

SOUTH GROVE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH LONDON

Lord's Day Morning

Date 4th December 2022

Preacher Rev Philip Knowles Hymns Psa 23, 598, 612, 594 Read: Philippians 1:12-21

Text Philippians 1:21

Series: Philippians (31) Title : To Die Is Gain

The first half of Paul words in **Philippians 1:21**, focus upon living for Christ, now the second half of Paul's words concentrates upon dying in Christ.

But whether in living or dying, for Paul both were centred upon Christ, as eternal his hope.

When Paul said **for to me to live is Christ**, he was saying living is Christ, my purpose on earth is Christ, my chief end, is Christ, I am saved because of Christ.

Therefore, we connect the two thoughts together, since living is Christ then dying is gain.

The word **gain** means **to profit, advantage, more of the same**. **But such gain by dying, can only be gain, if living is Christ.**

See how the words match up, Only because living is Christ, is dying gain.

For instance, if Paul said for me to live is tent making, or traveling then dying is not gain.

Apply to ourselves if you say, for to me to live is activities dying is not gain, if living is money then dying is not gain, why because none of these things will go with us at death, they are temporal, we will leave them behind.

But only when we can say for me to live is Christ, then we say to die is gain.

Paul can say to die is gain, because for Paul to live is Christ.

I FIRST, PAUL'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF DEATH

The very fact that Paul refers to the words **die** and **death** from **verses 20-23**, and expresses death by the words **depart to be with Christ**, confirms Paul's acknowledgment of death.

In other words, Paul knew as he said in **Heb 9:27** **it is appointed unto men once to die**. Death is a reality for all.

Paul was not afraid or put off by the **D word, Die, Death, Departure, Dying.**

Oh, many try and avoid the word death, and change the subject.

To speak of death sounds, doom and changes the mood, happier things to speak about.

People want to talk about anything else other than death, rather than acknowledge it.

But not Paul, the reason being, to Paul living is Christ who is the hope of glory, **therefore death is gain.**

(Other believers acknowledged death, David said acknowledged in **1 Samuel 20:2** "**there is but a step between me and death**," King Solomon acknowledged death in **Ecclesiastes 3:1&2** "**to every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven, a time to be born, and a time to die...**")

Such an acknowledgment of death, then raises questions that only the Bible can answer such as to **the existence of death, why is there death at all?**

You often hear questions or expressions at funerals, concerning the death of a loved one, **why did they have to die!**

1 Cor 15:26 teaches that death is an 'enemy', to man. Death for man is unnatural, for it was not part of God's original creation.

God created mankind to live and fellowship with Him.

God gave Adam and Eve a command to obey God, a way of life to follow, something to forbid, resulting in the reward of life forever with God, but also a penalty, a curse for disobedience which is death.

Genesis 3, Romans 5, 1 Corinthians 15 and many more verses, teach that Death exists as the result of man's sin against God.

It is God's judgment for disobeying His word.

You see if there were no sin there would be no death.

To acknowledge death is to think upon the entrance of death, as **Romans 5:12** teaches ***Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.***

Therefore, in that one moment or act, Adam sinned and Adam died, all sinned and died in him.

The word **passed** means to ***spread upon the idea means to touch everything, touch everyone.***

Some have asked the question from the different scriptural accounts, why does the Bible say by one man, instead of one woman, since Eve sinned first.

We read in **1 Tim 2:14** ***And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.***

In taking all the passages stated, we learn, since Adam was the first Man, he was the prophet, priest and King of his home.

Adam was held responsible by God for his next of kin, his fellowman, his neighbour, which in this case was his wife Eve, but also all humanity that would follow.

God viewed, treated, and dealt with the human race in Adam.

If you like - Adam was the captain of the human race, he represented us. As any captain of a people, Adam acted on our behalf. God dealt with the human race in Adam.

God held Adam responsible and accountable for Eve's protection, wellbeing and action.

