

Women's Bible Study
Philippians 1:19-26, October 11, 2023
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Today we're going to talk about life and death. Not eternal life or eternal death but about our current life in this mortal body and then the actual death of that body. The thought of the death of our bodies can be a little unsettling. We work hard to take care of these bodies. Since the day we were born this is all we have known. We try to prevent pain and deterioration but even with our best-efforts death is inevitable. Even more important than the thought of death is our life. What are we living for? What are we passionate about?

For I know that this shall turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I shall not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ shall even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose. But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better; yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake. And convinced of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith, so that your proud confidence in me may abound in Christ Jesus through my coming to you again.

Vs. 19a **For I know that this shall turn out for my deliverance...** Paul knows that he will be delivered from his imprisonment in one way or another. He has yet to stand before Caesar. He believes that he will be released or killed when that happens. To him either option is deliverance. The word deliverance is the Greek word *soteria* and translated salvation in the King James Version. It means rescue or safety.

Vs. 19b. **...through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.** Once again Paul is emphasizing the partnership of the Philippian believers with him in the preaching of the gospel. Their prayers were so important to him. He linked their prayers to the working of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Throughout his letters he exhorts and commands believers to pray. 1 Thessalonians 5:17 commands us to "Pray without ceasing"!!

Ephesians 6:18-19

With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel.

Colossians 4:2-4

Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; praying at the same time for us as well, that God may open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; in order that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.

2 Thessalonians 3:1

Finally, brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord may spread rapidly and be glorified, just as it did also with you.

Vs. 20 ...according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I shall not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness Christ shall even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.

Psalms 119:116

Sustain me according to Your word, that I may live; and do not let me be ashamed of my hope.

Expectation here is the Greek word *apokaradokia* which means an intense anticipation. I can picture a bride who in intense anticipation of her wedding can't think of anything else. This is Paul in his desire and hope to exalt Christ in his body. When a person is anticipating something earnestly, they are probably thinking about it. What dominates our thoughts? Is it God at the front of our thoughts?

The boldness of Paul is something we can aspire to. I think it should be our goal to put aside our own desire for comfort and aim for boldness. Death due to boldness is not likely in today's culture. Probably the worst thing we will encounter is someone being angry over our testimony.

The object of this intense anticipation and boldness is only Jesus. We need to be careful that we don't confuse political issues and social issues with sharing the gospel. Boldness in the political arena or concerning social issues is not the same as sharing that Jesus is the only way

to Heaven. Fighting with a non-believer about these things will just alienate them. We cannot expect a non-believer to have godly behaviors or opinions.

How does intense anticipation to exalt Christ look in our lives?

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

Here is Paul's life statement. This is how he lived. When he was alive on Earth, his life was all about Christ. Glorifying Jesus, telling others about Jesus, helping people live for Jesus, establishing churches to exalt Jesus, spending time praying to Jesus, spending time with other people that loved Jesus. This is what I want. I desire to live for Jesus so completely that I can say that he is my life. I can be so easily distracted by my desires and emotions.

Jesus is to believers the one pearl of great price, for whom we are willing to part with all that we have. He has so completely won our love that it beats alone for him; to his glory we would live, and in defense of his gospel we would die; he is the pattern of our life, and the model after which we would sculpture our character. Charles Spurgeon; [Mornings and Evenings with Spurgeon](#)

Matthew 22:37-38

And He said to him, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the great and foremost commandment.

Love here is not a warm fuzzy feeling toward God. When a person loves something, they think about it. They study it. They want to spend time with the object of their affection. God tells us in His word that the people who love him will obey him.

John 14:15

If you love Me, you will keep my commandments.

The second part, that to die is gain, seems obvious. We know that we will stop hurting in Heaven. We will see loved ones that have gone ahead of us. We will behold the glory of God. To me, I think the best part will be that I won't have to fight the daily battle with sin. It is a battle, right? Every. Single. Day. This is not a battle that we can let up on.

Psalm 119:175

Let my soul live that it may praise You, and let Your ordinances help me.

Psalm 146:2

I will praise the LORD while I live; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.

Romans 14:8 ...for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

*We shall all feel very much ashamed if we do not yield to Jesus on the point He has asked us to yield to Him. Paul says- "My determination is to be my utmost for his Highest." To get there is a question of will, not of debate nor of reasoning, **but a surrender of will**, an absolute and irrevocable surrender on that point. An overweening consideration for ourselves is the thing that keeps us from that decision, though we put it that we are considering others. When we consider what it will cost others if we obey the call of Jesus, we tell God He does not know what our obedience will mean. Keep to the point; He does know. Shut out every other consideration and keep yourself before God for this one thing only-My Utmost for His Highest. I am determined to be absolutely and entirely for Him and for Him alone.* Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest*

- What knocks us off the path?
- How can we keep that from happening?
- Do we make excuses for ourselves?

Vs. 22-24 But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose. But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better, yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake. And convinced of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith, so that your proud confidence in me may abound in Christ Jesus through my coming to you again.

The phrase "proud confidence" comes from the Greek word *kauchema* which means, "a boast in a good or a bad sense:--boasting, to glory (of), glorying, rejoice(-ing)." It is like when a parent boasts that their child achieved something. When one of our brothers and sisters achieves something that they have been striving and praying for such as patience or boldness

in their faith we can also boast about them. The boasting will mostly be praising God because we know that it is God that gives us victory over our weaknesses.

I'm very glad that it is not my choice to make whether it is my time to go be with Jesus or stay on this Earth. I don't think Paul is implying that it is his choice to make either, but if it were his choice, it would be a very hard one. As we have already discussed, Paul's life as the missionary to the Gentiles has not been easy. He is surely longing for the rest of Heaven and being with Christ. It is his deep and intense love for the churches he has established and the individual believers that cause him to want to stay and continue his labor. Paul has found the secret to joy. It is a single-minded devotion to Jesus.

I wonder if sometimes we want Heaven because life is so very hard not because we long to see Jesus. This is not our choice to make. We can be sure that if we are still here on Earth there is more work for us to do for the cause of Christ.

Psalm 90:17

And let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us and do confirm for us the work of our hands; yes, confirm the work of our hands.

1 Corinthians 3:13

...each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work.

1 Corinthians 15:58

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.

Colossians 1:9-10

For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.

Colossians 3:23-24

Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men; knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

1 Thessalonians 1:11-12

To this end also we pray for you always that our God may count you worthy of your calling and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power; in order that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

We are in a battle in this life. It is very hard to maintain our focus on the most important thing. Jesus is worthy of the effort it takes. We will be worshiping Him throughout eternity so what about now? Are we giving Him the best of us or does He get the leftovers. Do we only worship when we feel good, or things are going our way but when times get hard, and we face opposition or difficulty from within or without we choose complaining or even sometimes we kind of drop out of the race. I am here to urge you (and myself) to not drop out and to stay in the race. Please Lord, don't let us be ashamed.

Hebrews 12:1-3

Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.