

To Live Is Christ, To Die Is Gain

Philippians 1:19-30

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Lesson Aim: To understand that death for the Christian should not be dreaded or feared, but rather longed for as graduation day into everlasting life and into the presence of the living God.. To realize that the Christian's goal in life should be to glorify God whether in life or in death.

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD'S WORD (*BIBLE STUDY*)

Part I: To live is Christ! (Phil. 1:19-21)

1. As Paul waits under house arrest to go before Caesar, rejection of his message and execution are real possibilities. What kind of deliverance is Paul most likely referring to in verse 19? According to Paul, what is the means of that deliverance? Does prayer actually "change God's mind"? Do the prayers of God's people change things? Explain your answers. Is it possible that God could choose to deliver Paul (*and other believers for that matter*) by death? Is deliverance this way necessarily a bad thing?
2. Who is referred to in **verse 19** as the Spirit of Christ? What will this Spirit supply to Paul and all believers who ask? According to the following verses, are the Spirit and the Spirit of Christ used interchangeably for God the Holy Spirit? (**See Rom. 8:9-14; 1 Pet. 1:10-12**)
3. Paul was truly Christ centered. According to **verse 20**, what was the goal of his life? How can we magnify Christ in our lives? How can Christ be magnified in our death?
4. What was the central focus of Paul's life (**vs. 21**)? What was Paul's view of physical death? Why is the death of an unbeliever very different from the death of a believer? (**See Matt. 25:31-46**) Describe the two different kinds of funerals.

Part II: To die and be with Christ is far better (Phil. 1:22-26)

1. In **verse 22** Paul ponders the impact he will have on the Philippians and others should he remain alive. What kind of fruit is Paul hoping to see from his labor? What kind of fruit do you hope to see from people you've led to the Lord and disciplined?

2. Paul found himself in a wrestling match as to whether it would be better for him to depart and be with Jesus (*that's what he really wanted to do*), or stay and labor on reaching people for Christ and ministering to the Church (**vs. 23**). Why would Paul really prefer to depart, most people dread death?

3. Mike spoke of several different views of the "Intermediate State", that period between physical death and resurrection. Does the Bible teach Annihilationism (*nothingness at death for unbelievers*)? (**See Matt. 13:41-42; 25:29-30**) Why or why not? Does the Bible teach the doctrine of "Soul Sleep" (*the believer sleeps from physical death until the resurrection with no consciousness*)? Why or why not? (**See Luke 13:27-28; 16:19-30**)

4. Does the Bible anywhere teach that there is such a place as purgatory (*a holding tank where Christians go to serve off time as punishment for their sins before going to heaven*)? (**Heb. 9:11-15; 25-26; 2 Cor. 5:8**)

5. Does the Bible teach that Christians go immediately and consciously at death into the presence of the Lord? Why or why not? (**See Luke 23:43; 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23**) As much as Paul would prefer to go home to Christ, what did he feel was best for the Church (**vs. 24**)? Why has God left you here on earth?

6. According to **verse 25** Paul seems confident that he will not die at the moment and will live another day to encourage the Philippians. What two benefits did the Apostle see in remaining and ministering to the Church?

7. Why is it so important for every Christian "to continue growing" in their Christian faith (**vs. 25**)? What happens if we don't? According to **verses 25 and 26**, what emotional response did Paul expect his return to bring to the Church? Why is it so important for us to encourage one another in the faith? Do you share with others when you become discouraged? If not, do so today.

Part III: Striving together for the faith of the gospel and suffering for Christ

(Phil. 1:27-30)

1. Paul may have been using a play on words in **verse 27**, the word “conduct” can literally be translated in the Greek, “*live as citizens*”, meaning live as citizens of the kingdom of God. The Philippians would find special meaning in this play on words as they were “citizens of Rome”. How should a “citizen of the kingdom of God” conduct their life? Describe what you would consider conduct “*worthy of the gospel of Christ*”? What can happen to the testimony of our Lord when Christians do not live their lives in a way that brings glory to Him?

2. What does Paul encourage the Church in Philippi to do whether he is with them or not (**vs. 27**)? Why is it so important for the Church to minister as a team? (**See 1 Cor. 12:12-31**) What was God’s purpose in designing the Church like a body?

3. Paul encourages the Philippians not to be terrified of their adversaries (**vs. 28**). According to **verse 28**, what happens when Christians minister in the love and courage of God? Who is encouraged? Who becomes convicted?

4. People don’t usually look upon suffering as a good thing. What does **verse 29** indicate about suffering and our relationship to Jesus Christ? According to **1 Peter 4:12-16**, should the believer walking with Christ expect to suffer? Why? How should they respond to suffering for Christ?

5. The Life Application Study Bible mentions four benefits of suffering. Discuss why each of the four points listed below actually work for the benefit of the body of Christ:
 - a. It takes our eyes off of earthly comforts.
 - b. It weeds out superficial believers.
 - c. It strengthens the faith of those who endure.
 - d. It serves as an example to others who may follow us.

6. In **1 Cor. 11:1** Paul says, “Imitate Me, just as I also imitate Christ.” What can we learn from Paul’s reaction to the conflict he faced (*to which the Philippians witnessed*) in **Acts 16:16-34**? How can we imitate Paul today as he imitated Christ then?

7. Did today’s message alter your understanding of suffering and death? Do you understand that death is a good thing for the follower of Christ? (**See Psalm 116:15**) Do you see that

suffering can actually work for our spiritual good? Do you have enough faith that you can thank God even for the hard times in life?

MINER'S CORNER – *Manna for today!*

- * God works through the prayers of His people, *so we must pray!*
- * Whether in life or in death, the goal of every Christian should be to magnify Christ.
- * Death for the Christian should not be dreaded or feared, but longed for as graduation day into everlasting life and into the presence of the living God.
- * Our conduct (daily living) should be worthy of the Gospel of Christ, standing fast in one spirit, with one mind as we strive together for one faith.
- * Suffering for our faith is a privilege bringing huge blessing in this life and life everlasting.