As husband and wife, they were one, her failure was his failure, and his failure was her failure, both are guilty, but as the one held responsible by God, Adam was charged for breaking God's law and the passing or spreading the penalty for disobedience which was death, ***so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned***

Therefore, to acknowledge death is to think upon the effects of death.

Off course Adam and Eve did not die physically straightway, but they began to die, the body began to change, age weaken, until **physical death**.

But their sin, immediately brought **spiritual death** **the loss** of fellowship with God cut off from God, which meant a greater tragedy of **eternal death** that is person who dies physically,

and spiritually without Christ as Saviour, will suffer eternal torments in the lake of fire.

However, before they died God forgave Adam and Eve by giving the promise of a Saviour, Jesus Christ, who they put their faith in that Christ would come into the world in a future day, to live for them, giving a perfect obedience where they failed, and paying the penalty of the law, which is death, giving His life in their place.

Death is the equaliser among all. Young or old, rich or poor, all will physically die.

Right now if you are not forgiven by God you are spiritual dead to God, there is no fellowship with Him.

To die in such a condition means eternal death, separation in the lake of fire, to be punished for sin, tormented in body and soul, in darkness where can see nothing but only hear walking and gnashing of teeth.

Death due to sin is a terror! That's why Paul said in **1 Corinthians 15:56** "*The sting of death is sin...*"

The word **sting** is taken from effects and impact of the animal with a sting such a scorpion, but the focus is upon the **sting itself**. Their sting brings fear.

Paul is using the effect of the animal's sting is to teach a spiritual lesson with reference to death.

Just as a scorpion sting brings terror, fear and is deadly to all. So, Death is a terror, fear and horror inflicting its power upon sinful men. Death like a deadly sting that pierces the very soul of the sinner. Death is the king of terrors, an uncaring enemy, a real destroyer. No respecter of persons.

No wonder people don't want to acknowledge death. What about you today?

To acknowledge death is to think upon the essence / definition of death, what is death? some would answer, it is

when the heart stops, but not so, because the heart can be medically stopped, but the person is still alive.

But Death is when the soul leaves the body.

Notice what scripture says about Rachel's death in **Genesis 35:18**, "**And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died)...**" when Rachel died her soul departed from her body.

When Christ died on the cross, **Luke 23:46** "**Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, He gave up the ghost.**" Then He buried in a tomb.

Therefore, at death the soul departs from the body. The body is buried and rots, some get cremated, but the Lord will raise it up at the last day, but the soul is eternal, it cannot die. The soul will go to one of two places, heaven or hell.

Job said in **Job 14:10** "**...man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?**"

The body & soul reunited for Heaven or hell.

To acknowledge death is to think upon the evidence of death.

Every grave, burial site, a place of remembrance, is evidence of death, from the time of Adam.

But here is Paul's point he can say with assurance, dying is gain, for he will be with Christ.

He can speak freely about death, because, He said in **1 Cor 15: 54** "...**death is swallowed up in victory.**" **55** "**O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?**"

Believer, Hallelujah, there is comfort, victory yeah gain in the gospel.

Christ's death and Christ triumph over the grave took the sting, the terror out of death for all His people.

Believer our goal is not the grave but the heaven.

Believer, we have nothing to fear, death is conquered by Christ in which Christ's prayer is answered from **John 14 & 17** that His people be with Him in glory.

Death and the grave did not hold Him and it will not hold you.

Unsaved one, Death is a terror, and torture for you. You have every right to fear death as you are spiritually unprepared.

Paul's acknowledgment of death.

II SECOND, PAUL'S ADVANTAGE IN DEATH.

There can never be a disadvantage to the believer in Christ, because Paul views death **to be with Christ...far better**, that's gain.

So, what is the advantage? Or what is the gain in death, that Paul has in view? **dying is gain, dying is interest, dying is promotion.**

Now there are many advantages the believer has in death, such as the believer being finally free from the presence of sin.

