rigid schema) and/or moral (list of do and list of don't)

Hard: v 19

When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path.

- water off a duck's back
- intellectual hearing only, the Word remains theoretical
- the heart remains in rebellion
- Or as CS Lewis has it in *The Screwtape Letters* -

Never having been a human (oh, that abominable advantage of the Enemy's!) you don't realise how enslaved they are to the pressure of the ordinary. I once had a patient, a sound atheist, who used to read in the British Museum. One day, as he sat reading, I saw a train of thought in his mind beginning to go the wrong way. The Enemy, of course, was at his elbow in a moment. Before I knew where I was I saw my twenty years' work beginning to totter. If I had lost my head and begun to attempt a defence by argument, I should have been undone. But I was not such a fool. I struck instantly at the part of the man which I had best under my control, and suggested that it was just about time he had some lunch. The Enemy presumably made the counter-suggestion (you know how one can never quite overhear what He says to them?) that this was more important than lunch. At least I think that must have been His line, for when I said, "Quite. In fact much too important to

tackle at the end of a morning," the patient brightened up considerably; and by the time I had added "**Much better come back after lunch and go into it with a fresh mind,**" he was already halfway to the door. **Once he was in the street the battle was won. I showed him a newsboy shouting the midday paper, and a No. 73 bus going past, and before he reached the bottom of the steps I had got into him an unalterable conviction that, whatever odd ideas might come into a man's head when he was shut up alone with his books, a healthy dose of "real life" (by which he meant the bus and the newsboy) was enough to show him that all "that sort of thing" just couldn't be true.** He knew he'd had a narrow escape, and in later years was fond of talking about "that inarticulate sense for actuality which is our ultimate safe guard against the aberrations of mere logic." He is now safe in Our Father's house.

Superficial: v 20 - 21

The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. ²¹ But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away.

- no depth to draw on when times get hard
- question the Kings kingship "what use is this king to me if he can't x, y, z?"
- emotional response

Divided: v 22

The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful.

- the power-sharing arrangement, under whose kingship do they really live?
- contradicted heart, two masters, miserable
- Consciously or unconsciously haven't dismantled their idols (or functional saviours)
 - money
 - power
 - position
 - lifestyle
 - conduct
 - scheduling
 - kids
 - spouse
 - job/boss
- weeds can grow imperceptibly slowly, so perhaps a passive rather than active choice
- CS Lewis again...

*"It does not matter how small the sins are provided that their cumulative effect is to edge the man away from the Light and out into the Nothing. Murder is no better than cards if cards can do the trick. **Indeed the safest road to Hell is the gradual one--the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts.**"*

— C.S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*

Good: v 23

But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.

- understands the old life must die - John 12:25
- yielded to the King
- fruitful...to varying degrees (30, 60, 100...a normal yield would be 10)...all good to the Master

Strong's: to be fertile (literally or figuratively):—be (bear, bring forth) fruit(-ful).

- **Galatians 5:22-23a** *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control*
- **2 Peter 1:3-7** *His divine power has given us **everything we need for a godly life** through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. ⁴ Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.⁵ **For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; ⁶ and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; ⁷ and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love.***
- enjoys the tutelage of the Spirit, Hebrews 10:14 (sanctification)

*For by **one** sacrifice he has **made perfect** for ever those who are **being made holy**.*

Humility? Is that the thing we need to bring in order for the seed to fully mature? **Micah 6:8** *He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.*

Aside:

Sowing or lifestyle evangelism (John 13:35 ...they will know that you are my disciples if you have love one for another...), which comes first?...changed lifestyle is part of the fruit...but still the seed must be sown...you must be humble enough to sow, to deflect any compliment and reinterpret it to present the better King, Jesus.

Parable of the Weeds

The players:

- the man - Jesus (only)
- the field - the world
- the good seed - people of the kingdom
- the weeds - people of the evil one
- the enemy - the devil

Context

The weed was likely Darnell - indistinguishable from wheat until the fruiting heads appear, a common and frustrating problem for farmers of the day.

The 'age' refers to the period between the first and second coming of Christ.

