

Agony of Defeat

(Sermon Notes)

By Warren Zehrung 6/6/2015

Beginning in the 1970's, ABC TV had a program called, "Wide World of Sports." Most older people will be somewhat familiar with the TV sports program because in those days there were only three major TV networks and the show was popular for 37 years. A part of the introduction to the program went like this:

"...Spanning the globe to bring you the constant variety of sport... the thrill of victory... and the **agony of defeat**..." The catchphrase, "The agony of defeat," became a symbol for stunning failure.

At about the same time, in the 1970's the Church instituted a program for our church youth. It was called **Youth Opportunities United** – or **Y.O.U.** for short. Baton Rouge was given a charter membership for **Y.O.U.** in Baton Rouge, LA. I was appointed to be the **Y.O.U.** Coordinator for our area. I think that I was chosen for my qualifications.

- I had the ability to travel.
- I had teenagers, and
- I had a large van.

We were called **YOU District 51** which encompassed the southern half Louisiana and all of Mississippi up to Memphis, TN. We would travel to Big Sandy, TX for Regional tournaments. Camping, Basketball and Volleyball were some of our activities, but for the purposes of this sermon, I want to tell you about our Track and Field program.

We would get up early on Sunday mornings – gather up as many of our teens from far and wide and find a park to practice in – preferably with a ¼ mile track – all in preparation for the next big Track Meet. It wasn't all fun and games – there was a lot of training and hard work involved.

I want to relay one part of that experience with you. It was the girl's long-distance race. Some of those girls were driven to win – and they put everything they had into training and racing. The day of the big race was everything! We had traveled long distances to be able to participate. The kids had their colorful uniforms which properly identified the different competing teams.

We did not have mascots per se, but the kids had chosen a name for our team. We were the "Bullets," because nothing was faster than a speeding bullet!

The time came for the girls long-distance race – everyone was in their starting position – bang – the starting gun was fired! Off they went around that oval track – round and round and round. It was exhilarating and exciting! Some dropped back – some surged ahead. Until in the final laps – when the anguish was clearly seen on their faces...

And then the dash to the finish line. It was nip and tuck... They gave it all that they had – gasping for air, running all-out with all the physical and mental exertion they could demand of their bodies, lungs burning, muscles aching, totally fatigued... only one would cross the finish line first – and the winner would all but collapse after race in pain and anguish and sheer exhaustion.

The ancient Greeks had a word for this **athletic contest** and that word was "**Agony**." That is our Greek word for today – "**Agony**," as we will be looking into the word of God and exploring the world of suffering and agony as they apply to converted Christians.

The meaning of 'agone' in the Greek language derives from the concept of an athletic contest. The very direct analogy of this Greek word was not lost on Paul.

1Corinthians 9:23 And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.

1Corinthians 9:24 Know ye not that they which **run in a race** run all, but one receives the prize? **So run**, that ye may obtain.

1Corinthians 9:25 And every man that strives for the mastery [**'agonizomai'**] is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

1Corinthians 9:26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beats the air:

1Corinthians 9:27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

“...be a castaway...” there is that **agony of defeat** word, again! As you would imagine, in the Greek language, there are various endings and prefaces to the word like, ‘Agony, agonize, agonizing,’ and so forth – but for our purposes today – I’ll simply refer to the various translations as the word derived from “**agony**.”

In English, ‘agony’ has come to mean – ‘pain, hurt, suffering, torture, torment, anguish, affliction, trauma.’ But in the Greek of the Bible, “agony” still retains much of its athletic connotations such as ‘contend’ [*agonizomai*] ‘fight, strive, struggle, labor fervently, endeavor, compete, earnestly contend, agonize,’ that all-out effort of crossing that finish line first! Suffice it to say that many of the Greek nuances were lost on the King James translators of 1611.

The Greeks were big into athletic events – even having originated the world Olympics. This first Scriptural excerpt comes from the night of Christ’s passion. Try to picture what was going through Christ’s mind as He contemplated His imminent death – as He approached the finish line. Jesus was emptied of all His stamina...

Luke 22:42 Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.

The **stress**..., the weight of the sins of the world – were almost too much to bear.

Luke 22:43 And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.

