

## For Me to Live is Christ and to Die is Gain

April 18, 2004

Pastor Jim Kimbriel

Philippians 1:18b-26

Yes, and I will rejoice, [19] for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, [20] as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. [21] For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. [22] If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. [23] I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. [24] But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. [25] Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, [26] so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.

“Live life like you really mean it”

During this project there were three high altitude jumps accomplished from a balloon-supported gondola--from 76,400 on November 16, 1958, from 74,700 25 days later, and on August 16, 1960, from 102,800 feet, the highest altitude from which man has jumped. In freefall for 4.5 minutes at speeds up to 714 mph and temperatures as low as -94 degrees Fahrenheit, Kittinger opened his parachute at 18,000 feet. In addition to the altitude record, he set records for longest freefall and fastest speed by a man (without an aircraft!) For work accomplished during the project, Captain Kittinger was awarded the C.B. Harmon Trophy, which was presented by President Eisenhower on October 3, 1960, an oak leaf cluster to the Distinguished Flying Cross,

Tax Week

In filling out the form it starts with who you are and **where you live**, then the rest of the form is dedicated to sucking the life out of you. In the movie Sabrina an important question is asked.

**Where do you live?** The young life-loving woman Sabrina encounters a man intent on making money, but he never found the secret of living. And this young woman asks him “**Where do you live?**”

**I recently read the Heavenly Man**, It is a book about a house church pastor in China. He is a contemporary and he tells of how he received the title Heavenly man.

In 1979 as a young man of 21 he was at a all night meeting where he had preached and recited scripture late into the night. Finally, too tired to go on he went out into the field a lay down. He was a wakened by the boots of the Public security Bureau. As they were beating him and leading him to jail they continually asked him ‘Where do you Live?’ and he replied in a loud voice, “I am a Heavenly Man, I live in heaven.” He said it loudly to warn the others of the danger they were in at that time.

Where do you Live?

In our Passage there are two main emotions coexisting

One is **certainty or a confidence**

The other is **anticipation or even a longing**

You may have thought I was going to say uncertainty as the second, but that is not a predominant emotion in the passage rather it is a admission of not knowing certain aspects of his future.

What is Paul certain of or what creates in Paul incredible confidence?

Where is Paul as he is writing this letter? In a prison or under house arrest in Rome. He could be facing execution as a result of his trial. He could be released.

In these circumstances he writes in verse 19-

Yes, and I will rejoice, [19] for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ **this will turn out for my deliverance**,

Does Paul mean that he will be delivered from prison? Not likely. Because later on he speaks of his death as a real possible outcome of his trial.

What then is this Deliverance or as others have translated Salvation?

It is the confidence that Paul will be vindicated before the Judge in Heaven. It is confidence in the one sure thing for the man in a Roman prison, and that is, He will receive mercy and grace because his Judge is also his savior. He has had an advocate in the realm of God who has made intercession for his soul. His crimes against God have been atoned for.

1. Paul in other letter spoke of this in the past tense in Ephes. 1:13 (ESV)

In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,  
Ephes. 2:8-9 (ESV)

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, [9] not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Paul knew where he lived because of who had died for him and assured his salvation.

Paul knew his address was not one Painful way Rome 80236. He knew where he lived.

Where do you live?

2. Paul lived in the present confidence of his salvation on a daily basis.  
Philip. 2:12-13 (ESV)

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, [13] for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

Salvation is a present possession whose riches must be explored and enjoyed day after day.

For Paul that was part of living.

Do you know where you live?

3. Now, Here, in this passage Paul is reminding himself that the full experience, the rich experience, the complete experience of salvation lies in the future.

for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ **this will turn out for my deliverance**,

Paul spoke of salvation in the future tense in other passages.

Romans 13:11 (ESV)

Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed.

Paul knew the future was assured, but he still made a request of the Philippians knowing that the attaining of this future had to be continually lived out.

I am reading the autobiography of a house church pastor in China by the name of Yun. Pastor Yun was incarcerated in a labor camp 300 kilometers from his home and the vast distance from his loved ones increased his depression. Paul hundreds of Kilometers from the Philippians was so encouraged by a visit of one of them that he had to make this request.

"Will you pray for me"

for I know that **through your prayers** and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance,

"for I know that through your prayers"

Jesus encouraged the Disciples for they were to encounter the kinds of circumstances Paul was currently encountering.

