

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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“For me to live is Christ”

(Jerry Fite)

Paul writes, “*For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain*” (*Philippians 1:21*).

Paul is imprisoned in Rome, and does not know if he will live or die. He knows his bonds are the result of preaching the truth of the gospel of Christ (*Philippians 1:13*). Paul and brethren know that he is capable and ready to defend the gospel of Christ (*Philippians 1:14*). He knows that through the supply of God’s Spirit and the prayers of the saints, he will be saved (*Philippians 1:19*). Paul is uncertain as to whether this salvation will be from prison alive, or into the heavenly kingdom through death (*cf. 2 Tim. 4:18, 6-7*).

Let us try to see from the context exactly what was on Paul’s mind when he said, “for me to live is Christ”.

Paul’s claim in verse 21 is an explanation of verse 20. Paul’s expectation and hope was that he would never be put to shame, but as always, “*Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life, or by death*” (*Philippians 1:20*). Therefore, Paul viewed his life as

“*magnifying*” Christ. Paul lived to exalt Christ, enlarging Christ’s greatness more and more in people’s minds. He could exalt Christ by continuing to live and preach the unsearchable riches of the gospel (*Ephesians 3:8*). Or, He could magnify Christ by dying for the cause of Christ, refusing to deny the faith, and gain for himself the comforting presence of the Lord (*Philippians 1:23*).

Paul also thinks of being allowed to live as being fruitful in his labor of preaching the Gospel. He writes, “*But to live in the flesh, - if this shall bring fruit from my work, then what I shall choose I know not*” (*Philippians 1:22*). To live and work, or die and be with Christ, left Paul with a dilemma as to which to choose. But fruitful labor has a definite objective. He would abide in the flesh to help in “*your progress and joy in the faith; that your glorying may abound in Christ Jesus in me through my presence with you again*” (*Philippians 1:25-26*).

Fruitful labor is people progressing in the faith, not digressing. Fruitful labor is people

rejoicing in the faith, not murmuring over its demands (*cf. Philippians 2:14*). Fruitful labor is people glorifying Christ more and more, instead of less and less.

Glorying in Christ in our life is definitely on Paul’s mind as we can see from *Philippians 3*. Paul gloried in Christ as the foundation for being righteous before God. Paul desires to be found in Christ, “*not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith*” (*Philippians 3:9*). No man will be justified through the law, because we do not keep all of it perfectly at all times (*cf. Galatians 3:10*). Faith in Christ-trusting in His sacrifice of sins and receiving the forgiveness of sins through His blood in our obedience of faith, we can be found in Christ and glorify Christ by our new life in Him.

Is your priority in life to magnify Christ, labor for Christ and be found in Christ? If for you to live is Christ, these priorities will characterize your life.