

Living for Christ:

Suffering for Others

Scripture Passage

“For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according 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. For to me, to live [is] Christ, and to die [is] gain. But if [I] live on in the flesh, this [will mean] fruit from [my] labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, [which is] far better. Nevertheless to remain in the flesh [is] more needful for you. And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith, that your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again. Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, and not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God. For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear [is] in me.” (Philippians 1:19-30 NKJV)

Biblical Thesis

Living for Christ means being willing to suffer for others

Commentary

Paul understood that his suffering was part of the Christian experience. He also knew that he would never be ashamed of his loyalty to Christ, and that his boldness and suffering would somehow turn out for his good and the good of those who listened to him.

Therefore, he was free to declare, “For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” Could you honestly say this is true of your life? Do you live for Christ or self? There are many who say they love people, but only love what people can do for them. The Pharisees had zeal, but that zeal was for power and filthy lucre.

True love lays down its life for the sake of others. There is a conscience choice to serve others.

Paul's Choice

Notice how Paul was hard pressed to be with Christ, a far better thing to do, but chose to remain with the believers. You might wonder how he made this choice since he was in prison. It's not that he had power over his condition humanly speaking, but he had a mind to remain. He was confident seeing their need that God would deliver him to them in the future. This was likely prophetic insight.

Paul was willing to postpone being in the presence of Christ for the sake of these people. Not only was he forsaking glory, but also in doing so, he extended his suffering. We all must make this choice if we are

to honor God by loving Him and loving others. No greater love is this than to lay down your life for another.

Paul's Consolation

Paul wanted the Philippians to rejoice in his coming to them again. However, he wanted them to continue in the Gospel until that day. He desired that they too would be willing to suffer for others. This meant that he wanted them to stand fast in one mind striving together for the faith.

The Benefits of Standing Together

If they stood together, their faith would be used mightily. Their adversaries would see their own perdition by seeing the confidence of the Philippians. It would also be of great benefit to them personally because it would be proof of salvation to them.

Paul kind of summed things up for the Philippians by saying it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake. This is the way of the cross. This is what it means to take it up and follow Him.

Are you willing to say as Paul did, "For to me, to live [is] Christ, and to die [is] gain"?