The Kingdom is both now and not yet.

the now - **Luke 17:20-21** *...in your midst...* & **Matt 28: 18-20** *...All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me...*

- the Lord is seeking and gathering people to himself
- renewing hearts of believers, making them justified in the eyes of God by gifting them his righteousness

the not yet - **Isaiah 65: 17-19** *See, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. ¹⁸ But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. ¹⁹ I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more.* & Rev 21

- new heaven and new earth
- 'eden restored'
- end of death
- new bodies
- **this is what Jesus is offering if you yield to him and give up on being in rebellion against God...it is the *hope* of the message.**

What are we to make of this parable?

First:

- Take heart, there is a plan, the evil will be dealt with
- judgement is coming

Second:

- there is the opportunity to change, from weed to wheat

Third:

- Avoid making judgment (reserved for the King) or comparison (you might be unwittingly measuring yourself against a weed), instead be undistracted in your service of the King

We can see from **Matt 7:22** (Lord, Lord...) that sincere words and outward signs are not sufficient, Jesus looks at the heart, and is clear on what he expects to see in terms of the owner's disposition (i.e. qualities of mind and character). The MSG paraphrase translation is brutal - **Matt 7:13-27**.

Matt 7:13-27 (MSG)

13-14 "Don't look for shortcuts to God. The market is flooded with surefire, easygoing formulas for a successful life that can be practiced in your spare time. Don't fall for that stuff, even though crowds of people do. The way to life—to God!—is vigorous and requires total attention.

15-20 "Be wary of false preachers who smile a lot, dripping with practiced sincerity. Chances are they are out to rip you off some way or other. Don't be impressed with charisma; look for character. Who preachers are is the main thing, not what they say. A genuine leader will never exploit your emotions or your pocketbook. These diseased trees with their bad apples are going to be chopped down and burned.

21-23 "Knowing the correct password—saying 'Master, Master,' for instance— isn't going to get you anywhere with me. What is required is serious obedience—doing what my Father wills. I can see it now—at the Final Judgment thousands strutting up to me and saying, 'Master, we preached the Message, we bashed the demons, our God-sponsored projects had everyone talking.' And do you know what I am going to say? 'You missed the boat. All you did was use me to make yourselves important. You don't impress me one bit. You're out of here.'

24-25 "These words I speak to you are not incidental additions to your life, homeowner improvements to your standard of living. They are foundational words, words to build a life on. If you work these words into your life, you are like a smart carpenter who built his house on solid rock. Rain poured down, the river flooded, a tornado hit—but nothing moved that house. It was fixed to the rock.

26-27 "But if you just use my words in Bible studies and don't work them into your life, you are like a stupid carpenter who built his house on the sandy beach. When a storm rolled in and the waves came up, it collapsed like a house of cards."

Parables of Mustard Seed & Yeast

In the style of “*Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?*”, Jesus here is assuring us that small / humble beginnings, such as the mustard seed, can mature into something comparatively a whole lot more impressive. God habitually chooses the smallest, the least, the weakest, the unaccomplished, the flawed, the outcast as his means of getting things done...the qualification being a yielding heart.

The Kingdom has grown hugely, from the carpenter’s son, to a band of Galileans, to thousands at a time of the Acts and through history to present, with allegiance in 2018 estimated (some how) to be 2.22 Bn world wide, over 30% of the population. The seed has indeed grown.

Wherever the Gospel is heard and understood the seed of the Kingdom can grow.

So don’t be put off doing some planting of your own by lack of resources or infrastructure, or be in awe of those with these things in abundance...if your heart is prompted by the Spirit, then strike out and try.

Some commentators suggest that the birds represent evil, i.e. as the kingdom grows so other things will latch on or hide in it. But don’t be overly anxious as we can be assured the King will sweep up evil in his own good time.

All starts by seed falling to the ground, giving of itself.

Yeast or leaven

In the Bible yeast can symbolically be good or evil. Here it represents good, small beginning - but potent enough to transform a significant quantity.

- as the seed of the Gospel works through the heart
- so it works through the many, bringing those that would listen into the Kingdom
- Distributed rather than singular effort
- Irreversible

Conclusion

So finally, to draw all this together and return to the question:

How can we embrace the call of the King and take steps that will produce a harvest?

