

***Philippians 1:12–18a (NASB 2020)***

***The Gospel Is Preached***

<sup>12</sup> Now I want you to know, brothers *and sisters*, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel, <sup>13</sup> so that my imprisonment in *the cause of* Christ has become well known throughout the praetorian guard and to everyone else, <sup>14</sup> and that most of the brothers *and sisters*, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear. <sup>15</sup> Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from goodwill; <sup>16</sup> the latter *do it* out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel; <sup>17</sup> the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition rather than from pure motives, thinking that they are causing me distress in my imprisonment. <sup>18</sup> What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in this I rejoice.

- 1) So Paul now changes subjects to give the Philippians an update on how things are with him.
- 2) Paul's attitude in these verses is absolutely amazing!
  - a) He has been in prison for more than four years at this point yet, he begins by calling it "my circumstances."
  - b) He says nothing about his lack of freedom or any other negative point.
  - c) Instead of complaining he simply lists all the positive things that have happened as a result:
    - i) Greater progress of the gospel.
    - ii) Cause of Christ known throughout the praetorian guard and everyone else.
      - (1) When we consider the "everyone else" comment, it would have to mean all others whom Paul has spoken to about Christ in this period.
    - iii) All those in Rome (brothers and sisters) trusting the Lord because of his imprisonment and are far more courageous speaking the word of God without fear.
  - d) Without regard for the reasons, Christ is proclaimed and in this he rejoices!
  - e) This is exactly what the Lord had told Paul was going to happen over four years before...

***Acts 23:11 (NASB 2020)***

<sup>11</sup> But on the following night, the Lord stood near him and said, "**Be courageous! For as you have testified to the *truth* about Me in Jerusalem, so you must testify in Rome also.**"

- 3) The only negative in this entire passage is his mention of those who are "preaching Christ even from envy and strife."
  - a) One definition of Envy is the desire to deprive others of what is rightfully theirs.

## ***Philippians – Notes – 2024***

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- i) In this case, it was likely Paul's success with the Gentiles.
  - ii) These men wanted to be "famous" as church planters and preachers of the gospel.
  - iii) Paul makes it clear that what they are preaching is the "right stuff" just with wrong motives.
  - iv) Envy leads to competition, hostility and conflict – strife! Obviously, none of these are good.
- b) But even this negative Paul considers as a positive because he says, "Christ is proclaimed, and in this I rejoice."
- 4) What an example Paul sets for us in these verses. To be able to be in this situation and have such focus on Christ and Him preached and at any personal cost is amazing.
- 5) And as we proceed to the next passage, he takes it even one step further...

### ***Philippians 1:18b–20 (NASB 2020)***

But *not only that*, I also will rejoice, <sup>19</sup> for I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, <sup>20</sup> according to my eager expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but *that* with all boldness, Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.

- 6) Again, from 18a, "Christ is proclaimed, and in this I rejoice." BUT not only that but he chooses to continue to rejoice.
- 7) Why? Because:
- a) He will be delivered. How?
    - i) By their prayers.
    - ii) By the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.
  - b) AND in all of it, he will not be shamed. Why?
    - i) Because Christ is proclaimed (exalted) in boldness, in Paul's body, in life or death!
- 8) To use the vernacular, Paul could simply have exclaimed "**It's all good**"!!!!
- 9) All of this serves as the introduction to what I consider one of the boldest statements one can make... Verse 21 reads...

### ***Philippians 1:21–26 (NASB 2020)***

#### ***To Live Is Christ***

<sup>21</sup> For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

***To die is gain is reasonably easy for us to grasp but, what does the first part of that sentence "to live is Christ" mean to you?***

10) I never read this statement that I don't stop and take a moment to consider how far away from or how close I am to being able to make the statement for myself.

11) One commentary says that it means to “be *consumed* with Christ's concerns, values, and mission.”

a) Sounds a bit strong but perhaps accurate for us and Paul.

12) So, to ask the question again perhaps a little differently and perhaps a little more pointedly.

***What about us, does Jesus want us to be “consumed” by His concerns, values, and mission?***

***Do we want to be “consumed” by His concerns, values, and mission?***

***Are we?***

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

14) However, reading on starting in verse 22 Paul does some reflecting on his current state ...

<sup>22</sup> 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. <sup>23</sup> But I am hard-pressed from both *directions*, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for *that* is very much better; <sup>24</sup> yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sakes. <sup>25</sup> Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith, <sup>26</sup> so that your pride in Christ Jesus may be abundant because of me by my coming to you again.

15) Try to imagine for a moment a balance scale.

16) On the one side (side he prefers) is going on to be with Christ.

17) On the other side living.

18) Now, we begin placing these thoughts on the scale...

a) On the side he prefers (the being with Christ side) is Gain, Being with Christ, Desirable and Better.

i) The conclusion of verse 23 says this is much better.

b) On the other side Christ is promoted (to live is Christ), remaining, Fruitful work.

i) At this point, the scale becomes well balanced.

c) Then, he places the final item on the staying (living) side of the scales – “remaining in the flesh is more necessary for your sakes.”

d) This tips the scale in favor of living and staying in the fight!

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

## ***Philippians – Notes – 2024***

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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.

20) Runge then asks a series of questions as he concludes:

How do we decide 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 (see 2:4)?

Convinced that the Philippians' needs outweigh his own desire to depart and be with Christ, Paul chooses to remain serving them.<sup>3</sup>

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

### ***Philippians 1:27–30 (NASB 2020)***

<sup>27</sup> 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; <sup>28</sup> 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. <sup>29</sup> For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer on His behalf, <sup>30</sup> experiencing the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear *to be* in me.

22) He places no conditions on the Philippian believers because of his decision however, the use of the word **Only** as the introductory word comes really close.

23) When we are trying to give freedom to someone but at the same time, we want to assure that some requirements are met first, we might use a phrase like this:

24) Example – “you can do anything you want only you must finish your homework first.”

a) In reality, you can do nothing except what will fit in the time after the homework is complete.

25) Obviously, Paul is not talking about homework.

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<sup>3</sup> Steven E. Runge, [\*High Definition Commentary: Philippians\*](#) (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2011), Php 1:21–26.

## ***Philippians – Notes – 2024***

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26) But what he is doing is emphasizing what he really considers important for them – to conduct themselves in a worthy manner for all the reasons that follow.

- a) He hears of their standing firm in one spirit – unity.
- b) Striving for the faith of the gospel – together – more unity.
- c) Not intimidated (alarmed) by their opponents – internal or external.

27) 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.

28) That does not change regardless of Paul's presence or absence.

***Here is one of those reflection questions – is Christ our motivation for the way we live or is it some other thing, person, or feeling we are seeking?***