Jesus was at the point of exhaustion and collapse.

Luke 22:44 And being in an **agony** [Greek ‘*agonia*’ - anguish] He prayed more earnestly: and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

Remember that this Greek word “Agony” means to struggle, contend, - [*agonizomai*]- means] - fight, labor fervently, endeavor, or compete.

John 18:36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, [Greek ‘*agonizomai*’ strive for the finish line with all their might] that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

Let’s fast forward some 2000 years to now!

It seems that in these last days the overall Church of God is taking our Christian calling all **too** casually. I still encounter a concept in God’s Church that says in effect, “I’ve become a Christian... Shouldn’t my life be filled only with peace, joy, contentment and happiness?”

Do we realize that as Christians, we have given up our own agenda of always having everything our own way? Brethren, there is also a very real component of **suffering and agony** in a Christian’s everyday life.

Do we agonize over being true Christians in every sense of the word? Or, after all these years in the Church, are we just kind of drifting along?

Do we strive – like going for the finish line – for the meat of God’s word, or are we content with the low-key, toned-down approach most congregations have settled for? Do we provoke our ministers to love and good works as it says in Hebrews 10:24, or have we assumed the posture of our wayward forefathers?

Isaiah 30:10 *“Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits.”* (Isaiah 30:10)

In other words, do we say to our ministers? “Tell us that everything is alright? “Give us sermons that make us feel good. “Don’t rock our boat because we like things the way they are. “Don’t make us face any problems because we don’t want to get that involved. “Don’t make us take a stand for our faith... Say it to us over and over again – that God is pleased with us just like we are.”

Could we be setting ourselves up for stunning failure? Just think, if Jesus Christ were to say to us when we stand before Him to give an accounting of ourselves,

Matthew 7:23 I never knew you: **depart** from me, ye that work iniquity.

Romans 14:10 ... we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

Romans 14:12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

Just imagine if Jesus Christ were to say to us,

Luke 13:28 There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the Kingdom of God, and **you yourselves thrust out**.

Can you envision the sheer horror of hearing Jesus Christ uttering those words? That, my friend, would surely be the **agony of defeat**!

But, never fear, God tells us how we can turn the situation around one-hundred and eighty degrees and go the opposite direction. We come to the most vital concept expressed in all the Scriptures. It is the example that Jesus Christ, Himself, gave to us. It is a matter of suffering and denying ourselves now. Jesus said:

Luke 9:22 The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day.

Luke 9:23 And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him **deny himself**, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

Luke 9:24 For whosoever will [seek to] save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will **lose his life** for my sake, the same shall save it. Do not let anyone fool you; it is not easy to be a Christian. In fact it is an agonizing and ongoing process of **laying down our life** daily for Christ's sake – that is the only way we will ever hear the words:

Matthew 25:21, 23 Well done, you good and faithful servant... enter you into the joy of thy Lord.

The phrase "laying down our life" is not generally understood very well. Whenever we realize that a spiritual problem needs addressing, whether personal, congregational or doctrinal, we must do everything within our purview and might to render a resolution to the predicament – no matter what it personally costs us with regard to our good reputation, status, or even being willing to sacrifice our life itself. God would not have shown the problem to us – except that He expects us to get profoundly involved.

Leviticus 5:1 When someone sins, and [you] hear [about the evidence of the transgression] or, are an eyewitness, whether [you] hath seen or known of it; if [you] do not expose it, then [you] shall bear his iniquity.

God says that we must get involved for everyone's sake – or be just as guilty as the perpetrators.

In today's sermon I am going to turn around this phrase, the **agony of defeat**, to represent the agony a Christian experiences in overcoming sin. There is an agony that is involved in defeating sin. Christians are indeed called upon to suffer for righteousness sake – there is no way around it.

2Timothy 3:12 All that will live godly in Christ Jesus **shall suffer** persecution.

Suffering is part and parcel with our Christian walk. Suffering for a Christian is to be expected – that is why we counted the cost before becoming baptized. We should not be surprised by trials, afflictions and sufferings.

1Thessalonians 3:3 No man should be moved by these **afflictions**: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.

Suffering for righteousness sake must be expected by a Christian.

