

22S09 Philippians 1:19-26 to Live is Christ

Hello everyone. Thank you for joining me today @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. I hope everyone is doing well. Today I want to continue our study of Philippians with Philippians 1:19-26.

Before we start, let us remember this short letter was most likely written by the Apostle Paul while he was in prison in Rome. Paul had first visited Philippi during his second missionary journey and he has great affection for the church in Philippi. This letter is sometimes called “the Joy Epistle” because of thankful and joyful tone. But remember Paul is in prison in Rome, not very happy circumstances.

I’m reading from the New King James version (NKJV) today. But of course, you can use whatever translation you choose.

Let’s read Philippians 1:19-26 (NKJV) *¹⁹For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, ²⁰according 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. ²¹For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. ²²But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. ²³For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. ²⁴Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you. ²⁵And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith, ²⁶that your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again.*

Let’s pray. Dear heavenly father, guide our discussion today such that your message is clear to each of us. As we read your word from Philippians, help us see why Paul is so thankful and joyful despite his situation. I pray that you help me stay out of the way so your hope and peace can be shared with us. I pray this in your name Lord Jesus. Amen.

So, before we start studying today. This section in the NKJV is titled “to live is Christ” but remember these titles are not part of the bible scripture rather useful summaries of the text to come. I like the (NLT) which says, “Paul’s Life for Christ”. This a very important section of scripture for us as Christians. Paul is defining his earnest wishes and purpose of his life in Christ.

So, let’s break these verse down a little more. Starting with Philippians 1:19-20 (NKJV) *¹⁹For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, ²⁰according 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.* Paul is thankful for the prayers of the Philippians about his situation, He is hopeful he will be released from prison but he is proud to boldly speak about Jesus so Jesus can be glorified even if this means he is

killed. Whether by my life or by my death. How many of us can truly say this? Whatever God wants of me, whether I speak Jesus into peoples lives with my life or glorify God by dying because of Jesus. Are we ready for this? We should be. But Paul goes on to say *²¹For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. ²²But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell.* (Philippians 1:21-22 NKJV).

Did we hear what Paul said. To live is Christ and to die is gain. Paul does not regard living as that great. Paul knows that being in heaven with Jesus is a whole lot better than here. Life is hard, heaven is way better. So Paul is telling us to not be so attached to our lives that we fear going to heaven. Death is not the end, but the beginning. But Paul is confident if God allow him to live, it will be to produce fruit from his labor. Yet Paul is not sure which he would choose. Life or Death and Paul is unsure which is better for him.

Paul continues with *²³For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. ²⁴Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you.* (Philippians 1:23-24 NKJV). Paul wants to die because he knows without any doubt that being with Christ is better. Better than anything else this life offers. But nevertheless, if God needs him here in the flesh, he is ready for whatever comes. God's will first, not ours. Paul is saying, he wishes to go home to heaven but he will do whatever God wants. God's will not his.

This section concludes with Paul saying, *²⁵And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith, ²⁶that your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again.* (Philippians 1:25-26 NKJV). Again, Paul shows is joy and hopeful tone of this amazing letter by comforting the Philippians by saying. He will want to remain to help them progress in faith, have joy in faith.

Let's review.

- 1) Whether by life or by death? What did Paul mean by this.? Paul is acknowledging that it's all about God's plan not Paul's. He knows God will use his life or death to further the kingdom of God on earth. He knows it's not about him but God.
- 2) Does Paul want to live or die? Paul is conflicted. The KJV uses the word betwixt. Meaning Paul can see the good in both. He'd rather die and go to heaven which is much better than life here but he wants to help his friends and reach more for Jesus. Tough choice. Your comfort & happiness, or the salvation of others. Your answer says a lot about you. Is it about you or God? I'll let you answer that.
- 3) Why does Paul think he will remain? For others. He says specifically, to help other continue in their progress and joy of faith. So, we can rejoice in his life or rejoice in the answered prayers. Either way, Paul hopes to make their love for

Jesus Christ more abundant or greater. Continually growing until the return of Christ or we go to Jesus. .

Let me leave you with this. We should not fear death, it's only the beginning. As Paul says, if you are a follower of Jesus, death is gain. Our life belongs to Jesus, so it is about God's will for our lives, not what we selfishly want. We can face anything in the life when we have this perspective. To die is gain but if God keeps us here, we should be focused on His plan. We don't have to worry about our situation but leave it to God, do our appointed work, and look forward to our future with Jesus in Heaven. Amen.

Let's Pray. Heavenly Father thank you for this letter from Paul. Help us to read and meditate on this letter so we can hear the message you have for us. Help us to remember who you are Lord. You are our king, king of kings. You are our Lord, Lord over everyone. We can trust you Lord. Help us to do what you ask and not worry about what others are doing. I pray this in your Name Lord Jesus. Amen

I hope you will join us for the rest of our study of Philippians. Please email me comments or feedback. Thank you for joining me today. Until next time @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. God bless.