

PHILIPPIANS

To Live Is Christ

Philippians 1:21-26: For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. 22 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. 23 But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better; 24 yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake. 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 your proud confidence in me may abound in Christ Jesus through my coming to you again.

God is in control and as a child of God, Paul wins either way; if he is freed from prison and lives, it is not his life anyway; it is Christ's, who lives in Him. If he dies, he goes to be with the Lord forever – he does not need to wait for the Second Coming of the Lord. **Romans 8:35-39; 2 Corinthians 5:6-9; Galatians 2:20, 6:14**

Romans 8:35-39: Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 Just as it is written, "FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED." 37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

2 Corinthians 5:6-9: Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord – 7 for we walk by faith, not by sight – 8 we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord. 9 Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.

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.

Galatians 6:14: But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

Paul equates being with the Lord with “fruitful labor” of fulfilling his ministry on earth – he loved leading and instructing the churches, despite the problems. He recognized that going to be with the Lord would be great for him, but not for the church. So, like Christ, Paul put aside his own interest to minister to the believers – to help establish and strengthen their faith and glorify God. **John 16:7; Acts 14:21-22; 20:29-31; Romans 1:11-12; 15:18-20, 30-32**

John 16:7: "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.

Acts 14:21-22: After they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, 22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."

Acts 20:29-30: "I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.

Romans 1:11-12: For I long to see you so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established; 12 that is, that I may be encouraged together with you while among you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine.

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Romans 15:18-20: *For I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me, resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed, 19 in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit; so that from Jerusalem and round about as far as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. 20 And thus I aspired to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, so that I would not build on another man's foundation*

Romans 15:30-32: *Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me, 31 that I may be rescued from those who are disobedient in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may prove acceptable to the saints; 32 so that I may come to you in joy by the will of God and find refreshing rest in your company.*

Philippians 1:27-30: *Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; 28 in no way alarmed by your opponents -- which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and that too, from God. 29 For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, 30 experiencing the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear to be in me.*

A believer's conduct is dependent upon their life decisions – how they choose to live. Paul encourages the Philippians to live life's well pleasing to God in accordance with their testimony/confession (*conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ*), even when he is not present with them. This is a sign of maturity,

Paul says his desire is to hear that the Philippians are living godly lives, marked out by faithfulness (*standing firm*), obedience (*one spirit*), committed (*one mind*) and purposeful (*striving together for the faith of the gospel*). This includes staying faithful, committed, and purposeful in spite of persecutions, which were coming upon them. **Ephesians 4:1-3; Colossians 1:9-12; 2 Timothy 3:12-13**

Ephesians 4:1-3: *Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, 3 being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

Colossians 1:9-12: *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, 10 so that you will 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; 11 strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.*

2 Timothy 3:12-13: *Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. 13 But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.*

28 in no way alarmed by your opponents -- which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and that too, from God.

Paul points out the persecutions are a sign of the spiritual state of those involved. Those who are persecuting Christ, which is the truth, do not have the truth and are dead (*a sign of destruction for them*). Those being persecuted have the truth and belong to the Lord, Who has guaranteed their deliverance and salvation (*salvation for you*); the Philippians, as with all believers, are persecuted for this reason, because the name the name of Christ. **Isaiah 51:7-8, 12; Matthew 5:10-12; 10:28; Luke 21:12-19; Romans 8:16-18**

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Isaiah 51:7-8: "Listen to Me, you who know righteousness, a people in whose heart is My law; do not fear the reproach of man, nor be dismayed at their revilings. 8 "For the moth will eat them like a garment, and the grub will eat them like wool. But My righteousness will be forever, and My salvation to all generations."

Isaiah 51:12: "I, even I, am He who comforts you. Who are you that you are afraid of man who dies and of the son of man who is made like grass

Matthew 5:10-12: "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 "Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. 12 "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Matthew 10:28: "Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Luke 21:12-19: "But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and will persecute you, delivering you to the synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors for My name's sake. 13 "It will lead to an opportunity for your testimony. 14 "So make up your minds not to prepare beforehand to defend yourselves; 15 for I will give you utterance and wisdom which none of your opponents will be able to resist or refute. 16 "But you will be betrayed even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death, 17 and you will be hated by all because of My name. 18 "Yet not a hair of your head will perish. 19 "By your endurance you will gain your lives.

Romans 8:16-18: The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him. 18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

29 For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, 30 experiencing the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear to be in me.

The attacks and suffering for belonging to the Lord have been preapproved by the Lord (*to suffer for His sake*), to glory the Father and the Son (*for Christ's sake*). Belonging to the Lord does not remove one from the attacks of the ungodly, but God, Who is in control of the circumstances (*to you it has been granted*), has permitted the attacks for His purposes. Paul encourages his readers by reminding them of Christ's sufferings and His faithfulness. Those who trust and obey God can expect to suffer for God. This was true of Christ; it was true of Paul and is true of all believers. *Romans 5:3-5; 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16, 3:3-4; 1 Peter 4:12-16; James 1:2-4 Romans 5:3-5: and not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; 4 and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; 5 and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*

1 Thessalonians 2:14-16: For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, for you also endured the same sufferings at the hands of your own countrymen, even as they did from the Jews, 15 who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out. They are not pleasing to God, but hostile to all men, 16 hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved; with the result that they always fill up the measure of their sins. But wrath has come upon them to the utmost.

1 Thessalonians 3:3-4: so that no one would be disturbed by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we have been destined for this. 4 For indeed when we were with you, we kept telling you in advance that we were going to suffer affliction; and so it came to pass, as you know.

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1 Peter 4:12-16: Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; 13 but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. 14 If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. 15 Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; 16 but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.

James 1:2-4: Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. 4 And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.