

What Does It Mean: “To Live is Christ & to Die is Gain”?

Philippians 1:19-26

1 What does it mean: “To live is Christ and to die is gain”? Our scripture today will tell us.

The passage is from Philippians, chapter 1, verses 19 through 26. ²

Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, for I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. 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. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. ^{1 3}

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! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in

¹ Philippians 1:19-21.

the faith, so that through my being with you again your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me. ²

The first thing aspect of this answer has to do with your earthly life. ⁴

I. Life Means Service and Commitment

Life means service and commitment. Verse 21, **For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. ⁵**

What does it mean to belong to someone or something?

The greatest achievements are usually accomplished by people who zero in on what they want to do in life. It becomes the passion for everything they do.

Bob Feller loved to throw a baseball when he was a kid. At five years old he was pitching throw a hole I the barn wall several hours a day. By the time he was ten, his dad had outfitted him with all the equipment he needed to play baseball. At thirteen he was

² Philippians 1:22-26.

pitching for a local team and had a strikeout average of twenty a game. At seventeen, he was playing for the Cleveland Indians

In the major leagues he had six seasons as a twenty-game winner, three no hit games, eleven one hitters, 266 wins and set a record of 348 strikeouts in one season! He is a member of the Baseball Hall of Fame because he had only one desire: baseball! ³ ₆

That's what God wants from you. Christians are owned by Lord Jesus. He created you and then, redeemed you on the cross! You now belong to Him. ⁷

The word Christian, in the original language, ⁴ is a Latin form of a Greek word meaning "Christ's" or "of Christ". This word is found three times in the New Testament. ⁸

In Acts, chapter 11, verse 26, it says, **The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.** ⁹ In chapter 26, verse 28, it says, **Then Agrippa said to Paul, "Do**

³ "That One Desire", Our Daily Bread.

⁴ Χριστιανους.

you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?”¹⁰ And again, in First Peter, chapter 4, verse 16, **However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.¹¹**

The concept of belonging to the Lord is described best in Romans. Chapter 14, verses 7 through 9, **For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.**

The title Lord, master, implies ownership!¹²

The Old Testament examples of people who were dedicated to the Lord were the Nazarites!⁵ They took a vow to abstain from wine and other grape products, never cut their hair or become ritually impure. They

⁵ Hebrew נָזִיר meaning to consecrate, separate, or take a vow - Numbers 6:1-21.

dedicated themselves or were dedicated by their parents. ¹³

Samson was a Nazarite. ⁶ He was made supernaturally strong and was used by the Lord to kill many of Israel's enemies. ¹⁴ But his weakness was women. He was seduced, became physically weak (by forsaking his Nazarite vow) and was blinded and imprisoned. At a time of weakness, he let his enemies control him. ¹⁵ When you let the world control you instead of the Lord calling the shots, you also become weak and blind! ¹⁶

Samuel became a great prophet for the Lord. ¹⁷ He was dedicated at birth by his mother, Hannah. ⁷ The priest, Eli, raised him at the Tabernacle. ¹⁸ When you are given completely to the Lord, He will use you! ¹⁹

The best New Testament example of dedication to the Lord was **the Apostle Paul**. When the Lord uses you, you will be effective in your ministry. ²⁰ When

⁶ Judges 13:1-5.

⁷ I Samuel 1:11-28.

imprisoned for his faith, he even influenced the Roman palace guards! ⁸ ₂₁

He was always an encouragement to other believers. Verse 14 says, **Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly.** ²²

He always portrayed courage stating, **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.**

⁹ ₂₃

When Paul did something for the Lord, it was fruitful.

¹⁰ ₂₄

So, for you to live as Christ means **you should have the affections of Christ**. Verse 8, **God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus**. ²⁵

⁸ Philippians 1:13 - As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ.

⁹ Philippians 1:20.

¹⁰ Philippians 1:22. - If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me.

That means to have a deep affection for the brothers and sisters in the church. ²⁶ It means to have a desire to be with them for worship and study; to have fellowship. ²⁷ It means to have a devotion to help one another, to satisfy one another's needs, to love them!

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For you to live as Christ means **you should have the interests of Christ**. ²⁹

Like Paul, proclaiming the gospel. Verse 13, **As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ**. ³⁰

Like Paul, encouraging other believers to proclaim the gospel by them seeing your example. Verse 14, **Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly**. ³¹

Like Paul, rejoicing when the gospel is proclaimed even by people who are against you. ¹¹ ₃₂

For you to live as Christ means **you should have the Spirit of Christ**. Verse 19, . . . **for I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance**. ³³ This means having the Lord's aims and motives. ³⁴ Acts, chapter 2, verse 38, promises you the indwelling gift of the Holy Spirit. ¹² ₃₅

You need to come to the point in your life where you can say, **I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me**. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. ¹³ ₃₆

¹¹ Philippians 1:17-18 - The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.

¹² Acts 2:38 - Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

¹³ Galatians 2:20.

The Lord will give you the power to overcome temptation and accomplish His will only to the degree that you crucify your old self!

The second aspect of the answer about what it means to live for Christ and to die is gain has to do with death! ³⁷

II. Death Means Salvation

Death means salvation! The apostle continues, I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far . . . ¹⁴ ³⁸

How many of you want to go to heaven? How many of you want to go right now? ³⁹

God's word tells us that being with the Lord in heaven is much better than living this old life on earth! ⁴⁰ The Lord said, Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and

¹⁴ **Philippians 1:23.**

prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ⁴¹ Do you trust that Lord Jesus included you when He said that? ⁴²

When you are **in Christ** you never have to doubt your salvation! ⁴³

This is because you and the Lord have a slave/master relationship. ⁴⁴ **The slave's obligation** was to do his master's bidding 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and to remain faithful. ⁴⁵ **The master's obligation** was to provide for all of his slave's needs and to protect him from harm. ⁴⁶

Salvation is promised to all those who are in Christ! Here are some of the promises. ⁴⁷

Romans, chapter 6, verse 11, **In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.** ⁴⁸

Romans, chapter 6, verse 23, For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. 49

Romans, chapter 8, verse 1, Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 50

Romans, chapter 8, verse 39, . . . neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. 51

Second Corinthians, chapter 7, verse 15, Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! 52

For me to live is Christ and to die is gain! 53

He who is born of God overcomes the world! 54

Life means victory, purpose and meaning! 55

Death means victory over the grave and eternal life with a loving God!

So, live your life for Christ. Look forward to when you die because you are being launched into an everlasting life in heaven!

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