1Thessalonians 3:4 For truly, when we were with you, we told you before that we should **suffer tribulation** [trials]; even as it came to pass, and ye know.

There is **an** agony we must go through before we are victorious –

- victory in conquering the self;
- victory over this evil society; and the
- victory, ultimately won, over Satan himself.

Jesus came to this earth to show us that we are to **suffer** through many **agonizing** conflicts in our spiritual quest, but if we faint not, we shall go on and overcome all impediments, and with His help prove **victorious** at the end.

Let's look at a number of Scriptures that will help convey the concept of suffering and agony that a true Christian experiences. Peter makes a very important distinction:

When we **suffer** for our own shortcomings – it is to be expected. But when we suffer for living according to the Gospel – it is pleasing in God's sight.

1Peter 2:19 For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure **grief, suffering** wrongfully.

1Peter 2:20 For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye **do well**, and **suffer** for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable [favorable] with God.

It is the expected lot of a Christian to suffer - especially when pleasing God and walking in His way.

1Peter 2:21 For even hereunto were **ye called**: because Christ also **suffered** for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

1Peter 3:14 But and if ye **suffer for righteousness' sake**, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

1Peter 3:18 For Christ also hath once **suffered** for sins, the Just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

1Peter 4:12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

1Peter 4:13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's **sufferings**; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

I received an email in response to this week's Countdown letter. The writer had met for lunch with a few old friends that remain in one of the larger church splits. The writer said that in that bigger organization, they teach, "Be kind to each other," and that is as deep as they get. Here are some excerpts from the letter:

"During our lunch, I spoke repeatedly about the leaders of the church **forsaking** Christ's teaching about repentance and admonishing us to work

diligently towards God's righteousness and never let up.

"I was telling them how the churches of God were only speaking about "**love and acceptance**." They talk about bringing the gospel to the world and yet they don't follow through.

"They drop the seldom-used word "**repentance**" like a hot potato and move on to paragraph after paragraph about meetings and income.

"My comments were met with stony silence. Their eyes showed no acknowledgement or understanding of how much they had moved away from the practice of true Christianity.

"I could have cried. The only thing they said as they changed the subject, was that it's all political and they simply want to ignore the upper-echelon infighting and get on with their Saturday social relationships.

"It is such a struggle to overcome. Each day things happen that test our resolve and our level of conversion. I understand that I can't handle it on my own without God's Spirit anchoring me." [end email response]

It is like so much of the scattered church is "brain-dead," and unable to apply God's word to their lives.

I want to compare a very **similar** encounter with those of a Laodicean attitude that elicited this same **anguish** in Paul. Here is an example of Paul suffering as Christ did. It is easy to overlook because of the translation:

Colossians 2:1 For I would that ye knew what great conflict [great **agony**] I have for you, and for them at Laodicea...

We must **agonize** over our faith – it is not to a warm a seat on a downhill slide into the Kingdom of God. Paul's directive to Timothy almost reads like a prayer:

2Timothy 2:24 And the servant of the Lord must not strive [war, quarrel, dispute]; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,

2Timothy 2:25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will **give them repentance** to the acknowledging of the truth;

2Timothy 2:26 And that they **may recover** themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

Paul is expressing the **agonizing** pain he has for the brethren – much like Jesus experienced in the Garden of Gethsemane the night before He died.

Those who oppose themselves – their eyes are closed – they **will not** and cannot hear – it is agonizing. Jude, the ½ brother to Jesus has some good advice to those who have let down and are only coasting along in their faith:

Jude :1 Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called:

Jude :2 Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.

Jude :3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful [necessary] for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should **earnestly contend** [epagonizomai] for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

Go for that “first love” of the faith you once had like **striving** with all your might for the finish line of the race. Our Christian walk is an agonizing trek.

The Prophet, Isaiah, foretold the approach and manner that Jesus would portray when He came to this earth. In God’s Church, we’ve heard a lot over the years about how Jesus was going to **spank**, correct, **judge** and obliterate those who oppose Him. Indeed, though the claims have no merit, for many people, the God of the Old Testament is depicted as a “harsh God.”

Let’s read this section of Scripture where Isaiah describes the character and methodology of Jesus the Messiah when He comes to the earth in the flesh. We will read through this brief selection – and analyze the meaning:

Isaiah 42:1 Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon Him: He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.

