

“Living With Conviction”

August 18, 2024

Scripture Text: Philippians 1:22- 26 ESV **22** If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose, I cannot tell. **23** I am hard-pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. **24** But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. **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 in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.

Paul addresses the church at Philippi while in prison in Rome for making good trouble preaching the gospel of God’s amazing grace in Christ Jesus. In his imprisonment, he had some visitations, such as Timothy, and perhaps others not mentioned in the scriptures.

In verse 21, he boldly states, "To live for me is Christ, and to die is gain. In his letter, he reveals to all readers that he is **living with eternity in view**. If the prize we pursue in life is to be in God’s eternal presence, shouldn’t we work with the purpose to achieve that goal? For any athlete or professional to achieve their goals, they must be willing to endure hardships and setbacks along the way.

In **John 16:33**, Jesus addresses the believers, **“In the world, you shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world.”** Living in a world under condemnation, life is like a fish going upstream to achieve their ultimate purpose of reproducing for the following generation.

After we have committed our lives to Christ, we often struggle to avoid distractions and traps that the enemy uses to snuff out our fire.

VERSE 22: *If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose, I cannot tell.*

Most people live with the desire and countless efforts to make life more gratifying and comfortable while avoiding the threats and experiences of hardships. It’s human nature to admire individuals living on the edge and conquering every challenge. Paul endured beatings with rods, being bitten by poisonous snakes,

being shipwrecked three times, and spending a day and night in the sea, *all for the sake of spreading the Gospel of Grace.*

What appeared to be setbacks for Paul became significant opportunities and successes for communicating God's grace and salvation in Christ Jesus. Like anyone who commits to following the Lord, his conflict is between his flesh and spirit. He knew that God would use the weakness of his committed flesh to bring glory to the Name of Jesus.

He would write to the saints in **Galatia 6:9 ESV:** *And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap if we do not give up.*

VERSE 23: *I am hard-pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.*

In all of Paul's sufferings, he longed to be with the Lord, just as we would rather not entertain more suffering. He knew God was being glorified in his suffering as people came into a relationship with Jesus Christ through his testimony.

Paul knew that death was not a final transition to be feared but the very door that welcomes us into the eternal presence of the Lord. Living free of the fear of death allowed him to live with purpose, meaning, and commitment to the cause of Christ.

When we have made Jesus Christ our Lord and faithfully serve Him, we can confidently live, die, and live again. He belonged to Christ as we do and was confident of his eternal destiny. He could boldly dedicate his life on earth to live for Christ.

Until you are ready to die to yourself, you won't be prepared to live with these light afflictions.

He shared with the saints in Corinth in **2 Corinthians 4:17 ESV** *For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, 18: as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are not unseen are eternal.*