



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

JOY IN SPITE OF DEATH - PHILIPPIANS 1:19-21

COLORADO

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Dan File, PO Box 1088, Lake City, CO 82135-1088/303-345-8830 / dan.file@capitolcom.org

As we proceed with our study of Philippians, Paul continues to stress the overwhelming life shattering importance of Jesus Christ. Never does Paul ever regret giving up everything to gain Christ and he has no hesitation in urging others to follow his example. For Paul, Christ is everything! And everything is viewed from the perspective of glorifying God and thus Paul possessed a joy in spite of trials, testing or death.

I. JOY IN SPIRIT OF DEATH

“For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”
Philippians 1:19-21

As we look at this section of Scripture and remember the weeks past, we continue to see Paul as one who totally and completely depended on God and trusted His sovereign plan for his life.

A. PAUL TRUSTS IN THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

“For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ...”
Philippians 1:19

“**know**,” Greek “*eido*,” can be translated as to see, or to know by perception of the mind. It is an understanding of what is at hand or to come. It is a certainty of understanding.

Paul states in Philippians 1:19 that he knows that this will all turn out for his deliverance. Paul understood God’s sovereignty and knew that he would be delivered, either by release or death at the hand of Rome. His deliverance was not based on whether Caesar acquitted him or not. He knew his captivity had been divinely appointed for the Lord’s glory and the proclamation of the gospel. His assurance rested on the ultimate sovereignty of God.

1. EXAMPLE OF DELIVERANCE

“Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego answered and said to the king, Oh Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up.” Daniel 3:16-18

These three men knew God and trusted in His power over the king. They didn’t exactly know how God would work, but they trusted Him and had faith to the point that they knew deliverance would happen either through life or by death.

2. DELIVERANCE, BASED ON SOVEREIGNTY

“**deliverance**,” Greek “*soteria*,” ultimately means to save, salvation or eternal deliverance.

This is the same place Paul is at. He knew with absolute certainty that God would save him either through life or through death. He trusted that God was and is all powerful and able to deliver or rescue from a present experience. Keep in mind

BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS, GOVERNOR & SPOUSES: TUESDAY, 7:15 AM, CAPITOL BASEMENT, ROOM 0109, BREAKFAST SERVED
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here that Paul never places God in a box as to “how” He must rescue or “when” He must save. Rather he submits his life to the will of the Father. Paul knew his deliverance was a certainty based on God’s sovereignty.

B. PAUL MAGNIFIES GOD IN LIFE OR DEATH

“...according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death.” [Philippians 1:20](#)

1. WITH EXPECTANT TRUST

“earnest expectation,” Greek “apokaradokia,” means attentive looking forward with an outstretched neck and head, being thrust forward.

Paul goes on to say that with all hope, he moves forward with no shame or regret. The Greek word is worth noting here. Paul is so expectant and trusting in God to work, in spite of his harsh circumstances!

2. with hope as job

“For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God.” [Job 19:25-26](#)

This is the same hope, trust and faith in the sovereignty of God to work in deliverance either through life or death echoed through Job’s words that Paul was expressing in [Philippians 1:20](#). Is that our perspective as we view the present and future?

3. unashamed and with boldness

“...according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death.” [Philippians 1:20](#)

Paul had done nothing except proclaim Christ and proclaiming Christ had put him in chains and in jail. Yet, Paul was never ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ which was the reason for his chains. He saw it a joy to suffer even physical affliction for the sake of Christ. And then Paul states that he “as always” will be bold and outspoken for the truth of the resurrected Lord. Whether he lives or dies it is of no consequence to Paul as long as Jesus Christ is glorified.

4. for the glory of jesus christ

“...so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death.” [Philippians 1:20](#)

Whether Paul lives or dies it is of no consequence to him as long as Jesus Christ is glorified. Paul saw his body as “a temple of the Holy Spirit” ([1 Corinthians 6:19](#)). Paul’s plan was to continue presenting his physical body as “a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which was his spiritual service of worship.” ([Romans 12:1](#)).

Matthew Henry Commentary says this, “Those who desire that Christ be magnified in their bodies have a holy indifference whether it be by life or by death.”

c. the narrative of paul’s life in christ

“For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” [Phil. 1:21](#)

This is certainly a very well known verse. However, is it just well known or is it well lived?

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“live,” Greek, “zao” meaning to spend one’s existence, the narrative of one’s life. It is from this word that we get our word biography. A biography is the narrative of one’s life.

Here Paul makes a stirring, personal confession as he triumphantly asserts that life and death are viewed solely from the perspective of glorifying God. Paul weighs in the two possibilities of life and death in light of their significance. Everything becomes subordinate to the preaching of the gospel. The issues of life and death are clearly subordinate to Jesus Christ being glorified.

Let us consider our own existence. Let us look at the narrative of our life.

-Can we say that the total existence of our life is Christ?

-Can we say that the narrative of our life is Christ?

What Paul is saying in Philippians 1:21 is exactly that. That to live, our total existence, our whole and complete narrative is Christ! Is that our total reason for being? The glory of Christ ought to be the end of our life and the Word of Christ ought to be the rule of our existence.

What was Paul’s narrative? He traveled for Christ, he contended and preached for Christ, he was beaten and imprisoned for Christ and eventually he was beheaded for Christ to which Paul says at the end of the verse was “gain” ! Paul’s goal for himself and the Philippians was to be glorified in Christ’s presence and complete in Him. Paul longed to be with his Lord.

Paul was a godly man that we as men and women can pattern our lives after. What will be the narrative, the biography of our lives? Will it be said of us that we lived and died for Christ? That whether we lived or died, our passion and pursuit was to glorify God? That we lived with expectant trust in our sovereign God, that our hope was sure and steadfast in Christ, that because our life was Christ’s we were unashamed and bold to proclaim the gospel and our life was for the glory of Jesus Christ?

“Yield to the Lord, with a simple heart, All that thou hast and all that thou art, Renounce all strength but strength divine, And peace shall be forever thine.” Madame Jeanne Guyon