

>>>>>> *Philippians - Lesson 03* <<<<<<<

- 1) Last time, discussed the passage through chapter 1 verses 18-20, talking about those who were preaching the gospel out of envy and strife and those who were preaching from proper motives.
- 2) We finished up discussing what I consider one of the most if not the most challenging verse in the New Testament.

Philippians 1:21 (NASB 2020)

²¹ For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

- 3) When we get into chapter 2 shortly, Paul will have more to say about what it means to be like Christ.

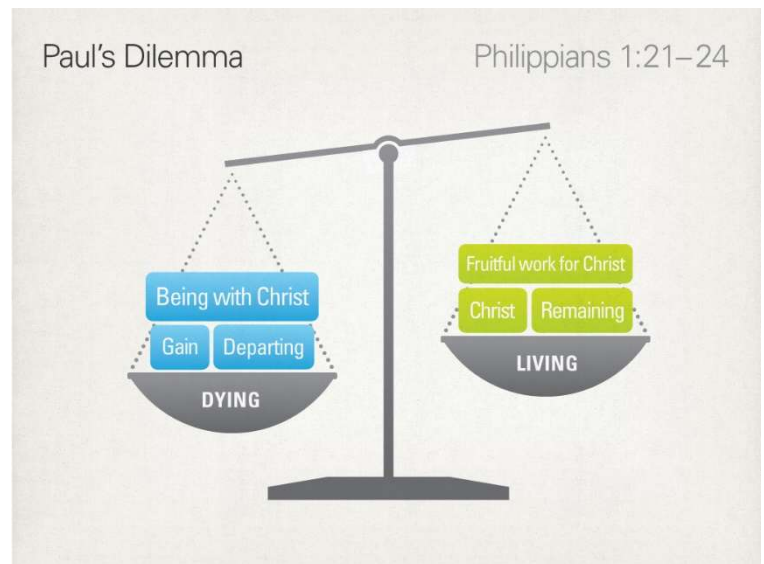
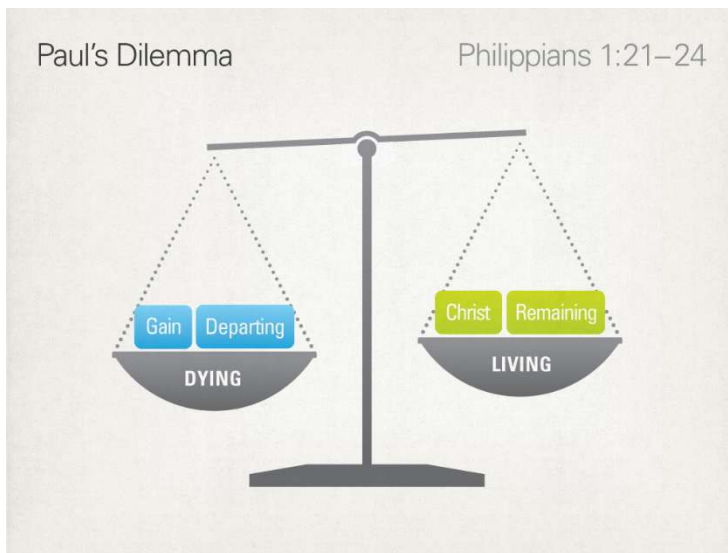
For now, any further thoughts or comments on any of that?

- 4) So reading on starting in chapter 1 verse 22 Paul does some reflecting on his own current state ...

Philippians 1:22–26 (NASB 2020)

²² But if *I am* to live *on* in the flesh, this *will mean* fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose. ²³ But I am hard-pressed from both *directions*, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for *that* is very much better; ²⁴ yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sakes. 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 your pride in Christ Jesus may be abundant because of me by my coming to you again.

- 5) Try to imagine for a moment a balance scale.
- 6) On the one side dying (in this case being executed) – going on to be with Christ.
- 7) On the other side living.
- 8) Now, we begin placing these thoughts on the scale...
 - a) On the departing side is Gain, Being with Christ, desirable and much better.
 - b) On the other side remaining, Christ is promoted (to live is Christ).
 - i) At this point, the scale becomes almost balanced.
 - c) Next comes being with Christ on the departing side.
 - d) On the other living side, Fruitful work for Christ.
 - i) Somewhat unbalanced to the departing side.
 - e) Then, he places the final item on the “staying” (living) side of the scales – “remaining in the flesh is more necessary for your sakes.” He is placing the heaviest item on that side – the NEEDS of OTHERS.
 - f) This tips the scale decidedly in favor of living and staying in the fight!



9) Steven Runge in his “High Definition Commentary on Philippians” says:

After listing the pros and cons of each option, Paul makes known his choice. He could have skipped comparing the options, but doing so would have obscured the significance of his decision. Opening up his decision-making process challenges us to follow in his path.

10) Runge then asks a series of questions as he concludes: ***(Questions for us to ponder)***

How do we decide whether to get involved in a ministry or not, to minister to someone else’s needs or not?

