



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

PHILIPPIANS: RESURRECTED LIFE

To Live is Christ (Philippians 1:19-26)

1. Read our scripture for the week. **Philippians 1:19-26 - 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. 20 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. 22 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. 25 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.**

What personal insights or reflections do you have from this passage? Your unique perspective can enrich our discussion.

Is there anything from this passage that you find confusing? Don't hesitate to voice your questions and seek clarification.

2. As Paul writes this passage, he awaits an audience with the Emperor. It is possible, and perhaps even likely, that the Emperor will sentence Paul to death. His only crime is preaching Christ. As Paul contemplates his trial and possible death sentence, he says this: **Philippians 1:20 - 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.** What are your thoughts and feelings as you contemplate Paul's thoughts on this situation?

In your own words, what does it mean to say to live is Christ and to die is gain?

3. In my life experience as a pastor, I have spent a significant amount of time with people, most of whom were diagnosed with substantial illnesses and were contemplating if they would live or die. I have found people very willing to share their inner thoughts and processes as they consider their impending death. In our passage, the apostle Paul is also willing to share his private thoughts about life and death. **Philippians 1:22 - 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.** I believe these verses should serve as a model for us on how we view our lives and our death. Do you agree?

Paul says: **I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far.** Pastor Erwin Lutzer says: "Death is the grand entrance, the door that swings into eternity. Eventually, it will open and allow you to come home." Is this how you see death? Do you see it as better by far? Do you see it as the way home? What does the prospect of your death fill you with? Is it fear and sadness as you contemplate leaving your family and the unknown circumstances of your death? Do you think your thoughts about your death directly affect the way that you live?

Paul, in this passage, also describes what it means for him if he lives. He says, **22 If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me.** What do you think Paul means by fruitful labor? What fruitful labor for Christ are you currently involved in?

By the way, Paul does live, only to be imprisoned a second time in Rome, and that imprisonment ends in his death. Church history records that Paul was beheaded by the emperor Nero, most likely in 67 AD.

4. Ultimately, Paul decides he should live: **Philippians 1:25 - 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.** Ultimately, Paul recognizes that the Philippians and all those in Christ need two things and that he can help them with both. They need progress in their faith and continued joy. Progress in the faith means spiritual growth. To continue progressing to be more like Christ. Be honest, are you currently growing? Are you progressing in your faith?

One of the themes of the book of Philippians is joy. Paul continually links his teaching in this letter with the importance of having and choosing joy. Do you think Paul values joy more than you do? How do you personally choose joy?