

To Live is Christ

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Morning Service

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Text:

[Philippians 1:12-24](#)

Introduction

What is life? What is death? These are the two most profound questions we could ever ask in this life. As a young boy growing up in the Philippines, I started to think about life and death when our neighbor died on a motorcycle accident and when two of my uncles passed away because of illness. What is life? What is the meaning and purpose of life? What is death? What is the meaning and result of death? What happens after death?

Paul answers these two profound questions in one verse.

[Philippians 1:21 For to me to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain.](#)

It so amazing how Paul answers both of these vitally important questions with one word. Notice in your Bible that the verb “is” is in italics. That means it is not in the original but was added to make the meaning clearer. What is the meaning, the significance of death? He answers both of these questions in one word. Life - Christ! Death - Gain!

As we saw last Sunday, Paul was imprisoned in Rome awaiting his trial. He was facing a real possibility of losing his life for his faith in Jesus Christ. Paul was torn between two desires.

[Philippians 1:23 For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire **to depart**, and to be with Christ; which is far better: 24: Nevertheless **to abide** in the flesh is more needful for you.](#)

Paul was willing to abide but he is ready to depart. That is where Paul was. To him, it is a win-win situation. For either way he wins. If he is released from prison and live for Christ here upon earth, that is a win, or if he is executed and die, that is also a win because he will go immediately into the presence of Christ who has died for him and purchased his salvation.

How is Paul able to face life and death like that? How is it that Paul has this bold confidence? Paul gives us his secret and it is found in our text ...

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

The only way anyone can live like this and the only way anyone can face death like this, is to know and experience what it means to live is Christ! This is Paul’s testimony. Notice, how he started this sentence ...

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

As far as I am concerned. I don't know about you but as for me. You can live how you want to live, but as for me to live is Christ. Whatever is life may be to someone else, to me to live is Christ.

What does it mean “to live is Christ”?

What did Paul mean when he said to live is Christ? We do not have to guess and speculate what he meant. To know and understand what he meant by those words, we just need to look at his life and writings as recorded in this reliable document the Bible,

I - Paul's Purpose in Life

Colossians 3:1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2: Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3: For ye are dead, and your **life is hid with Christ in God**. 4: When **Christ, who is our life**, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

Paul's reason and purpose for living is Christ. For Paul, life is Christ. Life is living for Christ. There was a time in Paul's life when he did not live for Christ. That time before his conversion to Jesus Christ, Paul lived without Christ. Paul lived independent of Christ. Paul lived against Christ. There was a time when Paul spent all his time and energy persecuting the followers of Jesus Christ. He did this, thinking that he was doing it for God not knowing that if you persecute the church and the Christians you are persecuting Christ.

But on the road to Damascus he had a personal encounter with Jesus Christ.

Acts 9:1 And **Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord**, went unto the high priest, 2: And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. 3: And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: 4: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, **Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 5: And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest**: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. 6: And he trembling and astonished said, **Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?** And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

Having encountered the Lord Jesus Christ, everything changed for Paul. Paul was transformed from a person who hated Christ and His followers into a lover and follower of Jesus Christ. loved and lived for Christ. And it began with faith in Christ.

Galatians 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Living for Christ begins with faith in Christ. It is impossible to live for Christ without faith in Christ. But not just simply having faith. Not just faith in anything but faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God who loved him and gave Himself up for him.

After conversion, Paul's life turned around completely. He had a 180 degree change of direction. His life was dramatically changed. He no longer lived for himself.

Paul was not just a Sunday morning Christian. No, he lived for Christ Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday. By the way, he lived this way not because up he was an apostle, he lived this way because he was a true Christian. Lest, we think that living for Christ is only for full time ministers, please turn to ...

2 Corinthians 5:14 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: 15: And that **he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.**

This is how you and I should live as Christians.

II - Paul's Pursuit in Life

Philippians 3:8 Yea doubtless, and **I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord:** for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, 9: And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: 10: **That I may know him,** and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

Paul longed to know Jesus Christ more and more each day. He is not content just to know something about Christ. He is not satisfied with vague and general knowledge of Christ. Paul wants to have a deep intimate personal relationship with Christ. This intimate knowledge only comes by prayer and meditation and reflection.

