

## Life with a Purpose

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### Philippians 1:18b-26

A few days ago, I had a project to drill a hole to put up curtains in one of our bedrooms. I am not a handy man, and I don't have a drill. Sevan borrowed it from our neighbor. Imagine "Mr. Nerses" going up the ladder and holding the drill to make a hole (big deal). Somehow it was not going in, and I was pushing harder and harder. Finally, I gave up and asked the neighbor's help. Behold, I was drilling with in reverse direction! The reverse knob was on, and I did not know about it. I felt embarrassed and stupid.

I held a drill, a very good brand, and I was not able to use it for its purpose.

Paul is in prison, most likely in Rome. He is not even sure he will come out alive.

But here is the secret of this man's **unexplainable joy**: he had one purpose in his life: **to glorify Jesus Christ in his life or his death.**

A drill has a purpose. Life has a purpose. Paul knows his life's purpose. Do you know yours? This pandemic brought forth those important questions about life and our existence.

Let us analyze the text:

#### -Paul's Deliverance

**Yes, and I will rejoice, for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance...**  
(Philippians 1:18b,19 ESV)

Paul is rejoicing even though he is in prison. As we heard last Sunday, what matters to him is that the good news of the Gospel is being preached (the Gospel is being advanced). The Gospel is being preached both inside and outside the prison. This brings joy to this man. I love it...

-There is joy in the future as well. **I will rejoice**: why? To the Philippians: you guys are praying for me, and the Spirit of Jesus Christ is at work in my life for my deliverance.

The future is not very clear. Is he going to be released from prison? He says, "I will visit you one day." Is he going to be executed because of his faith in Christ? Possibly.

One thing he is sure: Jesus Christ is at work for Paul's deliverance. It is not clear whether he means his deliverance from prison, or his salvation that comes from Jesus Christ. It does not matter, maybe both. The point is whether he lives or dies he is delivered. Either he will see the "Roman judge" or God, the supreme judge. He will be delivered.

Paul knows who he is; he knows his purpose; he knows why Christ chose him to be his disciple. He knows that through Christ there is deliverance, whatever happens to him.

Paul is a content man. He is satisfied. Whatever happens he wants God to be glorified. Paul folds the word "worry" and puts it on the side.

### **-Christ will be Honored**

**... as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. (Phil 1:20-21 ESV)**

Paul is not at all ashamed or embarrassed of what happened to him; he is filled with courage and boldness to honor Christ.

Paul's desire is that whatever happens to him, may Christ be glorified.

### **-Life and Death**

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

Is Paul suicidal? Is he depressed from life in prison?

Paul is not depressed. He is not thinking, "I hope I will die." Although he was seen quite a lot of torture, beating, imprisonment, and persecution.

N.T. Wright says: “This isn’t ‘death-wish’ in the sense of someone losing self-esteem... Paul, as this letter shows, is full of life and energy and quite ready to get back to work the minute they let him out of the prison.”<sup>2</sup>

No, for Paul to die means to be in the full presence of Jesus Christ. That is a gain. Please notice how much **he values Christ in his life**. For Paul, Christ is supreme. He will not give up Christ for anything else. Paul’s priority: Christ and only Christ...

Also, he is saying; if God gives me new opportunity to get out of this prison, I will continue to preach and make sure the Gospel of Jesus Christ will be advanced.

“For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (to be with Christ).

As I read in commentary: “Life means Christ to me, as I more fully know and love and serve him day by day; death means Christ to me, when I shall finally possess and eternally enjoy him.”<sup>3</sup>

Eugene Peterson paraphrased this passage:

I don’t expect to be embarrassed in the least. On the contrary, everything happening to me in this jail only serves to make Christ more accurately known, regardless of whether I live or die. They didn’t shut me up; they gave me a pulpit! Alive, I’m Christ’s messenger; dead, I’m his bounty. Life versus even more life! I can’t lose. (Philippians 1:19-21 MSG)

Specially Paul is looking forward to being with the believers of Philippi. He would like to help them grow in Christ. He likes to see them grow in the love of knowing Jesus and their lives to be transformed to Christ centered. This will bring joy to them as he has experiencing the same joy. (Phil. 1:24-26)

To live is Christ, to die is gain—a win-win proposition.

John Piper says about this passage: “God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in HIM.”

### **Application:**

1. Christ is supreme. The Beginning and the End.

Easily we all can go to depression in these crazy times. Paul knows his purpose.

A Drill is made to make holes.

Who are you and what is your purpose in life?

I am the beloved child of God. I am created in His image. I am created to worship Him. I am most satisfied when God is glorified.

Examine your life. How can bring glory to God in my life? My talents, my income, my work, my home, my kids, my degrees, my possessions, my car, my talents....

2. Have the passion to spread the Love of Jesus to your neighbors.

Whatever I do is for the advancement of the Gospel.

The story of Maggie.

Let me finish with a CS Lewis quote:

If you read history, you will find that the Christians who did the most for the present world were those who thought most of the next. The Apostles themselves, who set on foot the conversion of the Roman Empire, the great men who built up the Middle Ages, the English who abolished the Slave Trade, all left their mark on Earth, precisely because their minds were occupied with heaven. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this one. Aim at heaven and you will get earth 'thrown in': aim at earth and you will get neither. <sup>4</sup>

1. Gordon Fee, Paul's Letter to the Philippians (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. 1995), 136.

2. N.T. Wright, Paul for Everyone, the Prison Letters, P 91

3. J Alec Motyer, Bible Speaks Today

4. C. S. Lewis, Mere Christianity, 119.