Isaiah 42:2 He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street.

Isaiah 42:3 A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.

Isaiah 42:4 He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.

Now, let’s revisit these verses and expound on this description of Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 42:1 Behold my **servant** [the Messiah], whom I uphold [this is from God the Father’s perspective]; mine elect, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the nations of the earth.

We know well the passion and **agony** suffered by Jesus - not because of any fault or sin of His own - and He did not fail under the tremendous weight of the sins of the world - because His Father upheld Him.

Jesus will come to this earth again soon as a **servant** – the servant Messiah!

Isaiah 42:1 ... mine elect, in whom my soul delights... Jesus was indeed the Father’s elect Son in who He was well pleased.

Peter recalls the occasion of the transfiguration when the Father spoke from heaven:

2Peter 1:17 For [Jesus] received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

Isaiah 42:1 ...I have put my Spirit upon him

Luke 3:22 And the **Holy Spirit** descended in a bodily form like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven... [God’s Spirit is the very Mind and Life of God without measure.

John 3:34 For He whom God hath sent speaks the words of God: for God gives not the Spirit by measure unto Him.

Isaiah 42:1 ... he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. Only Jesus Christ is able to bring forth righteous judgment to the nations of the earth.

Isaiah 42:2 He shall not cry, nor **lift up**, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.

Jesus did not come as an agitator to stir up, incite rebellion, foment political unrest, or instigate trouble in a contentious way. Simply speaking the **truth** brought the wrath of the authorities down upon Jesus Christ. Jesus could have come to this earth as a conquering Hero, like a Genghis Kahn or a Nebuchadnezzar – but He did not. He came totally unlike the typical King or conquistador with **swords** flashing, vanquishing the foes.

Isaiah 42:3 A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.

Some ministers think that the Gospel is to be preached like a herd of bull elephants tromping down the undergrowth – destroying and dominating people, homes and families in their path. A reed is a delicate water plant. It is like a stalk of tender grass – easily trodden down and broken over – and once damaged; it is unable to right itself again. God's people are often that way – often frail and weak. Jesus did not crush a single person in His delivery of the Good News of His Father's coming Kingdom. He did not bruise or wound the weak brethren to whom He came in gentleness and understanding.

Isaiah 42:3 “...the smoking flax shall he not quench.” He did not snuff out the spirit in those whom were being called of the Father.

Brethren, Jesus is our role model of how to trust God and live righteously. We do not face the world with guns blazing, or calling fire down from heaven as James and John were want to do.

Luke 9:54 And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command **fire to come down from heaven**, and consume them, even as Elias did?

Luke 9:55 But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not **what manner of spirit ye are of.**

Brethren, do we know what manner of spirit we are of?

Credit to: John Gill's <http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/isaiah-42-4.html>

Isaiah 42:4 He shall not fail [The Hebrew shows - as when **a light goes dim**] nor be discouraged [broken and crushed], until he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.

The Light of Jesus Christ shone in this dark world.

John 1:5 And the light shines in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

John 1:9 [Jesus] was the true Light, which lights every man that cometh into the world.

John 1:10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

Isaiah 42:4 “...nor be discouraged.” [broken and crushed] Jesus did not fall beneath the enormous weight of the mission set before Him. He was not crushed or broken – but He overcame all. Jesus said:

John 16:33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; **I have overcome the world.**

Isaiah 42:4 “...until he has set judgment in the earth: Jesus, because He is the hands-on Creator is **worth more** than all created things that have come about through Him. Just as an artist is greater than his paintings – which he could re-paint if it were necessary. Jesus paid the price of judgment in pouring out His own blood, and thereby he has **victoriously** set judgment in the earth.

Hebrews 9:12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but **by his own blood** he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained **eternal redemption** for us.

Isaiah 42:4 “...and the isles shall wait for his law.” The Gospel will go to all the earth and then Jesus will return.

Matthew 12:21 And in his name shall the Nations trust.

Matthew 12:14 Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council **against** him, how they might destroy him. [Religious persecution.]

Matthew 12:15 But when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all;

Matthew 12:16 And [Jesus] charged them that they should not make him known:

Matthew 12:17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by **Isaiah** the prophet, saying, [Mathew quotes the verses we have been looking at.]