Matthew 10:18-20 (ESV)

Mark 13:9-11 (ESV)

"But be on your guard. For they will deliver you over to councils, **and you will be beaten in synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings** for my sake, to bear witness before them. [10] And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations. [11] And when they bring you to trial and deliver you over, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the **Holy Spirit**."

Luke 12:11-12 (ESV)

And when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not be anxious about how you should defend yourself or what you should say, [12] for the **Holy Spirit** will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say."

Paul now was experiencing the same situation Jesus had warned them of and Needed the Holy Spirit, and that is what he asks them to pray for for him.

Luke 11:13 (ESV)

If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

It is through this affirmation which comes by the prayers or intercession of the saints in Phillipi and the sure **supply** of the Spirit of Christ by Christ.

Paul is confident that His ultimate deliverance is assured.

Both of these activities are so personal.

Paul Knew that the Intercession of the believers and the promised Holy Spirit of Christ were helping him live in the reality of his future salvation.

Now in our passage Paul highlights his own future actions as being important. In verse 20 he shifts from his future hope to His consuming passion.

As you read you get the impression that in every fiber of Paul's existence he is desiring one thing above all else.

Paul was so confident of one thing—His salvation His salvation was secured by Christ. He had great confidence in it being accomplished.

Now he can boast in His one passion.

Paul had one goal

[20] as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always **Christ will be honored in my body**, whether by life or by death.

This is where Paul lived

By that I mean this is where Paul experienced real life. Living with and loving Christ was Paul's occupation.

Early in his walk with Jesus, Paul found out what was closest to Jesus' heart and Paul put all his energies there.

Jesus' own glory is the closest thing to his heart.

- · Jesus designed the transformation of believers and
- · the incorporation of believers into a local body-church and
- · the glorification of believers to bring him Glory.

That is then where Paul lived.

Where do you live?

Life is not a thing to grasp or a place to exist but life is a person. This is Paul's assertion. Life is a person. And Paul's consuming passion was to bring Glory to that person.

Paul determined with his whole being that Christ would command his affections, would control his attention.

as it is my **eager expectation and hope** that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death.

Like the runner in Phil 3:13 Paul is concentrating his focus

Philip. 3:13-14 (ESV)

Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, [14] I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

That concentrated focus is "watching something with the head turned away from all competing objects. This is actually a word Paul made up. It works for him to describe his intensity. In Romans He uses the word to speak of the **certain** event of the revealing of the sons of God.

Romans 8:18-19 (ESV)

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. [19] For the creation waits with **eager longing** for the revealing of the sons of God.

Here in Philippians he is straining forward towards the certain event of Christ's glory either through Paul's Life or death.

as it is my **eager expectation and hope** that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death.

In our passage it is the great temptation to misunderstand hope. Hope in our world seems to connote the against all odds hope. Uncertainty riddles our word hope. In our text, Hope carries

such certainty in the event taking place, only the **timing and mode of accomplishment are uncertain**. The **what** is assured. It is the **when** and the **how** that Paul is uncertain of in our passage.

Paul is certain that he will be glorified. Paul is sure that he who began a good work will complete it. Paul is certain that Jesus will glorify himself either through Paul's Death or through his life. It is just now that he is not certain of the timing or the mode of death. But we will see that in sharper focus later.

What about you?

Are you certain of God's glory through your life or death?

Paul

Our Passage shows us three ways Paul worked at bringing glory to Christ through his living.

1. 1. Paul kept his **conscience clear**

as it is my eager expectation and hope that **I will not be at all ashamed**, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death.

I shall not be ashamed

I don't want to do anything that would disqualify myself.

As pastor Yun was taken to his prison cell in China he would yell out, "I won't betray my Jesus, I am not Judas. I am not Judas!" In so doing he encouraged his other Christian prisoners to keep the faith.

Paul is saying, "I AM going to keep the faith". I am not going to do anything to disqualify myself.

Shame would be Paul's failure to win his Lord's approval.

2. 2. Paul is saying "I am not going to shut up" He desired a **courageous** testimony as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, **but that with full courage** now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death.

I am going to maintain my full testimony with confidence and courage.

[20] as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, **but that with full courage** now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death.

My life and my words will not be silenced and they are and always will be about Jesus my savior.

I don't know what pressure is like. I mean the pressure of the possibility of execution.

I get the impression that the extreme sports are pursued so that the adrenalin makes the person feel alive.

Paul was in an extreme situation. What would you do if you saw the executioner coming?