Upon earth Paul felt the conflict of the flesh and Spirit. He lamented his failures; he said in **Romans 7:24** "**O wretched man that I am!**"

His gain would mean the battle and struggle with sin, the flesh would be over. The gain of never-failing Christ again.

Its true believer you know full well what Paul means, and you know full well we sin against God daily.

We battle with the world, devil and flesh. We give into temptation so easily. We are drawn away by our own lusts.

But we have the gain at death we shall enter into heaven.

The gain of no more imperfection, persecutions, troubles, sickness and sorrow, rather perfection likeness to Christ. The work begun in us will be finally complete.

Dying is gain for Paul, because he could enter into his eternal rest from earthly labours. The gain of joining heaven's choir to sing worthy is the lamb.

But above all the gain in death for Paul and you believer means to see Christ and to be with Christ because that is Paul chief focus.

In living it was all about Christ, likewise in death it is all about Christ.

Notice he said in **verse 23 to be with Christ.** this is the greatest gain the pre-eminent gain.

That's what moved the song writer, **Fanny Cosby in 1891**, to share her gain, advantage and Supreme priority of reaching heaven at death.

Though physical blinded at a young age, Fanny Cosby longed for the day when the first view she would ever have again would be at death to see Christ, to behold the King in His beauty, to see Him as He is.

Her words are these, ***“When my life work is ended and I cross the swelling tide, when the bright and glorious morning I shall see, I shall know my Redeemer when I reach the other side and His smile will be the first to welcome me....”*** and then she speaks of many other advantages and gains of heaven, then closes with her supreme gain ***“...But I long to meet my Saviour first of all.***

The song started with the gain of seeing Christ, being with Christ and it ended with Christ. The song started with living is Christ and ended with dying is gain.

That's the gain the advantage we possess, share and look forward to believer. Dying is gain, because Christ is gain, Christ is heaven, Christ is our all in all.

Christ is the head of His Church, the Saviour of His body. He has Redeemed, and loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood.

Believer dying is gain because blessed are they who die in the Lord.

Unsaved one, death is not a gain for you, ***unless on earth now, you turn from sin and by faith receive Christ as your only Saviour, believe the gospel, confess sin and have sins forgiven by Christ.***

III PAUL'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS DEATH

Paul goes on to show that death is THE ENTRANCE to gain, NOT the exit from living.

Paul was not looking to get out earth, he was looking forward to going home.

Paul had a glorious view of death. Death would not rob him, defeat him, cause him to despair, because he looked at death through Christ.

2 Cor 5:8 “*We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.*”

Paul described it in **Phil 1:21** “*for to me to live is Christ and to die is gain.*” **Paul is showing, it’s not that I die, rather its I go home.**

When God’s people are taken from the world, and called home to heaven, such language is described *as being taken up*. **2 Tim 4:6** Paul said my *departure is at hand*, **2 Cor 5:1-8** Paul describe death as exchanging the temporal or earthly tent for the permanent building.

In **Luke 9**, Christ’s own death is referred by the word **decease**. In **Luke 9** at the Mount of Transfiguration, the Lord Jesus took with him, Peter, James and John.

As they were assembled, we read, in **verse 30-31** “...*there talked with him two men which were Moses and Elias*” **verse 31** “*who appeared in glory and spake of his decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem.*”

The word **decease** is the word for *departure, exodus, to exit, to go out* the death of Jesus Christ, His departure out of this world, is glorious victory.

This truth comforted Peter, as he used the same word in reference to thinking about his own death. **2 Pet 1:15** “**my decease**.” Peter’s approach to death, was the victory of the cross, that gave him hope for entrance into heaven.

Ps 23, Christ’s presence goes with us at death. we will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Believer we approach death, with the same assurance, as Paul and all believers dying is gain, because to live is Christ.

The Saviour's ***purpose of coming into this world was to purchase redemption, the forgiveness and the deliverance from sin, guaranteeing that He will have with Him in heaven a company of sinners, saved by grace and gathered from all the nations of the earth.***