**No Matter What Christ is Preached**

**by Pastor Fee Soliven**

**Philippians 1:18-24**

**Wednesday Evening**

**February 2, 2022**

**Philippians 1:18-24**

18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice. 19 For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

20 according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. 21 For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

22 But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. 23 For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. 24 Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you.

**18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice. 19 For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,**

Saints, Paul rejoiced that whether or not their motives were pure the message about Christ was being preached.

Some Christians serve for the wrong reasons. Paul wouldn’t condone, nor does God excuse, their motives, but we should be glad if God uses their message, regardless of their motives.

Paul had no concern for his own reputation or success; he had dedicated his life to glorifying God. He understood that God was being glorified even as he sat in chains; thus, Paul could rejoice.

Paul had been able to rejoice during his two years in prison, could rejoice that good results could come from preachers with bad motives, and would continue to rejoice no matter how long he would remain in prison or how long he would live.

Paul knew that all that had happened (resulting in his imprisonment, would end in his deliverance. What kind of deliverance did Paul envision? While most scholars agree that Paul was quoting from:

**Job 13:15-16**

15 Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him. Even so, I will defend my own ways before Him. 16 He also shall be my salvation, For a hypocrite could not come before Him.

Some scholars argue that Paul was referring to his upcoming trial, believing that he would be acquitted and freed (which did happen). However, this is unlikely because of Paul’s words in the next verse that reveal his uncertainty about the outcome of his trial.

Others believe that, like Job, Paul was focusing on his relationship with God—that whether he lived or died, his stand for Christ would be vindicated. Still others think Paul was referring to his apostleship in the face of the envious preachers.

As Job sought to prove his integrity, so Paul was seeking to vindicate his standing, despite his chains. A final option, and most likely, is that Paul was referring to his ultimate deliverance in salvation.

That is, whether or not he would be delivered by the Roman court, he would be delivered from God’s judgment. Paul’s confidence came from two sources: human and divine. Paul knew that the Philippians’ constant prayers had sustained him. As Paul consistently prayed for the churches, so he petitioned their prayers on his behalf:

**Romans 15:30**

Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me…

**2 Corinthians 1:11**

you also helping together in prayer for us, that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the gift granted to us through many.

**Colossians 4:3**

meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains,

**1 Thessalonians 5:25**

“Brethren, pray for us”

**2 Thessalonians 3:1-2**

1 Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you, 2 and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith.

Saints, in addition, Paul depended upon the Spirit of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, who makes Christ’s presence real in true believers. The prayers of the church and the support of the Holy Spirit sustained Paul through a difficult trial and, in the end, no matter what the outcome, Paul would ultimately be “delivered.”

**20 according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death.**

Saints, the Greek word translated eager expectation pictures a person straining his neck to see what is ahead. In Romans 8:19, Paul used the same word as he described looking forward to the revelation of God’s children, as God had planned from the beginning of creation.

**Romans 8:19**

“For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God”

Hope and expectation are linked together. Paul looked forward to the final fulfillment. He was not concerned about the verdict of his trial, but for the testimony he would leave. Paul hoped he would never do anything that would cause him shame.

**Romans 14:8**

If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

**1 Corinthians 6:20**

you were bought at a price. Therefore glorify God with your body.

He was not worried about his own humiliation, but he prayed for courage to be bold for Christ and to always honor Christ. When standing trial, Paul wanted to speak God’s truth courageously and not be timid or ashamed.

The words, whether I live or I die, reveal that Paul was uncertain about the outcome of his trial. He faced the possibility of execution.

**21 For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.**

**Isaiah 57:1-2**

1 The righteous perishes, and no man lays it to heart: 2 and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come…

**Romans 8:35-39**

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."

37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. 38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Saints, to those who don’t believe in God, life on earth is all there is, and so it is natural for them to strive for this world’s values—money, popularity, power, pleasure, and prestige.

For Paul, however, living was for Christ—Paul’s life focus was to develop eternal values and to tell others about Christ, who alone could help them see life from an eternal perspective. For to me indicates Paul’s firm resolve and unshaken faith.

The essence of life was Christ and having a vital spiritual union with him. Everything Paul desired or attempted was inspired by his devotion for Christ. With that attitude, dying would not be a tragedy but, instead, a realization of Paul’s hope and expectation.

To live would continue Paul’s ministry of spreading the gospel; to die would be even better because Paul’s martyrdom would glorify Christ and bring him face to face with the Savior.

Paul’s faithful and fearless witness even unto death would enhance the reputation of the gospel. Christ would be magnified as much in Paul’s death as he had been in Paul’s life.

**22 But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell.**

Saints, Paul poured out his heart to his friends in Philippi. If the verdict should go for Paul and he should be released, that would mean more fruitful service for Christ—further missionary travels, more churches planted, more converts, the strengthening of fellow believers, more opportunities to serve Christ.

**Romans 1:13**

Now I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that I often planned to come to you (but was hindered until now), that I might have some fruit among you also, just as among the other Gentiles.

Certainly, that would be a happy result. Yet if the decision to either live or die were up to him, he wouldn’t know which is better. How many of us are so dedicated to God that if the choice were given, we would choose to be in God’s presence?

**23 For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. 24 Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you.**

**John 12:26**

“If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor”

Two choices were equally compelling:

**1. The desire to die and be with Christ himself**

and

**2. The desire to stay alive and so continue his fellowship with and service to the believers**

Saints, while Paul lived in intimate communion with Christ during his (Paul’s) service on earth, being with Christ in heaven would be even closer and more intimate than any human could imagine. These words reveal Paul’s understanding of death—believers being immediately present with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:2-8).

**2 Corinthians 5:2-8**

2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, 3 if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked.

4 For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. 5 Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

6 So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. 7 For we walk by faith, not by sight. 8 We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

Saints, Paul had no question that death would be far better because in death he would reach his ultimate goal (to be with Christ) and finally have eternal fellowship in God’s presence.

Paul was prepared and ready to die at any moment for his faith, and he actually looked forward to death because of the certainty of being with the Lord forever. But he knew that his personal desires had to be subordinated to God’s will.

Paul felt that his ministry on earth was not yet complete and that he needed to live to help the churches grow and solidify. Paul placed his fellow believers’ needs above his own desires.

Saints, Soon and Very soon, Jesus is about to appear, we are almost out of here!

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

**1 Corinthians 15:50-54**

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

**Short Movie Slide>**

**Acts 2:38-39**

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

**Let’s Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.” In Jesus Name!**