It would be tempting to say—ah, never mind-I didn't really mean all that I said. Take out all the offensive things I ever said and that can be my testimony.

Instead Paul desires even greater boldness. Greater Courage

3. Finally Paul desires his life to bring great glory to Christ through him maintaining an unblemished record. **Consistent Life-**

[20] as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage **now as always** Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death.

Paul desired to be faithful unto death. He wanted every breath to count for Christ.

Like the church at Smyrna Paul wanted this:

Rev. 2:10 (ESV)

Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.

All of this is so that Christ will be Glorified-Literally-Magnified or enlarged.

When you look at Paul do you give Jesus Glory? When people look at you do people give Jesus Glory?

Well, know this with certainty Jesus will glorify himself through this world.

Now we see Paul moves from what he knows to what he doesn't Know. He moves from the certain to the uncertain.

He knows he will see Glory.

He knows Christ will be glorified

Through either his life maintaining a:

Clear Conscience

Courageous Testimony

Consistent Life

Or through Death

With the awesome truths certain-Paul plays the ultimate game of options.

Options is the gross kids game where you choose between the lesser of terribles.

For example- Would you rather be buried up to here in cow manure or sheep manure.

Paul is now confronted with the best options possible, and in his ecstatic wrestling we get significant insight into our future.

[21] For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. [22] If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. [23] I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. [24] But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. [25] Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, [26] so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.

What Paul is saying-If you really want to live then your gonna have to die.

Many movies these days have at the center someone without any passion for life or with nothing to live for-Then they are able to find purpose in an ideal.

Consider this—there is something much more compelling to give your life for than an ideal.

Paul says,

“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”

What is Paul talking about when he says death is Gain?

He uses that term other places and even here in the book-- Philip. 3:4-8 (ESV) though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: [5] circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; [6] as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness, under the law blameless. [7] But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. [8] Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may **gain** Christ

In the Past Paul had a different Value System

Paul formerly lived for an ideal.

He was possessing of the perfect religious blood line-Israelite, Benjamin tribe a Hebrew. The Chosen of the chosen.

He possessed the perfect religious practice- Circumcision, Pharisee, Persecutor of any deviation from the religion—Persecutor of the Church.

It was based on Religious Pedigree He valued an idea called religiosity and he took it to its logical conclusion-Death-He was a murderer. It was a beautiful life, it even appeared righteous.

Now that belongs in his past and in the heap of trash called fleshly desires.

For Paul what is the Gain? Christ

On that Damascus road Paul exchanged an ideal of religiosity for a person, and in so doing he became alive.

Where do you live?

Here is the Christians dilemma

I live for Christ, I live in Christ, My life is Christ, My love is Christ. I serve Christ-Giving away my life for the service of Christ's body, the church. All really good things-now-The incredible idea that death is to be far superior to life.

This is not an idea only in Christianity

The Buddhist sees death as superior to life. In Death there is a release from all desire and the attainment of Nirvana.

Death for the Hindu is superior, for through devotion or religious activities and creating good Karma you the individual can eventually reach Brahman-The creative energy of the universe.

Death for the Muslim is exciting-the river of alcohol and the river of milk and the 72 perpetual virgins—all to be shunned in this life and to be experienced in excess in the life to come.

The attraction for Paul was not indulgence in the forbidden or joining the cosmic power, But rather indulgence in the glory of Christ the power that created the universe.

Paul desired to pull up his tent pegs and be with Christ. To experience the full impact of his glory.

I get the idea that Paul was so captured by Jesus in this life that the wait to be in his presence could only be made bearable by serving Jesus.

Its like the young couple waiting to be married, the only thing that makes the waiting endurable.

It is the captivation of the love. The sure hope or confidence that the wedding will come.

Paul had that confidence that all he did through his life made it meaningful for him to stay on in this life.

Here again the language is personal. "For your sakes"

### CS Lewis The Last Battle

Through the Narnia books I have experienced a wonderfully real portrayal of the relationship with Jesus, through the relationship of several children's relationship with the Jesus figure in the books who is a lion named Aslan. Through the seven books you fall in love with this Lion, and you wish it would never end. Well the last in the sequence called the Last Battle ends this way, and I believe it portrays the relationship with Jesus, Paul had and we can all have.

To Paul Life is a person—The PERSON Jesus

To Paul Death is a Person—The Person Jesus Christ

To Paul Living was serving the people Jesus Loves

Where do you live?

John 14:6

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.