- be ruthlessly honest with yourself in identifying the disposition of your heart
 - be purposeful in your wholehearted study and embrace of the Word and its outworking in your life
 - and pray for and accept the work of the Spirit that you should continue to be made holy
- the seed must be sown
 - which means knowing and being familiar in speaking the message of the Gospel, the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and what that means for mankind
 - and being proactive both individually and collectively, in whole or in part, in sowing & discipleship
- be spurred on by the promise of the Kingdom yet to come

and,

- don't be sidetracked or disillusioned by evil shenanigans, the King has a plan.

Amen.

The Parable of the Sower

13 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. ² Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. ³ Then he told them many things in parables, saying: “A farmer went out to sow his seed. ⁴ As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵ Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. ⁶ But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. ⁷ Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. ⁸ Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. ⁹ Whoever has ears, let them hear.”

¹⁰ The disciples came to him and asked, “Why do you speak to the people in parables?”

¹¹ He replied, “Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. ¹² Whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. ¹³ This is why I speak to them in parables:

*“Though seeing, they do not see;
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¹⁴ In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah:

*“‘You will be ever hearing but never understanding;
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*¹⁵ For this people’s heart has become calloused;
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*Otherwise they might see with their eyes,
hear with their ears,
understand with their hearts
and turn, and I would heal them.’*

¹⁶ But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. ¹⁷ For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

¹⁸ “Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: ¹⁹ When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. ²⁰ The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. ²¹ But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. ²² The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. ²³ But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”

The Parable of the Weeds

²⁴ Jesus told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. ²⁵ But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. ²⁶ When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared.

²⁷ “The owner’s servants came to him and said, ‘Sir, didn’t you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?’

²⁸ “‘An enemy did this,’ he replied.

“The servants asked him, ‘Do you want us to go and pull them up?’

²⁹ “‘No,’ he answered, ‘because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. ³⁰ Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.’”

The Parables of the Mustard Seed and the Yeast

³¹ He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. ³² Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.”

³³ He told them still another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds^[b] of flour until it worked all through the dough.”

³⁴ Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables; he did not say anything to them without using a parable. ³⁵ So was fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet:

“I will open my mouth in parables,

I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world.”^[c]

The Parable of the Weeds Explained

³⁶ Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field.”

³⁷ He answered, “The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. ³⁸ The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the people of the kingdom. The weeds are the people of the evil one, ³⁹ and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

⁴⁰ “As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. ⁴¹ The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. ⁴² They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³ Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let them hear.

John 12: 24-26

²⁴ Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. ²⁵ Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶ Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.

1 John 3: 1-10

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ² Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears,^[a] we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. ³ All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

⁴ Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. ⁵ But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. ⁶ No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.

⁷ Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. The one who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. ⁸ The one who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. ⁹ No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in them; they cannot go on sinning, because they have been born of God. ¹⁰ This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: anyone who does not do what is right is not God's child, nor is anyone who does not love their brother and sister.

Luke 17: 20-21

Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, 'The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, ²¹ nor will people say, "Here it is," or "There it is," because the kingdom of God is in your midst.'

2 Peter 1:3-11

His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. ⁴ Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

⁵ For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; ⁶ and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; ⁷ and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. ⁸ For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins.

¹⁰ Therefore, my brothers and sisters,^[a] make every effort to confirm your calling and election. For if you do these things, you will never stumble, ¹¹ and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Galatians 5:22-23a

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
23 gentleness and self-control.*

Hebrews 10:14

For by one sacrifice he has made perfect for ever those who are being made holy.

John 15: 1-10

‘I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. 2 He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes^[a] so that it will be even more fruitful. 3 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. 4 Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

5 ‘I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. 7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

9 ‘As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. 10 If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love.

Matt 28:18-20

Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Luke 17:1-4

Jesus said to his disciples: “Things that cause people to stumble are bound to come, but woe to anyone through whom they come. 2 It would be better for them to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around their neck than to cause one of these little ones to stumble. 3 So watch yourselves.

“If your brother or sister^[a] sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them. 4 Even if they sin against you seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying ‘I repent,’ you must forgive them.”

Isaiah 65:17-19

“See, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. ¹⁸ But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. ¹⁹ I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more.

Matt 7:21-23 (NIV)

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’ ²³ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’

Matt 7:13-27 (MSG)

¹³⁻¹⁴ “Don’t look for shortcuts to God. The market is flooded with surefire, easygoing formulas for a successful life that can be practiced in your spare time. Don’t fall for that stuff, even though crowds of people do. The way to life—to God!—is vigorous and requires total attention.

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Philippians 1:27-28

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,^[e] 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.