Matthew 12:18 Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my Spirit upon him, and he shall show judgment to the Gentiles.

Matthew 12:19 He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.

Matthew 12:20 A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.

Matthew 12:21 And in his name shall the Nations trust.

How much effort should we be applying to enter the Kingdom of God?

Luke 13:24 **Strive** [*'agonizomai'* – like going for the finish line with all our might – that is what this word connotes] to enter in at the strait gate: for **many**, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall **not** be able.

'agonizomai' means [**agonize**, struggle, contend, fight, labor fervently, endeavor, compete, earnestly contend with that all-out effort to the finish line.]

2Timothy 2:3 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

2Timothy 2:4 No man that wars entangles himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

2Timothy 2:5 And if a man also **strive for masteries** [*'athleo'* - an athletic term], yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.

We do not preach a prosperity Gospel message. As a true Christian we will **not** experience a life of Raleigh – of ease, contentment, and gratification.

Brethren, let me ask you this question – was it **easy** for Jesus Christ – or was He marred more than any man? (Isaiah 52:14 quoted above)

Colossians 1:26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:

Colossians 1:27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; **which is Christ in you**, the hope of glory:

Colossians 1:28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:

How much was Paul effort and strength in the Gospel work?

Colossians 1:29 Whereunto I also labor, striving [*'agonizomai'*] [struggling with all might!] according to his working, which works in me **mightily**.

Colossians 4:12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, salutes you, always **laboring fervently** [*'agonizomai'*] for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

Colossians 4:13 For I bear him record, that he hath a great **zeal** for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis.

Paul's example is that he both **labored** with all his might – **and** he **suffered** also.

1Timothy 4:8 For bodily exercise profits a little while: [there is that athletic analogy] but Godliness is profitable **unto all things**, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

Yes, Godliness is eternally profitable.

1Timothy 4:9 This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation.

1Timothy 4:10 For therefore we **both labor** and **suffer reproach**, because we **trust** in the living God, [that's faith] who is the Savior of all men, specially of those that believe.

1Timothy 6:11 ...follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

1Timothy 6:12 Fight [**'agonizomai'**] the good fight [**'agon'**] of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

Paul pushed as hard as he possibly could to the end of life's race... He instructs Timothy to do the same... Suffer and labor for the finish line.

2Timothy 4:5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

2Timothy 4:6 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

2Timothy 4:7 I have fought [**'agonizomai'**] a good fight [**'agon'** contest], I have **finished my course**, I have kept the faith:

Paul finished the race and gained his prize – the crown of righteousness.

2Timothy 4:8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a **crown** of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

Moses was an Egyptian Military Commander with great power and standing. We read about him here:

Hebrews 11:25 Choosing rather to **suffer affliction** with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

Brethren, it is the same Christian **race** we are all running – past present and future.

Hebrews 12:1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses [in Chapter 11], let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the **race** [**'agon'** effort, conflict] that is set before us,

Hebrews 12:2 Looking unto Jesus the author and **finisher** of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

1Thessalonians 2:1 For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain:

1Thessalonians 2:2 But even after that we had **suffered** before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much **contention** [**'agon'** effort and conflict].

Paul wrote the Book of Philippians about 60 - 62 A.D. as he anticipated his release from prison at Rome, Italy. Being a Prison Epistle adds to the meaning of the Book of Philippians because of the **persecution** Paul was enduring. We find an example here of **suffering in agony** for the Gospel's sake.

Philippians 1:27 Only let your conversation be as it becomes the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye **stand fast [unified] in one spirit**, with **one** mind striving together [actually *wrestling* – a favorite Greek sport] for the faith of the gospel;

Philippians 1:28 And in nothing **terrified** by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition[or destruction], but to you [the faith of the gospel – means] salvation, and that of God.

The Protestants falsely say that you only have to **believe** on the name Jesus. That is not true. Read it here:

Philippians 1:29 For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, **but also to suffer** for His sake;

Philippians 1:30 Having the same conflict [**'agon'**] which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.

Brethren, Our Christian calling means that we are running in an agonizing race to the very end.

End: Agony of Defeat