Do we consider only our own interests?

What about the interests of others?

Philippians 2:4 (NASB 2020)

⁴ do not *merely* look out for your own personal *interests*, but also for the *interests* of others.

11) He concludes by saying...

Convinced that the needs of the Philippians’ outweigh his own desire to depart and be with Christ, Paul chooses to remain serving them.⁶

12) Continuing, Paul connects his decision to the next series of statements...

Philippians 1:27–30 (NASB 2020)

²⁷ Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear about you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; ²⁸ and in no way alarmed by *your* opponents—which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and this *too*, from God. ²⁹ For to you it has been granted for Christ’s sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer on His behalf, ³⁰ experiencing the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear *to be* in me.

13) Paul places no conditions on the Philippian believers because of his decision to stay.

- a) However, by using the word **Only** as the introductory word he is making a few strong requests.

14) What he is doing is emphasizing what he really considers important for them – to conduct themselves in a worthy manner.

15) **Worthy of the gospel of Christ.**

Somebody take a stab at it – What does “Worthy of the Gospel of Christ” mean?

- a) This is one of those phrases that doesn’t jump off the page as having an obvious definition.
- b) It does not mean that we have to be perfect before we accept Christ and start living for Him.
- c) It does mean that when we do accept Christ as our savior we become God’s children and we must always remember that that privilege was bought with a price.
- d) So, to be worthy of that “good news,” we should reflect the fruit of the Spirit along with gratitude to God in every aspect of our lives.
- e) James says it this way:

James 2:12 (NASB 2020)

¹² So speak, and so act, as those who are to be judged by *the* law of freedom.

⁶ Steven E. Runge, [*High Definition Commentary: Philippians*](#) (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2011), Php 1:21–26.

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16) Additionally, Paul wants this not only for us as individuals but also as a body.

17) He wants to hear about them as a group...

- a) Standing firm in one spirit – unity.
- b) Striving for the faith of the gospel.

18) Now **“faith of the gospel”** is another phrase that does not have an obvious “jump off the page” meaning.

What do you think it means?

- a) In this context, it most likely indicates that the gospel is the source of the faith –
 - i) In other words, where it starts.
 - ii) – and the Philippians should be striving to maintain it.

19) And all of this with one mind.

- a) The word (SU Ka) translated here as “mind” is predominantly translated as soul or life in the New Testament.
- b) Baylor Handbook comments on the word in this context:

It is “the essence of life in terms of thinking, willing, and feeling,” which can be rendered as “inner self, mind, thoughts, feelings, heart, being”⁷

- c) If we apply that definition and complete the statement it might be rendered something like this:

striving together with all of your minds, your willingness, and your feelings, for your faith which began with the gospel of Christ.

20) The bottom line here is that it is not Paul they need to be responsible to, it is Christ.

- a) Keep strong in what they are doing.

21) That does not change regardless of Paul’s presence or absence.

22) Here is one of those reflection questions – something for EACH of us to ponder.

- a) NOT EXPECTING AN ANSWER – Just something to think about.

Is Christ our motivation for the way we live or is it some other thing, person, or feeling we are seeking?

23) Paul concludes this section of the letter with an assurance.

- a) Don’t be frightened by your opponents – a sign of destruction for them and of salvation for you.

⁷ Lidija Novakovic, *Philippians: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, ed. Lidija Novakovic, Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2020), 36.

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- b) The opponents of the church at Philippi were probably a few Judaizers from within the congregation by now.
- c) Then there were those who would destroy the church from without – in other cities, Jews and Gentiles (as RICK pointed out, predominantly Romans) who saw the church as a threat.
 - i) The city of Philippi was known for not wanting “other religions” in their city.
 - ii) Where the non-Romans perhaps got involved in this were the merchants who made their living doing things that the members of the church would have no need of.
 - (1) Those who provided carved and casted images of the many Roman gods.
 - (a) Christians were no longer customers – the bigger the church the fewer customers they had.
 - (2) In some cases, they messed with their livelihood in other ways.
 - (a) e.g. the casting out of the spirit from the girl who was following them to the river. The end result was Paul and Silas in jail.
 - (3) Bottom line of all that is Christianity took money out of their pockets.

24) All this leads to a couple of questions for us today:

First, who are the opponents of the church at large (Christianity) today?

Do we have opponents of our church here at Altamesa?

- 25) The Philippians have been granted not only to believe in Christ but to suffer for him.
- a) The suffering is not because of their sins.
 - b) It is not accidental – God had not gotten sidetracked and forgotten to protect them.
 - c) It was an honor to suffer for Christ – and they can look at the example they had seen in Paul in days past as well as what they hear is his plight now.

26) Paul has been encouraging throughout this passage.

- a) In calling to mind his example, in bringing focus to what is important.

27) I think we can all agree that we do not suffer today as these early Christians did.

Why do we not?

28) In many ways, living out the gospel can cause us to “suffer” just because we may become a challenge to those who are not.

In what practical ways can we encourage and support one another in our mission to live out the Gospel daily?