



A Radio Ministry of Cornerstone Community Church

"That Christ Would Be Magnified"

Philippians 1:19-20

Paul Tautges, Pastor

Would you open your Bibles, please, to Philippians chapter 1, as we continue to work through this wonderful little letter of the apostle Paul, writing from prison in Rome to the dear believers there in the city of Philippi.

Let's pick it up in verse 12 which is where we were last week. *"I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel so that it has become known throughout the whole Imperial Guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from goodwill. The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. What, then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed. And in that I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice. For I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, this will turn out for my deliverance, as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage, now as always, Christ will be honored in my body whether by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me, yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard-pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus because of my coming to you again."*

Now you just heard the most important thing that will be said today. Because God just spoke. God just spoke to us through his word. And anything that you and I have to say is drastically less important than what he has just said. So may the Spirit of God give us those hearts that Isaiah spoke of and may he teach us and renew our minds and transform our heart's desires that we might glory in Christ.

We see revealed in this Scripture the overarching desire and goal of the apostle's life.

When you think about it, it really is the overarching passion of one's life that determines all of his other passions. What you value the most is what you will devote your life to. Who you love the most is who you will ultimately worship. These are all ways of saying the same thing: that what you seek first is what you will find.

And so we look at this text, and particularly the passion of the apostle that's revealed in verse 20, and we see this: that Paul's heart's desire was *"that Christ will be honored in my body whether by life or by death."* The word *honored* is sometimes translated *magnified* or *exalted* in other translations. So it was Paul's desire that whether he was to continue to live or whether he was to die in prison, that Christ would be magnified and exalted.

Originally my intention was to preach this whole passage from 19 all the way down to 26, but I agonized over it. And it was such a difficult passage to wrestle through for me. Usually Paul's structure, usually his argument and his logic just jumps out at me and I can find the outline. It just emerges. And I couldn't this week and that's why you see nothing up on the screen. It's not because the media people were lazy, it was because I had zippos to give them. I couldn't come up with what Paul was saying in a structural kind of way. And as I worked and worked through the passage, I finally came to the conclusion that I just wanted to zero in on verses 19 and 20.

And what's also very strange for me is that I'm going to preach this passage backwards. Because I see the key thought being at the end of verse 20. And to understand that first helps us to understand what he's saying in 19. So for those of you who simply cannot take notes without knowing where I'm going, structurally we're just really at a roadblock right now.

Let me just tell you where I'm going, okay? I'm starting at the end of verse 20 and I'm going to be talking about there being one goal. And then we're going to go back to verse 19 and look at two means to achieving that goal. All right?

So let's start with the one main goal, which is the overarching desire—passion—of Paul's life. Look at the end of verse 20: *"But that with full courage now as always, Christ will be honored in my body whether by life or by death."* That's his goal. I mean, how do you say it any differently? Whether he lives or whether he dies it's the same goal—that Christ will be magnified and exalted. That the God who created him and the Savior who redeemed him would be glorified through whatever happens with his life.

Now he's going to say that again in chapter 3, if you'll turn there, just a little differently in verse 10 when he reveals, again, his heart's desire is *"that I may know Christ and the power of his resurrection and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead."* Paul says "My heart's desire is to know him." And notice he doesn't only say, "I want to know the good things about walking with Christ, and I want to know the power of the resurrection." I mean, who wouldn't say that? "I want resurrection power today, Lord."

But he doesn't stop there. He says he also wants to share in his sufferings. How many of us have prayed that part of the verse? Lord, I want to know you so badly that I want to share in the same kinds of sufferings that Jesus suffered. And yet there is something that happens within us spiritually when we suffer that spurs us on to growth that would not happen if we did not suffer.

Let me say it a different way. Cozy Christians are usually immature Christians. Cozy Christians are usually people who just really haven't wrestled with the ins and outs of who God is and how he works in our hearts and our lives. And that's why the Lord shakes things up for us and we are not cozy—because he wants us to grow. He wants to challenge us, spur us on. So Paul says, “I want Christ to be honored in my body whether by life or by death.”