So many professing Christians are content with just knowing that they are going to Heaven when they die, but do not pursue a deeper knowledge of Christ. As long as our object is simply to get to Heaven, we will never experience true lasting joy. For true and lasting joy is found in knowing and living for Jesus Christ.

III - Paul's Pattern in Life

1 Corinthians 11:1 **Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.**

Paul was a true follower of Jesus Christ. His desire was to be like Christ. He understood that this is God's purpose in salvation. He understood that the goal of his Christian life was to be conformed into the image of Jesus Christ.

Follow me as I follow Christ. Imitate me as I imitate Christ. Copy me as I copy Christ. Paul patterned his life after Christ. Christ was his supreme example. This is the only safe example; and if we follow this, we can never go astray.

1 Peter 2:21 **For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:**

If you are following anyone or anything else you are following the wrong thing. We must follow Christ. We must talk like Christ, walk like Christ, act like Christ, and react like Christ. Everything in our lives must be patterned after Christ.

IV - Paul's Preaching

1 Corinthians 2:1 And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. 2: For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

For I determined, that is, I made a resolution. Paul is fixed and resolved to preach Christ and nothing but Christ. It was not a matter of accident, or chance, that he made Christ his great and constant theme, but it was his fixed and deliberate purpose. Paul's message is simple and clear - Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Paul's message is the Person and Work of Jesus Christ. Whatever subject he preaches, Paul always manage to connect it to Christ.

V - Paul's Power in Life

As Paul patterns his life after Christ and preaches Christ, he knows that he can do all these only in the strength that Christ provides.

Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Paul derives his strength from Christ. Jesus Christ is the source of his strength. He knows he can do all things. All things that are within the will of God; all things that God desires us to do; all things that are involved in following Christ. All these things can be done only through Christ who strengthens.

Colossians 1:27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: 28: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: 29: Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

Paul labor and fight and serve so hard, depending on and deriving from Christ's mighty power that works within him.

Oh, how our service should be done according to Christ's power, which works in us mightily.

VI - Paul's Pleasure in Life

What gives Paul great delight and joy? Jesus Christ and His glory. It gives Paul pleasure when Christ is glorified.

Philippians 1:15 Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: 16: The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: 17: But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. 18: What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.

There is nothing that gives Paul joy and pleasure more than Christ. He is excited for Christ. Actually, **to be a follower of Christ, you cannot love anything or anyone more than Christ.**

Philippians 1:23 According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.

Closing Thoughts

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

This is Paul's testimony. This is how Paul lived his life. Paul lived for Christ. His purpose, his pattern, his pursuit, his preaching, his power, and his pleasure in life is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is everything to Paul. Jesus Christ is not just part of his life. Jesus Christ is his life!

To Paul, life means Christ and death means gain. Gain means to receive more. Gain is to receive more of the same thing. If to live is Christ, then to die would be more of Christ. It means to go and be with Him. No wonder Paul said to die is gain, because death means the fulfillment and realization of his great desire. Paul wants Christ in this life and in death he gets more of Christ. Christ means everything to Paul in this life, and when he dies he will have even more.

How about you? What is life to you? What are you living for? What is your purpose, your pattern, your pursuit, your preaching (message), your power, and your pleasure in life? If we live for anything or anyone other than Christ then to die is loss.

Have you experienced what Paul experienced on the Damascus Road where he encountered the Lord Jesus Christ? Having encountered the living Christ, everything changed for you. Everything that you once held on to and trusted to get you to Heaven became all loss that you might win and have Christ. This is a fork on the road. Self or Christ. Sin or Christ. Ambition or Christ. The world or Christ. Worldly possessions or Christ. Popularity and fame or Christ. You cannot have either one of these and Christ. At the same. You must choose one. You must decide yourself.

*Jesus is all the world to me,
My life, my joy, my all;
He is my strength from day to day,
Without Him I would fall.*

In a funeral service, a friend asked another about a millionaire who just died, "*How much did he leave?*" His friend responded, "*He left it all. He left everything.*"

Job 1:21 And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.

1 Timothy 6:7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

*Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.*

AMEN!