

Rejoicing in Future Hope

Philippians 1:18b-26 Coast Community Church; Jackson Tran; 09-06-2020

“For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.” – Philippians 1:21

- **Paul’s Knowledge** (v. 19-20)
 - What does Paul “know” that leads to his confidence?
 1. That this will turn out for his deliverance; that he would not be put to shame
 - Deliverance here does not mean deliverance from death at his trial
 - Paul is speaking of being delivered from being ashamed of the gospel
 - He had written to the Christians in Rome that he was not ashamed of the gospel (Rom. 1:16), now he’ll have the opportunity to live that out as he faces Caesar in Rome
 2. *But that* Christ will be exalted by life or death
 - The opposite of being ashamed of Jesus and the gospel is to exalt Jesus, in the face of death
 - Paul’s knowledge that leads to an anticipation of joy is not a mere *feeling*
 - Paul know his feelings changed and there were times he despaired even of life (2 Cor. 1:8)
 - Yet, he knew that when his feelings changed, his trust was grounded in God, not himself (2 Cor. 1:9) who has already delivered him from death to life (2 Cor. 1:10-11)
 - Paul was also confident in this knowledge because of the saints’ prayers and the Holy Spirit (Phil. 1:19)
 - Knowing that the Philippians and others were praying for him gave Paul the confidence to be assured of his deliverance, because through it, the Holy Spirit would empower him
 - *Application questions*
 - What do you need deliverance from?
 - Are you looking for deliverance from *that situation* or are you looking for deliverance from being ashamed of Jesus, no matter how things turn out?
 - Do you covet your brothers and sisters’ prayers?
- **Paul’s Devotion** (v. 21-24)
 - Paul’s “earnest expectation and hope” is to exalt Jesus
 - Paul’s supreme goal in life is promoting the glory of God
 - And he wants *all* Christians to embrace this
 - Jesus should be the core and center of all Christian’s identity and being
 - His devotion plays out in two surprising ways
 1. Paul states he doesn’t know which option (life or death) to *choose* (v. 22)
 - Even though Caesar was to try him and either exonerate or execute him, Paul knows that God is ultimately in charge and that he has a direct line to Him through prayer
 - He could appear to God through prayer (Paul’s choice) and know that God would do whatever necessary for His glory and the good of those who love Him
 2. Paul finds death a favorable alternative (v. 23)

- It's not that Paul has a death wish, but rather it comes from a life that is completely devoted to Jesus
 - Christ rules and thus death means Paul gets to be with Jesus and in His presence
 - There's nothing they can do to him – no decree from Caesar will affect him eternally
 - For Paul, he's already dead in one sense (Gal. 2:20) and this life is lived as an alien and stranger headed towards his ultimate destination (1 Pet. 2:11)
 - To kill Paul, or any Christian, means to bring that journey to an end and help him arrive at his destiny sooner
 - *Yet*, if Paul lived he would be able to continue ministering to people like the Philippians
 - Here again, Paul's absolute devotion in life is loving God which leads to loving people
 - While dying was "very much better" for *Paul*, living was better others
- *Application questions*
 - What is *your* earnest hope and expectation?
 - Are you looking to exalt God no matter where your life leads? Or are you instead looking to something *else*?
 - Relationships, a college degree, a job promotion, getting married, having children, your children becoming respectable and accomplished adults?
- **Paul's Conclusion** (v. 25-26)
 - Paul presented himself as an example of one who has put Christ as the chief end of his life
 - He presents himself as an example for the Philippians to follow as he's about to turn to *their* troubles and how they need to live in light of Christ
 - Paul uses the word "convinced" which means *to be persuaded*
 - Through his reasoning and weighing, Paul is persuaded which option (life or death) he will appeal to God for (choose)
 - Death is favorable for *him*, but life is favorable for the *Philippians*
 - He draws his case study (his example) to a close
 - The Philippians are able to see the innerworkings of a man who is wholeheartedly devoted to God
 - They have seen the conclusion he comes to – a selfless conclusion to live so that others may gain
 - *Application questions*
 - Think about your own situation and where they are headed. Are you anxious about where a difficult relationship will go? Are you dreading the next encounter?
 - Are you afraid of the coronavirus infecting you or a family member?
 - Are you anxious about the uncertainty of our country's direction?
 - Are you stressed about your job security or career trajectory?
 - *How are you reacting to the future?*
 - Can you say with Paul, "To me to live is Christ?"
 - Are you able to live from a standpoint of death to self?