And that desire is really a gospel-centered desire. It really falls right in line with the call of the gospel. Remember what Jesus said? When he called his disciples he said really radical things like this: “And he who does not take his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me.” “He who has found his life shall lose it and he who has lost his life for my sake will find it.” What is he saying? You want to really find your life? You want to really find why God created you and why the Savior has redeemed you? Then lose your life. It means submit your entire life to Christ, and say, Lord, whatever you would have me do, that's what I'm willing to do.

That's one of the paradoxes in Scripture, that if you give your life away in honor to Christ, then you get it back. You keep it. You get it back. But if you keep it, if you do everything in your power to create a very comfortable, cozy, safe Christian life whereby you're never challenged to really go outside and trust God, then you're going to end up losing your life. Losing the tremendous blessings that God has in store for those who love him and follow him with all of their hearts.

See, we as believers have an all-important decision to make. And that is, who will we ultimately live for? Will we live for ourselves or will we live for Christ—the one who died and rose again on our behalf? See, what we live for and who we live for is what dominates our hearts. And you can say it backwards as well: whoever dominates your heart—whatever dominates your heart is what you live for. See? It's tied together. So Paul said, I just want my life to count for Christ. That's what I want. Whether I'm released from this prison and go on to serve him or whether I rot in this prison I want Christ to be honored.

And notice that he says he wants Christ to be honored in his body. That's just kind of odd. I mean, why would he say that? Well, it's because of what Paul knows about redemption. Remember we talked about redemption a few weeks back? We are redeemed by the Lord, and a result of that is we become his property. There's a sign above the life of the converted person that says “Under New Management,” “Under New Ownership.” Okay? That's Paul's argument when it comes to calling believers to be pure in a seductive world.

In First Corinthians 6 he said, *“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you who you have from God? And that you are not your own, but you have been bought with a price.”* If you know the Lord Jesus Christ, then you are not your own. You no longer own your life. You no longer own your body. It all belongs to the Lord. This is his goal.

Look at Colossians chapter 3. Just turn to the right in your Bible. One book to the right, Colossians 3. I love the way Paul says this. He says it over and over in his letters in different ways, and that's of course to get our attention, to help us to...for this to become a part of the

way we think. Colossians 3: *“If, then, you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.”* It actually could be better translated *since—Since* this is true. Since you have been raised up with Christ—that's true of the believer—then seek the things above where Christ is. I mean, that's only logical, right? Set your mind on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. So set your mind on heavenly things.

That's why I'm glad we sang that song about heaven this morning because you know what? In the repertoire of the church today there is a shortage of songs about heaven. Previous generations sang a lot about heaven. We don't sing a lot about heaven. Maybe that says something about how bound to this earth we are. We're supposed to be setting our eyes on the things that are above. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Look what Paul is saying. Set your mind on things above. Why? Because that's where Christ is and you are united with Christ, for you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. In other words, Christian, listen to me. You have no life except the life that is now in Christ with God. It's not my life and the Christian life. It's one life, all tied, united with Christ. That's where your life is. You have died. Your life is hidden with Christ in God. So that when Christ who is your life appears, then you will also appear with him in glory. See, because we are in union with Christ everything that is Christ's becomes ours. Isn't that amazing? And so when he appears, we will be with him glory.

So as Paul is sitting in prison and he's writing this letter or he's speaking it to Timothy and Timothy is writing it, his mind rests upon this one resolve in verse 20. “Whether I live or die I belong to God and therefore I want Christ to be honored. I want Christ to be magnified in my life.” And that then leads him to describe this turmoil that is inside of his heart which we'll look at another time. He wants to be with Christ, and yet he wants to stay, because he wants to continue to serve Christ and be a blessing to the Philippians and others. And so that's the tension. That's the tension of the the heart of the one who knows Christ and loves to serve Christ. Lord, I just want to go home and be with you, but man alive, there are so many needs here. So let me serve and serve and serve until I can serve no more. See the tension? He wants Christ to be honored.

