



**Big Idea: Joy is the product of confidence in Christ.**

**-- Setting the Stage – Understanding Union with Christ**

- Union with Christ is the interpretive **Key** to the New Testament.
- Salvation in Christ means that, by grace through faith, Christ is in us and we are in Christ (1 John 4:13-15).
- Two implications of union with Christ vital to understanding this text:
  - 1.) Because Christ is in us, our lives say something about Him.
  - 2.) Because we are in Christ, His life sets the pattern for our own.

**1.) Stand for Christ with **Courage** (v. 28).**

**-- “...without being frightened...”**

- A good, literal English translation is “*without being skittish.*”
- Skittish believers get too invested in the wrong kingdom (Mark 4:18-19).
- Skittish believers focus on our rival instead of our Redeemer (2 Kings 6:15-17, 1 Peter 3:14-15).

**-- “...by those who oppose you...”**

- Opposition to the Gospel aims to **Frighten** God’s people.
- Opposition aims to make sinners deny it and make the saints be quiet.
- We fall for Satan’s scheme when we fear the world (1 John 4:18).

**-- “This will be a sign to them...”**

- Because Christ is in us, our lives are meant to proclaim something true about Him.
- Confidence in the face of opposition to the Gospel makes clear that our God alone is the one true **Judge** of all (Mat. 10:28-33).

- Confidence in the face of opposition makes clear that man cannot stop what God has started in Christ.
- Tertullian – “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.”
- Matthew 16:18 – “*And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.*”

## 2.) **Suffer** for Christ with confidence (v. 29).

### -- “**...but also to suffer for him...**”

- Suffering for Christ means suffering in a way that that gives glory of God through the exaltation of Christ.
- John Piper – “All suffering that comes in the path of obedience is suffering with Christ and for Christ.”

### -- “**For it has been granted to you...**”

- Literally = “*For it has been given to you as a grace from God...*”
- In our union with Christ, we share in all that He did and accomplished on our behalf.
- **Suffering for Christ is *Proof* of our union with Christ** (John 15:2, 1 Peter 4:12-13).
  - Because we are one with Christ, we are one with Him not only in His glory but also in His suffering.
  - Suffering for Christ is a sure sign of our union with Him (2 Timothy 2:11-13).
- **Suffering for Christ is a *Testimony* to the Gospel** (Colossians 1:24).
  - As the body of Christ, united to Him by His Spirit, we are meant by God to make tangible the sufferings of Christ (2 Corinthians 4:8-11).
  - Even as Christ saved us by His sufferings in the body, so we witness to Him by our sufferings as His body.
- Suffering is a gift from God because it validates our eternal connection to Christ and makes real the Gospel we profess.

## Application

- **Rejoice** in the confidence we have been given in Christ, especially in the midst of persecution and suffering (Mat. 5:11-12 , Luke 6:22-23, Acts 5:41, Rom. 5:3-4, 2 Cor. 8:1-2, Col. 1:24, 1 Thes. 1:6, 1 Peter 1:6, 1 Pet. 4:13, James 1:2).

-- Stand for Christ with courage. Suffer for Christ with confidence. Rejoice that it tells of your union with Christ.