

Toby DeHay / General Adult

Philippians / Philippians 1:18–26; Isaiah 28:16; Romans 9:33; Mark 4:8–12

Living to Honor Jesus

PASSAGE: Phil 1:18b-26

Recap from Chris' sermon (12-18)

- The Gospel Moves Forward
- Chris reminded us that THE GOSPEL'S PURPOSES ARE ACHIEVED IN AND THROUGH OUR SUFFERINGS.
- Paul reminds his readers that his imprisonment served to advance the gospel. (12)
- So much so, that the whole imperial guard and others knew why Paul was imprisoned. (13)
- Because of this, the brothers have become more bold and confident to share the gospel. (14)
- In verses 15-17 we see some preaching the gospel out of envy and rivalry and others preaching from good will.
- Chris showed us that THE GOSPEL'S PURPOSES ARE ACHIEVED IN AND THROUGH CONFLICT.

- The Gospel Moves Forward

Philippians 1:18 ESV

¹⁸ What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice.

Yes, and I will rejoice,

Paul rejoices that the gospel is being proclaimed. Now he shows us what it looks like to live for that gospel.

[PROPOSITION]

Here's what I want you to take away:

Christ will be exalted in Paul's physical body whether Paul lives or dies. (v. 20b)

This is the overarching idea of where we are going today.

[OUTLINE]

Honor Jesus No Matter The Circumstance

To Live is Christ

So Live for Christ

Honor Jesus No Matter The Circumstance (Head)

To Live is Christ (Heart)

So Live for Christ (Hands)

[EXIT/TRANSITION]

ILLUSTRATION:

Jerry and the grocery store. *(Pic of Toby and Slugger overhead)*

Jerry loved checking groceries! People would line up 12 deep into the baking aisle just to go through Jerry's line.

People loved Jerry!

I asked Jerry why he choose checking groceries as a job after he retired.

Jerry said, "I love people. I being around people. I love making them smile. I like being around people so much, I like being around the ones who don't want to be around me!"

Jerry remembered customers birthdays and anniversaries.

He had a bag of candy to give out to kids.

Everyone loved Jerry!

As I read and studied this passage, Jerry came to mind.

Jerry didn't act that way because the company asked him to. It's who he was!

He came to the company with the idea that he wanted to be around people and wanted to help them have a better day with their short encounter with him.

What comes out of us reveals who we are.

We see this with Paul. Sure, Paul loved people, but more than that, he wanted them to see the real reason they were created...

For Christ to be exalted in in our lives whether we live or die.

Honor Jesus No Matter The Circumstance (Head)

What are a few ways we can put ourselves in a position to do this?

We can find our joy and confidence in Christ

Philippians 1:19 **ESV**

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

Let's key in on the phrase "for I know."

The verb tense Paul uses shows this action is completed, happening

even now, and it's completely real.

Paul has an “air of confidence.”

There are two trains of thought regarding the object of his confidence-his deliverance (or salvation if you have the KJV).

1. Deliverance from jail. From death and imprisonment.
2. The eschatological sense. The completion of salvation that began with a commitment to Christ and fully seen when the believer arrives at the Great Day and sees the complete salvation that was begun.

(Eschatological refers to theology concerning the end of human history—including Christ's return, resurrection of the dead, the last judgment, and eternal life in God's kingdom.)

Church, we have this joy and confidence not because of what we've done, but through the finished work of the cross.

Paul uses language just like this as he's describing our confidence in Christ.

Philippians 1:19 **ESV**

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

These are prayers from a community of believers.

People he loved and cared for.

Paul asked them to pray for him. He knew God answers prayers works

through His church to accomplish His purposes.

This isn't the Christian Eeyore resigning themselves to "whatever God has for them."

We can live with eager expectation and hope

Philippians 1:20 **ESV**

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.

We don't just live in a state of expectation and hope as if it's powered by wishes and dreams.