And notice verse 20. He wants this all to happen with full courage. He wants full courage. He needs full courage to maintain this focus on life. He needs courage because either one of these states will require courage. Dying will require courage, but living will require courage. Dying as a prisoner of Christ will certainly take courage, but living as a prisoner of Christ will take courage. So how does Paul expect that this longing in his heart will come to pass?

Well that's where we get into verse 19. So we've got one goal.

And now, verse 19, we have two means to achieving that one goal. The first means is prayer.

In particular, the prayers of other people for him. Now he's praying too, of course. But he focuses on how desperately he needs other Christians to pray for him. Look at verse 19. The end of 18: *"Yes and I will rejoice."* That's his affirmative statement of what he just said in 18, the earlier part, he really really believes. He really believes that even if preachers of the gospel don't have pure motives that he will rejoice that Jesus Christ and his name is lifted up. And he'll let the ultimate judgment to be left to God.

"For I know," verse 19, "that through your prayers"—skip the next phrase—"this will turn out for my deliverance." So it is through the prayers of God's people, Paul says, that I will be delivered. And I think what he means there is whichever way he's delivered. If he's delivered from prison and he goes on to continue to serve the Lord, or if he's delivered once and for all through death to be with Christ. Either way, he'll be delivered. And he's confident that this courage will come to him through the prayers of God's people.

That's one of the things I love about Paul is the priority that he placed upon prayer. But also the humility of Paul to admit that he needed other people to pray for him. It was not uncommon for Paul to ask for prayer, more often than just here in Philippians. For example, Romans 15. Paul says, *"I appeal to you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf so that I may be delivered from the unbelievers in Judea and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints so that by God's will I will come to you with joy and be refreshed in your company."* So Paul says, I appeal to you—pray for me. Pray for me that I may be delivered from the unbelievers in Judea.

Second Corinthians chapter 1, he says that *"Christ delivered us from such a deadly peril and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again. You also must help us by prayer."* Isn't that interesting? He just said in a very confident way, Christ will deliver us. But then he says, pray for us. That's Paul's theology of prayer. He understands that the fact that God is sovereign is not an excuse not to pray. The fact that God is sovereign is an incentive to pray, because we're praying to the one who has all authority. And he can do anything. There is nothing that is impossible. So he says, *"You must help us by prayer so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many."*

Then in Ephesians right after the section that we call "the armor of God." In fact, toward the end of it. I prefer to keep this connected because it is connected. Too often when we talk about the armor of God we stop at verse 18 when it actually includes 19, which says, *"praying at all times in the Spirit with all prayer and supplication, to that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints and also for me that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim."*

Sometimes we think the apostle Paul was just a natural public speaker and he never struggled with feelings of inferiority or insecurity and that is not the case at all. He said I need you to pray

for me that I will be bold. Colossians 4: *“Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it. Pray for us, that God would open a door for the word.”* First Thessalonians 5:25: *“Brothers, pray for us.”* I love that verse. It’s simple, right? Brothers, pray for us. He didn’t need to get into all kinds of details. Well, he could have. Second Thessalonians 3: *“Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored.”* Speed ahead—I love that. *“...the word of God may speed ahead—and be honored.”* Philemon 21: *“I’m confident of your obedience, knowing that you will do even more than I say. At the same time, prepare a guest room for me for I’m hoping that through your prayers I will be graciously given to you.”* Get your guest room ready, Philemon, and then pray I can come and fill it. That’s what he’s saying. He’s anticipating God answering the prayer. The apostle Paul knew that he needed prayer. And by the way, I need your prayers, too. There may be no greater help that you can give to your pastors and to your elders than to pray for them. So Paul knew that prayer was necessary for the courage that he needed to fulfill his passion and his goal.

But there's a second means, and that is help from the Holy Spirit.

“For I know,” verse 19, *“that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, this will turn out for my deliverance.”* Now it’s interesting that Paul refers to the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Jesus Christ. And perhaps he’s doing that to draw attention to the Spirit’s work through Jesus. And to encourage us that the same Spirit that descended upon the Lord Jesus at his baptism and empowered him for his life is the Spirit who indwells us as believers.

