

## **A LIFE OR DEATH MATTER PHILIPPIANS 1:19-26**

Death of godly person is special moment.

Ps. 116:15: it's even special to God!

Privilege of being with godly people,

who walk with the Lord for years, when they pass into our Lord's presence.

Sometimes people are overwhelmed by hospital stuff; we miss sacred significance of that unique moment!

Why would we want to hang on to people we love & keep them here?!!

Pagan leader commented: "For people who talk so much about how wonderful heaven will be, Christians sure invest a lot of effort to keep from going there!"

Paul writes to

### ***Discouraged Philippian church!***

Times are hard.

They're suffering.

Their leader's in jail.

Their messenger's sick.

### ***Everything seems to be going wrong.***

Paul writes *to encourage them* in their affliction  
& to encourage us when we face hard times!

### **Paul's Thanksgiving 1:3-8**

*Paul* praises God for what He's doing in them  
He's confident God will finish what he started!

### **Report concerning his imprisonment 12-26**

***What discourages them,  
doesn't discourage him!***

1<sup>st</sup> problem they're discouraged about:

"Paul, you're locked up in jail.

Enemy is winning.

It looks that way!

[Paul responds:]

### **Advance of Gospel 12-14**

Look at what God's doing!

God's using imprisonment to spread gospel, for His glory.

***God's at work in this!***

**=>we should be celebrating!**

### **Paul's testimony *inside* prison 12-13**

Guards are listening—realize he's not in prison for a crime, he's in prison because of *Jesus*.

=>Hardened soldiers are trusting Christ!

### **Testimony of others *outside* the prison 1:14**

Others have courage to talk about Jesus!

### **God uses difficult circumstances for His glory!**

2<sup>nd</sup> problem they're discouraged about: "Sure, people are proclaiming Christ. ***But*** they're doing it ***to spite you!***

*They want you to suffer because **you** can't do it."*

*They're doing it, but for wrong reasons!"*

### **Division among the preachers 15-18**

Division isn't cause to be discouraged!

Look at what *GOD* is doing!

Gospel is openly preached!

### **Their attitude 1:15-17**

If they're preaching to spite Paul, that's *their* problem.

God is using message  
 –they're preaching the Gospel!

### **Paul's attitude 1:18**

Paul rejoices because people are hearing the gospel.  
 He wants us to **celebrate** with JOY!

### **God uses divisive circum-stances for his glory!**

He wants us to see from God's perspective!  
*God's at work!* He WILL receive glory!  
 Therefore, we should celebrate!

**3<sup>rd</sup> problem** Philippians are discouraged about:

***"You could die in jail!"***

Sometimes they throw people in jail & throw key away!"  
 Paul wants us to understand what he *expects* God to do.

Whatever God does, ***God's perspective on life & death removes fear!***

### **Paul's Deliverance 19-26**

He's convinced he's going to be released soon.

**Means of deliverance 1:19** *"I will continue to rejoice, <sup>19</sup>for I know that through your prayers & the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance."*

**Paul expects God to answer their prayers by getting him out of jail.**

**He expects the Spirit to help him get out.**

He doesn't tell us how He will accomplish that. But...

**Goal *isn't* to get out of jail!**

**Goal is to glorify God, whether in jail or out!**

## **Desire for deliverance 1:20-26**

### **Desire that he not be embarrassed 1:20a**

*“I eagerly expect & hope that I will in no way be **ashamed**”*

More significantly, that **GOD** not be embarrassed, by his actions or attitudes

Or by his attempts to get out of jail.

Ultimate “deliverance” in imprisonment: that he be delivered from **causing shame to Lord’s name.**

### **Desire that God be glorified by life or death 1:20b-26**

Whether he lives or dies isn’t important!

What’s important is that God be glorified

People say: “A man has to LIVE!”

Who says so?!!

Why do we have to live!

Why do we dedicate so much effort to stay alive?!!

### ***LIFE IS NOT THE GOAL!***

Speaking boldly for Christ...

**Glorifying God in our body**

*... that’s the goal!*

### **Paul’s reason for desiring to be delivered: 1:20b-22a**

*“...but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. <sup>21</sup>For to me, to live is Christ & to die is gain. <sup>22</sup>If I’m to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me.”*

1:21 When... To live = Christ

To die = gain

**When focus of our life is Jesus, then to die is gain –*NOT* loss.**

Our physical existence gets in the way of fully enjoying God's presence.

When barrier is removed—when we're face-to-face with God –that's better.

The barrier's gone!

Nothing gets in the way.

**But, if Paul continues living, he'll be able to produce more fruit 1:22a**

For fruit-bearing vines,

**longer life = more fruit!**

Paul desires to **increase fruit**

**–NOT extend life!**

**To produce fruit, for God's glory, is the goal!**

***NOT* to stay alive!**

He doesn't want to confuse God's purpose for his life with our natural *human* desire to stay alive!

**Paul's doubt 1:22b-24** *"Yet what shall I choose? I don't know! <sup>23</sup>I'm torn between the two: I desire to depart & be with Christ, which is **better by far**; <sup>24</sup>but it's more necessary for you that I remain in the body."*

**Paul can't decide which to choose.**

**For *his* benefit,**

**it would be *better* to die,**

**because he'd be present with the Lord.**

Death is the *BETTER* option

–NOT our *NORMAL* perspective on life!

No more barriers! That's good!

But, he makes a concession:

**For *their* benefit,**

**it's better to stay with them.**

**Paul's plan 25-26** *“Convinced of this, I know that I'll remain, & will continue with all of you for your progress & joy in the faith, <sup>26</sup>so that through my being with you again your joy in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me.”*

**God still has a job for him**

–investing in them. Therefore, ...

**Paul expects God to get him out of jail.**

This will be better *for them*;

it will increase their confidence in the Lord.

**Paul's goals for getting out of jail:**

\* ***They* advance in their walk with God.**

\* ***They* have increased joy.**

Their confidence will abound in Jesus

Because of him;

by his coming to them again

**Paul gives up what's best for him**

**–for their**

**benefit!**

Most important: to do God's will, for benefit of his brothers & sisters in Christ  
 whether that involves living or dying.

**God uses diverse circumstances for his glory!**

God can use *our life* for His glory.

God can use *our death* for His glory.

Key issue isn't whether we live or die.

Key issue: **God's glory.**

It's about *HIM!*

**How can we best glorify God?**

If God is glorified—whether by life or by death—our side wins!

**IMPLICATIONS FOR US**

From broad, general perspective,  
 we easily join Phil. in discouragement.

When everything's going wrong...

When problems/pressure won't go away...

We lose perspective.

We focus on the negative,  
 instead of seeing what God is doing  
 and *celebrating*.

More specific to this passage,  
 do **WE** view **life** from that perspective?

*Do we really believe it's better to be away from the body &  
 present with the Lord?*

*Is that really gain?*

Then **why cling to this life & its stuff?**

*Which would YOU choose?*

The goal isn't **liberty**.

**NOT** to get out of jail!

The goal isn't **life**. **Not** to stay alive!

**The goal is to glorify God!**

***Is that OUR goal?***

If you've never trusted Jesus, this sounds weird!

It only makes sense to people who trust HIM!

What's OUR hope for the future?

***If our hope's in Him, & eternity with Him,***

***why try so hard to stay alive***

***[or enjoy a "good" life]?!!***

***Is our life focused on US,***

***or on glorifying God?***

***What are WE living for?***