Paul clearly expresses how these are played out:

1. He hoped he would not be **ashamed**.
2. He hoped Christ would be **exalted** in his body.

Let's break these down briefly.

Ashamed:

Paul isn't using the word as we might think. There's no guilt associated here.

Check out Isa 28:16 and Rom. 9:33

Isaiah 28:16 **ESV**

¹⁶ therefore thus says the Lord God,

“Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion,

a stone, a tested stone,

a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation:

‘Whoever believes will not be in haste.’

Romans 9:33 ESV

³³ as it is written,

“Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense;

and whoever believes in him will **not be put to shame.**”

Philippians, Colossians, Philemon Paul’s Salvation and Hope (1:18b–20)

These texts have little to do with being ashamed to confess Christ. They do not speak to the point of timidity. Rather, they speak to the security of believers and the certainty that they are on solid foundation when they believe on the “cornerstone.”

He’s not going to be ashamed, rather he’s confident in his confession that Jesus is the Christ; and more specifically, his Savior!

Paul prayed Christ be Exalted:

Paul is saying that whatever it takes, Jesus will be exalted in Paul’s

earthly body.

We can have full courage to honor Jesus

Paul took the language to another level.

Philippians 1:20 ESV

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.**

Check out the phrases, “full courage” and “whether by life or by death.”

You don’t need a whole lot of courage unless things are a bit difficult.

We don't need much courage when following Jesus costs us nothing. Paul is talking about courage when obedience becomes difficult.

Next, Paul says,

Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life - *PAUSE* - or by death.

Paul isn’t saying, “I hope things work out for me.” **He’s saying, “Whatever happens to me, Jesus gets the glory!”**

PAUSE. Could we say that? (make these a pregnant pause for effect)

Honoring Jesus no matter the circumstance points toward the Main Idea for the day:

Christ will be exalted/magnified in Paul's physical body whether Paul lives or dies. (v. 20b)

Transition to next... We looked at Honoring Jesus No Matter the Circumstance, or "the head," now let's look to the heart...

To Live is Christ! (Heart)

Paul helped the Philippian church understand this at the head level in 18-20 with the *for I know* language in 18b and following.

Paul now hits the heart.

Philippians 1:21 **ESV**

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

This is a statement of certainty.

Paul is giving an encouraging *win/win* here!

On the one hand, as long as Paul is alive, he moves forward with the mission of the gospel, he works to plant churches, and encourages them to grow.

On the other hand there's death. In death, Paul knows he is relieved of his suffering and gets to live in his glorified body forever with Jesus and the saints.

- Friends, this verse is the very heart of who we are in Christ!

- The very culmination of what we get to do as a believer!
- The heart understanding who we are in Christ! We get to glorify Him!

John Piper writes well of this passage and describes Paul's words here as Christian Hedonism.

Hedonism is the pursuit of pleasure or indulgence.

A Christian Hedonist seeks the greatest pleasure; which is glorifying Christ, and the action of us bringing Him glory is the greatest pleasure Christ has in us:

receiving glory from His greatest creation who knows he wants to worship Him!

Paul has discovered that the greatest joy in life isn't found in getting more from Jesus. It's found in Jesus Himself—and in seeing Jesus glorified.

As I was reading, and praying, and studying this section this week, I thought, *“what if this is the pinnacle of who we are supposed to be in Christ? How does my life and worship reflect that?”*

In *The Weight of Glory*, CS Lewis writes:

We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered to us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.

I imagine Paul saying, “**In Christ, the object of your pleasure has changed! Have pleasure! Enjoy what He’s created, but don’t just do it, do with His praise and glory in mind!**”

Two more quick truths before we move on from the heart to the hands:

1. This is a permanent identity meant to bring Him glory.
 - a. The gospel doesn't merely change what we believe. It changes what we live for.
 - b. Jesus saved us, and now our lives belong to Him.
 - c. So the question isn't simply, 'Am I a Christian?' The question is, 'Is Christ the purpose of my life?'
2. The language here is gospel in nature.
 - a. For Paul, living wasn't simply getting through another day. Living was Christ.
 - b. Living was the gospel. Hungry or in want. A safe passage or a shipwreck. On mission planting churches or writing letters from prison.
 - c. Death here is the gospel. The word “*to die*” is in the verb form denoting the **act of dying**, not the process. When I see Paul writing in this way I see a man who understands he will likely be martyred.