The Spirit of Jesus is a very appropriate title for the Holy Spirit because it was the Holy Spirit who had conceived Jesus in the womb of Mary. It was the Spirit who descended upon Jesus at his baptism. It was the Spirit of God that filled Jesus as he ministered. It was the Spirit of God, get this one, that led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. Jesus performed miracles in the power of the Spirit. The Son of God yielded himself to the Father in his death by the power of the Spirit. And the Spirit was involved in raising Jesus from the dead. And that’s just a sampling of the Spirit’s work in the life of Christ when he was here on this earth. What did Jesus say to his disciples when they were struggling with him telling them that he was leaving soon? He said don’t worry, I’m sending a helper. I’m sending the Holy Spirit to you.

And so that same Holy Spirit now helps us. He now indwells us as believers. So what are some of the ways he helps us? Let me just refresh your memory, give you a little summary of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit for us as believers.

First, he regenerates us. The Holy Spirit regenerates us. He causes us to be born again through the word of God. That’s John 3. Jesus makes that very clear. The Spirit indwells us. That is, he makes our bodies his home. And so our bodies then no longer belong to God but our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. And being resident within us, he fills us and he empowers us to yield to the lordship of Christ. So if you are experiencing an inner struggle about submitting to the lordship of Christ in certain areas of your life, understand that one of the people working in that struggle is the Spirit of God. And he’s working in you and on you to bring you to that place of submitting everything to him.

The Holy Spirit baptizes us into the body of Christ. The Scripture says that every believer is baptized by the Holy Spirit at the moment that we are saved. First Corinthians 12:13 says, "*For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, Jews or Greeks, slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.*" Sometimes you get the impression that there are the "haves" and the "have nots" when it comes to the Holy Spirit. But the Scripture says every believer has been baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ. Immersed into the work of the Lord Jesus Christ on our behalf, immersed into the body of Christ. That's why whether it's here in Cleveland or if it's in Romania or Thailand or any other part of the world, when you meet fellow believers, there's a bond immediately that you have. Because the same Holy Spirit who indwells you indwells them. One Spirit.

The Spirit seals us. This is amazing. He seals us until the day of redemption. Stamped with the seal of the Holy Spirit, we're secure in Christ. Paul calls the Holy Spirit a "down payment." You know what a down payment is, right? It's a promise that there's more coming. The Spirit of God is the promise in our hearts that the fullness of salvation is coming. God will finish. He will finish the work. Glorification's coming. It just might be awhile yet, but it's coming. And the Spirit of God is the down payment, the promise that it's coming.

We're gifted by the Spirit. The Scriptures teach that each of us as believers is given at least one spiritual gift, which is a spiritual enabling benefit and edify the body of Christ. Spiritual gifts are not given to edify *ourselves*, they are given to edify *the body*. And every one of us has at least one. And if you're not using it, then you're squelching the Spirit of God in your life. You're quenching. And you're also robbing this body of blessings. Maybe you sincerely don't know what your gift is, but I would urge you don't make that an excuse. Because I know Christians that have sat on their hands for decades saying, "I don't know what my spiritual gift is. Until God tells me, maybe in a dream in the night or something, I'm not going to do anything."

You know what, the best way to discern what your gifts are is just see the needs in the body and just start serving the Lord, and then he will show you where you are of greatest benefit to the body. You will hear affirming things from brothers and sisters in Christ of how God is using you to bless them and bless the body of Christ, and then you'll know. Oh, okay, I guess that's how I'm gifted. The Spirit of God teaches us. He teaches us in his word. That's why we can have 275, 300 people here on a Sunday morning and I preach one sermon and every single one of you leave with a different application for your life. I didn't do that, believe me. The Holy Spirit, he does that. He gives us assurance of our salvation. That's Romans 8.

