

## **Living as Citizens of Heaven – Part 3**

### **Christ Exalted – Phil. 1:18b-26**

Crosspoint – Dave Spooner – June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024

#### **Intro:**

- If you were here and at the beginning of this series, you may have remembered that verses from the letter of Philippians are perhaps the most quoted other than John 3:16 or the Lord's prayer. Our passage today is one of those powerful and profound statements worthy of the attention given to it.
- Remember that Paul the apostle is in prison awaiting trial in Rome, and he is writing to friends, brothers, and sisters in the faith who are from the church in the city of Philippi. They heard of Paul's plight and sent aid that was delivered by the hand of Epaphroditus, and Paul wrote back in response to them.
- Paul thanked them for their partnership in the Gospel, prayed their love for each other would abound in knowledge and depth of insight, and informed them that his circumstances have served to advance the Gospel. Paul rejoiced that the Gospel was being preached and that this was the most important thing.
- In today's passage, we learn to understand that our prayers are powerful, that we are to aim to honor Christ in all things, and how to discern the mind of the Lord for His direction for our future.

#### **Understand your prayers are powerful**

##### **Phil 1:18b-19 NIV**

**Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, 19 for I know that through your prayers and God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.**

- Paul gives us the second thing he is rejoicing about, (the first is that the Gospel is being preached) which is that he knows what has happened to him will turn out for his deliverance. How does he know this?
- He knows that he will be delivered from his present circumstances, being in jail, because they have been praying that he would be set free and also that God's Spirit has helped to sustain him while he is in prison.
- Paul's mind was convinced he would be set free because the people of God were praying that for him (this will come again into play later in this passage). Also, there were people on the outside who needed to grow in their faith and they were asking that Paul would be released to help them do so. And he had not perished in prison because of the help of God.
- Do you know that your prayers and combined prayers make a difference in the outcomes of this world? The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective (James 5:16). This is a person who has been made righteous by Christ and prays according to the heart and mind of Christ. Your prayers matter and they do make a difference.
- The most important meeting of your day is your prayer meeting. The most important meetings we have as a church are our prayer meetings. If the enemy will keep you away from any meetings, it will be these.

#### **Aim to honor Christ in all things**

### **Phil 1:20-21 NIV**

**I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. 21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.**

- We can expect and hope that we will not be ashamed and have the courage to honor Him in life and in death.
- We can expect this because of God's help in the past and our love for Him and we can hope that this is the case (not fully knowing the future).
- When we don't honor Christ by our behavior, we are ashamed that we have not lived a life worthy of the Gospel. God helps us in this.
- And there are other times when we need sufficient courage to lift up Christ in our living; to honor Him, give Him credit, and tell others about Him and our faith in Him.
- This is the right way to think about our existence: To live is Christ, and to die is gain. Christ is what we live for and what gives us life. And when we die, we are not losing and it is not the end. When we die, it is gain, not a loss. We are going to our home, not from it. We are going to our reward, not from it. We are going to relationships, not from them.
- Story from Kent Hughes and Surgeon Andrew Chong
- To live is Christ, and to die is gain – and Paul was struggling to know what the Lord had for him in the future. He was able to discern the mind of the Lord to perceive what was going to happen next, and we can also learn from his example and apply these steps to our own lives.

### **Discern the mind of the Lord**

#### **Phil 1:22-24 NIV**

**If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! 23 I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; 24 but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.**

1. *Know and understand Scripture.*
  - a. Paul knew the Scriptures, and indeed, it was better to be with the Lord. And it was his desire to depart (as in going on a journey) and be with Christ. Do you desire this? (And if not, ask God to give you this desire . . .) He knew that this is the truth of Scripture.
  - b. He also knew that it was God's will for people to grow in their faith, and He was called to help people to do this. He still had fruitful labor that he could do and that others desired and needed him to do.
  - c. Knowing the truth of Scripture is to understand the mind and will of the Lord. To understand the desire of God's will and the design of His plan.
2. *Use sound reasoning*

#### **Phil 1:25-26 NIV**

**Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, 26 so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me.**

- a. Paul's desire was to depart and be with Christ, which was far better for him, however, if he remained alive in the body, this was the more urgent need for the Philippians. So Paul concluded that God would have him remain (God was the one who decided his fate

- he did not take measures in his own hands) so that he could help them (the Philippians) to progress in their joy in the faith.
- b. And also that they could boast in Christ Jesus, that Christ had set Paul free – which would also aid in their growth and joy in the faith.
  - c. So Paul was able to discern the will of the Lord by knowing the Scriptures and their desires and observing the prayers and needs of those around him and His ability to uniquely meet those needs, so he was convinced as to what was going to happen.
  - d. We have to be careful in this and use discernment of the will of the Lord, our unique gifting and calling, and the real needs and opportunities of those around us.

### **Conclusion**

- Know that your prayers are powerful, and make your prayer meeting the most important meeting of your day.
- Make it your aim to honor the Lord, to live as Christ – and when you die, it is gain. This is the best way to live.
- Discern the will of the Lord so that you will have peace in your situation and confidence in the plan and pathway of the Lord.

### **Communion**

### **Benediction**

May your faith be found to be genuine as you pass through the tests and trials of this world, and because of this, may there be praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ and the salvation of your soul (1 Peter 1:6-9).

### **Questions for Small Groups**

- Do you know that prayer is powerful? Do you see your prayer meeting as your most important meeting of the day? If so, keep pressing in. If not, why not, and how can you see it this way?
- How can you specifically live as Christ while you are in the body?
- Do you see departing as Christ as gain? What will you gain, according to scripture?
- When were you able to discern the will of the Lord for your life, and when have you missed it? What happened on both of these occasions?