Whatever happens to me, Jesus gets the glory.

Paul's words capture how this is *heart* moment. He understands that his entire life's goal is to glorify Christ!

This section brings back the main idea for the day:

Christ will be exalted/magnified in Paul's physical body whether Paul lives or dies. (v. 20b)

So Live For Christ! (Hands)

Philippians 1:22–26 **ESV**

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.

Paul understands living for Christ with his head:

v19 *for I know* AND

v20 *it is my eager expectation and hope*

He understands with his head.

Paul understands living for Christ with all his heart:

v21 For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain.

His heart says, “I get it and I’m all in. I want my life, no matter my circumstance, to glorify Jesus. I want my death to glorify Him, and in dying, I get relief and He gets all the praise!”

We see in 21-26 that Paul understands with his hands/actions.

And what he does is flesh out verse 21.

Philippians 1:21 ESV

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

What does that mean Paul?

As he fleshes it out, he kind of presents it as a choice between life and death, but clearly Paul sees his purpose and his trials as way to LIVE for Jesus.

Philippians 1:22 ESV

²² If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell.

Let me park for a minute on his phrase *fruitful labor*.

Think about this in the context of who Paul is and what he’s doing.

Paul’s heart desire and resulting work with his hands is the outcome of a life of obedience to Jesus.

Remember the words of Jesus in Mark 4 concerning the fruitful soil and what will be seen as evidence?

Mark 4:8–9 ESV

⁸ And other seeds fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.” ⁹ And he said, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

Verse 8 contains the truth, the outcome, the desire for the believer, and verse 9 contains the hard word we skip over.

Mark 4:9 ESV

⁹ And he said, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

Church, Paul heard, he believed, it changed his heart, and the outworking of his hands showed it.

Do we truly have ears to hear? Jesus gives some sobering words continuing on in Mark.

Mark 4:10–12 ESV

¹⁰ And when he was alone, those around him with the twelve asked him about the parables. ¹¹ And he said to them, “To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables, ¹² so that

“ ‘they may indeed see but not perceive,

and may indeed hear but not understand,

lest they should turn and be forgiven.’ ”

Paul has settled this! He hears! He obeys!

Philippians 1:23–24 ESV

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.

Paul sees the two possibilities clearly:

1. to die is to be with Christ, which is far better;
2. to remain is to continue fruitful labor for the sake of others.

Remaining is better for their account!

As I thought through this passage, my mind came to the letters and encouragement Paul would continue to bring to the church.

After Philippians Paul wrote 1 Cor., 2 Cor., Galatians, and Romans.

I also thought about the previous work Paul had completed.

You have heard the saying about trees, right?

The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now. (pic)

The people we poured into 5, 10, and 20 years ago might provide immediate fruit, OR they needed a time to mature.

Either way, you had a part in that in the past.

Whether thinking about the past, or today, Paul's desire is to remain.

Philippians 1:25–26 ESV

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.**

Paul again reminds the church why he and they are obeying the commands of Christ and are following Him, despite persecution, sorrow, or trouble:

Philippians 1:26 ESV

²⁶ so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.

Every part of Paul cries out to glorify Christ!

- From Paul's prayer of deliverance.
- To his desire to not be ashamed of the gospel.
- To the ask for full courage.
- To Paul's life in Jesus.
- To the labor for the gospel.
- To remaining and continuing with the church, for their progress and joy.
- To his death.

Before I pray and close, let me ask two questions:

1. What is your life saying about Jesus?
2. Who will be different because you were faithful to Him?