And he also prays for us, Romans 8 says. When we don't even know how to pray, Paul says that the Spirit of God prays in silence for us. Wordless prayers. Do you ever have times like that? Where you are just clueless how to pray. Maybe you are in the midst of a trial. Or maybe you've prayed about the same thing for 20 years, and you are just weary and tired of saying the same thing. You know what's okay? Is to just quiet your heart before the Lord. Read his word, meditate on his word and say, "Lord, I just don't know how to pray today. Would you just do your will?" That's an okay prayer. It really is. Because the Spirit of God knows what's in your

heart, and even better than that, he knows what the will of God is, and he can bring the two together. So clearly the Holy Spirit has been given to us to be our helper.

So Paul says, *"I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, this will turn out for my deliverance."* So as the result of the Philippians' prayers and as a result of the help of the Holy Spirit, Paul expect that his life and ministry will be vindicated by the gospel. That's what that's about. *"It's my eager expectation,"* verse 20, *"and hope that I'll not be at all ashamed."* That I won't be ashamed that I've wasted my life. No, that's not what this is about. Gordon Fee writes in his commentary Paul's concern is altogether on Christ being magnified however the trial turns out. Christ being magnified would be Paul's vindication, not to mention the gospel's.

So, either way, whether he dies in prison or he is set free, Christ and the gospel will be vindicated as true. Because if he dies for the gospel, then its eternal value and the hope of eternal life are seen by everybody. Because he's not willing to recant the name of Christ to get out of the suffering. And if he lives then he'll continue to preach the gospel. So either way, Christ is honored, Christ is glorified. Suffering is not going to stop his ministry. Christ is going to be honored. So it is the glory of Christ that is Paul's singular goal: *"That now as always Christ will be honored in my body whether by life or by death."*

Let me ask you this morning, is that your singular goal? Because I've had to ask myself all week if that's mine. So now you get to ask it. Look in the mirror of God's word and ask yourself, is honoring Christ in my life or in my death my singular goal? Is it the overarching passion of my life that then puts all other passions in their proper place?

And you know what's really exciting about having that goal? It's that the Holy Spirit also has that goal. Jesus said in John 16 of the Holy Spirit, *"He will glorify me."* So when we make the glory and honor of Christ whether we live or die our overarching passion in life, guess who is guaranteed to help us? The Holy Spirit who has the same goal. We're not on our own! That's what makes this so wonderful. I'm not calling you to some kind of a moral reformation. Just a do-gooder kind of message. No. The Scripture says the Holy Spirit has been sent to glorify Christ. And you make that your goal, and you will always have his help.

Before we were married, Karen and I sang in a group that traveled around to area churches. And one of the songs that I really really loved was called Only One Life, written by Lanny Wolfe in 1973. And the words convicted me every time we sang that song and they still convict me.

It matters so little how much you may own
The places you've been or the people that you've known
For it all comes to nothing when placed at his feet
It is nothing to Jesus, only memories to keep.

You may take all the treasures from far away lands
Take all the riches you can hold in your hands

And take all the pleasures that your riches can buy
But what will you have when it's your time to die?

The days pass so swiftly, the months come and go
The years melt away like new falling snow
Spring turns to summer and summer to fall
Autumn brings winter then death comes to call.

Only one life—so soon it will pass
Only what's done for Christ will last.
Only one chance to do his will
So give to Jesus all of your days
It's the only life that pays
When you recall you have but one life.

That's all we have—one. One life. Let's pray.

Lord, as we consider the apostle's passion we are humbled and we are rebuked. For too often we do not have the same passion. Too often we are not living our lives with the conscious realization that we only have one to live. And I pray, Father, that your Spirit will do a work in our hearts. Give us, Lord, an overwhelming desire that Christ will be honored in our bodies whether in life or in death. And, Lord, I pray that we will hold the things of this world very loosely. Not with white-knuckled kind of gripping, but holding things as gifts from you to be used for your glory. And I pray, Father, that we will lose our lives for the sake of Jesus so that we in the end might keep them. Keep us, Father, from holding onto our lives for our own selfish reasons. For in the end we will lose them. Only one life, so soon it will pass. Only what is done for the honor of Christ will last. Help us we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

DelightInTheWord.org

Delight in the Word is a radio ministry of
Cornerstone Community Church
1400 Lander Road, Mayfield Heights, OH 44124
440-442-6470 www.cornerstonemayfield.org