

“To Live Is Christ, To Die Is Gain”

Philippians 1:19-30

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Teaching Aim: To recognize the goal of every born-again Christian should be to glorify God whether in life or in death. To understand, death for the Christian is not a bad thing, it is graduation day and a blessing from God. (See **Psalm 116:15**) To realize the soul of the born-again Christian goes immediately into the presence of God at death without a loss of consciousness; the physical body goes to sleep in the grave until the future Resurrection Day when God will once again reunite our glorified body and soul, this time for eternity.

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (*BIBLE STUDY*)

Part I: To live is Christ, and to die is gain (Phil. 1:19-21)

1. As Paul waited under house arrest for trial in Rome by Caesar, rejection of the gospel message and execution as a result was a real possibility. What kind of “*deliverance*” was Paul hoping for in **verse 19**? According to Paul, what would be the means of this deliverance? Was it possible that God would choose to deliver Paul through death? Is the same true for some Christians around the world today?

2. Who is referred to in **verse 19** as “*the Spirit of Jesus Christ*?” What will the Spirit of Jesus Christ supply to Paul and to all believers who ask? According to the following verses, are the titles “*Spirit*” and “*the Spirit of Christ*” used interchangeably for God the Holy Spirit? (**See Rom. 8:9-14; 1 Pet. 1:10-12**)

3. Paul was truly Christ centered. According to **verse 20**, what was the goal of Paul’s life? What are some ways that we can magnify Christ in our lives today? How can Christians magnify Christ in our death?

4. Who was the central focus of Paul's life (**vs. 21**)? How did Paul view physical death for the Christian? Why do you think so many Christians spend all of their money on medical expenses to keep from dying, even if for just a short time? In what way is the death of a born-again Christian and a non-believer different? (**See Matt.25:31-46**) Have you ever attended the funeral of an unbeliever? What was it like? How was it different from a Christian "*Celebration Of Life?*"

Part II: To die and be with Christ is far better (Phil. 1:22-26)

1. In **verse 22** Paul ponders the impact he could make on the Philippians and others should he remain alive for a season longer. What kind of fruit did Paul hope to see from his labor? What kind of fruit do you hope to see from your labors for the Lord?
2. Paul found himself hard-pressed as to whether it would be better for him to die and be with Christ or to remain alive on earth and minister on the earth (**vs. 23**). According to Paul, which of the two choices was better by far? How do most people look at death today?
3. What is the "*intermediate state?*" (Hint: Google it!) Why is this state important to everyone on earth? Does the Bible teach a doctrine of "*annihilationism*" (meaning death ends all existence)? (**See Matt. 13:41-42; 25:29-30**) Others teach "*soul sleep.*" What is the difference between "*annihilationism*" and "*soul sleep?*" Does the Bible teach either of these doctrines as some Christian groups claim? (**See Luke 13:27-28; 16:19-30**)
4. The Roman Catholic Church teaches that Christians go to a holding place after death called "*purgatory.*" They believe purgatory is an intermediate state or place of suffering in which the souls of Christians must go through after death in order to expiate their sins before they can go to heaven. Does the Bible teach this doctrine anywhere? (**Heb. 9:11-15; 25-26; 2 Cor. 5:8**) What does it teach?
5. The Bible teaches that the soul of the born-again Christian goes immediately and consciously at

death into the presence of the Lord, the body goes to the grave to await the day of resurrection. (See Luke 23:43; 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23) Although Paul desired to die and go immediately into the presence of the Lord, what did he determine was best for the churches at Philippi and elsewhere (vs. 24)? What do you see as your purpose on earth? What area of ministry has Christ called you to?

6. According to **verse 25**, Paul seemed confident that his death was not imminent and that he would live to see another day. What benefits did the Apostle Paul see in remaining alive and carrying on in ministry?

7. Why is it important for every Christian to continue growing in their Christian faith (vs. 25)? What will happen spiritually if we stop moving forward? According to **verses 25 and 26**, how did Paul expect the church to respond if he returned? Why is it so important for Christians to encourage one another in the faith? What is it that most often discourages you in your walk with Christ? What brings you the greatest joy?

Part III: Striving together for the faith of the gospel (Phil. 1:27-30)

1. Paul may have been using a play on words in **verse 27**. The word “conduct” can literally be translated in the Greek, “live as citizens”, Paul uses this to tell the citizens of Philippi to live as citizens of the kingdom of God. Why would this play on words have special meaning to the saints in Philippi? What does it mean for a person to conduct his or her life “worthy of the gospel of Christ?” What can happen to the name of Jesus Christ when Christians do not live in a way that brings glory to God?

2. What was Paul’s desire for the Philippian believers in **verse 27b**? Why is it so important for the

Church to minister in unity and in a Christ honoring way today? What was the High Priestly prayer of Jesus in **John 17:20-21**? Why? Why is the human body such a great metaphor for the Christian Church? (**See 1 Cor. 12:12-31**) In what part of the body do you find your giftedness?

3. Paul encouraged the Philippians not to be terrified of their adversaries (**vs. 28**). Paul certainly was not afraid of his adversaries and his courage was contagious emboldening other believers. According to Paul, what did the courage of believers prove to their adversaries? What did this confidence prove to the believers?

4. According to **verse 29**, what has been granted to the true believer in Christ? Most people don't look at suffering as a good thing. How can suffering be a good thing for the believer? Have you ever had to suffer for Christ? According to **1 Peter 4:12-16**, should believers expect to suffer if they are walking closely with Christ? What did Jesus say in **John 15:20**? What should our response as Christians be when we suffer because of our love for Christ?

5. The Life Application Study Bible notes mention four benefits that come to the church from suffering. How do each of the four points listed below actually work for the benefit of the Church:
 - 1) Suffering takes our eyes off of earthly comforts.
 - 2) Suffering weeds out superficial believers.
 - 3) Suffering strengthens the faith of those who faithfully endure.
 - 4) Suffering serves as an example to others who may follow us.

6. In **verse 30**, Paul indicates other believers were suffering "*the same conflict which they saw in him and now hear is in him.*" In **1 Cor. 11:1** Paul instructed the Corinthians, "*Imitate Me, just as I also imitate Christ.*" What can we learn from how Paul faced the conflict in **Acts 16:16-34**? Did the Philippians witness this? How can you imitate Paul today as he imitated Christ? What are some ways that suffering has strengthened you in the past?
7. What surprised you most about our study on suffering and death? Do you believe death is a blessing for the born-again Christian? (**See Psalm 116:15**) What scares you most, death, or the

dying process? What are some ways that going through difficult times can work for your spiritual good? Are you able to thank God in the difficult times knowing that He is at work in your life for good? (See **Rom. 8:28**)

MINER'S CORNER – *Manna for today!*

- God is omniscient and knows all things, His knowledge is perfect and complete.
- God works through the prayers of His people in a mysterious and wonderful way.
- Prayer should be to the spiritual life what breathing is to the physical life.
- Pray specifically, pray persistently, and pray expectantly.
- Death for the Christian should not be dreaded or feared but rather longed for; it is graduation day into everlasting life and into the presence of God forever.
- Whether in life or in death, the goal of every Christian should be to magnify Christ.
- Our conduct (the way we live our life) should be worthy of the gospel of Christ; standing fast in one spirit, with one mind as we strive together for the one true Biblical faith.
- Suffering for our faith in Christ is an honor and will bring eternal blessings in heaven.