

## Philippians ch 1 Vs 15-21

To die is \_\_\_?

We made mention last time you recall of the 3 things that God was in this particular case using in Paul's life for the furtherance of the gospel. The pioneer advance of the gospel, because the Philippians to whom he was writing were very aware of what was going on in his life, and from the outside looking in you might be prone to think of this man of God, this mighty apostle and warrior of the cross as just wasting away in prison. Because (we speak so much about the difference between common sense and kingdom sense and how opposite they so often are) but in our common reasoning we'd think man he could be so much more effective if he were just out there spreading the word. But Paul (even though he was writing from prison) wrote to encourage them not to be discouraged because the things that happened to him (which we covered extensively last time) actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel.

It was obvious to everyone who was around him that his imprisonment, his chains, were in Christ, and so we conclude the fact that joy isn't the absence of troubles or tribulations but the presence of Christ, and God used 3 things to pioneer advance the gospel in Paul's life as it pertains to this circumstance. #1 His chains (which we considered) #2 his critics and 3<sup>rdly</sup>, his crisis; in vs 13-14 we considered his chains and how they furthered the gospel by giving him contact with the lost (those Roman soldiers that were chained to him 1 every 4-6 hrs) they also gave courage to the saved. Encouragement is a contagious thing, and when we look at a life like Paul's and how he went through so much from the human perspective and yet pressed on, and encouraged others to stand firm for Jesus Christ the net affect of that should be that we to would be persuaded to trust God and speak the word with out fear. For God has not given us a spirit of fear but rather one of love and of *power* and of a sound mind, that we might be able to articulate clearly and boldly @ the leading of the Holy Spirit the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ and Him crucified, having come to this earth not to condemn the world but that the world through Him might be saved. and Then 3<sup>rdly</sup> again his chains placed him in such a position so as to full fill his call pen the written word of God so that the gospel would be furthered through the writing of Eph, Col, Phil, and Philemon while he was there in prison. Now we looked briefly at this 2<sup>nd</sup> aspect of how the gospel was furthered in our last gathering and this morning we're going to be looking at these last 2 categories; his critics and his crisis.

## Vs15-17

The price of leadership, not only endearing friends and co-laborers but also antagonists and enemies as well, Paul was a strong leader, a dynamic individual, driven by a purpose to reach people with the gospel of Jesus Christ and to see Him magnified and glorified regardless of the cost. and In some people that's going to entice admiration and respect, but in others envy and strife, because people begin to know your name and not theirs, even though you're not in the ministry to make a name but to magnify a name, the name of Jesus Christ But simply due to the fact that God is beginning to use your life, that's all it takes for some people to become hostile and antagonistic against you, and so they begin to act as though this is some competition and so they begin all these programs and write out their statistics and begin to compare and compete, and their motives aren't pure.

Oh, they may be preaching Christ, Paul didn't say that they were preaching a false gospel, but the motives for the things that they do are rooted in the flesh even though the message they give is scriptural. Now lets consider for a moment these words here, envy, and strife, the word translated "envy" here is the Greek word "phthonos" (fthon'-os); and speaks specifically of jealousy, and when we read Gal 5:19-21 as it list out there various works and lusts of the flesh both jealousy and envy are found tucked away in that list, we read there, "*Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like.*" and Those 3 words, "and the like" are important because Paul isn't saying that that's an exhaustive or all inclusive list of the works of the flesh, for example he didn't mention lying, or stealing, he didn't mention rebellion or sodomy, but these are the types of things that the flesh yields, and envy and jealousy is part of it. It's interesting that envy is what put Jesus on the cross; now we know that ultimately it was our sin that put Him there, but what was the human motive behind making sure He was put to death, (turn with me to the gospel of Matt ch 27 vs 15-18).

Interesting, and so you can begin to see how it finds itself in the list right next to murder, sorcery, adultery and the rest, the next time you think you're just struggling with a little envy or jealousy problem consider this, and talk to Jesus about that, because it was a little envy or jealousy problem that delivered Him over to Pilate which resulted in His crucifixion. 1 Cor 13:4 Says that, "*Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up.*" In other words it isn't jealous, it doesn't compete or compare, it doesn't parade itself, which is the result of pride or being puffed up. You see if you think about it you begin to realize that envy finds its roots in pride. and As J. Vernon McGee said, "Envy is that which says, I don't think much of you, and pride says, what do you think of me?" But the bible warns the believer against both, Paul is saying here that these guys are out there trying to afflict me because they're envious of how God is using my life so they're seeking to take advantage of the fact that I'm in jail to get their own thing going.

But again Paul couldn't really care less about their thing *or* his thing because he was about the Lord's thing, he was just thankful that for whatever reason people were out there sharing the love of Christ, God will deal with them concerning their motives, that's between them and the Lord. But they were preaching out of envy and there was another interesting motive here, "strife". and This word speaks of contentions or contentious behavior, so they were acting out of jealousy and being contentious, and again strife is the product of pride, Prov 13:10 says, "*By pride comes nothing but strife.*" and We find these words paired up together in several places and they're always with in the context of the outcroppings of the flesh, I'll give you just a couple, Rom 13:13-14 "*Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.*"

So strife and envy feeds the flesh, and the person caught up in these characteristics isn't operating or walking in the Spirit, they've "taken off" the Lord Jesus Christ as far as that aspect of their lives is concerned, and Paul is saying hey, don't do that, put on the Lord Jesus, not envy and strife.

Again, writing to the Corinthians he said, "*I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?*" 1 Cor 3:2-3 In other words envy and strife are marks of immaturity and carnality, it's fleshy; envy and strife can destroy a body of believers, and so I encourage you to guard against these things, be quick to take them to the Lord and repent of them lest they consume you. But Paul says here that not everyone's motives are fleshly, there are those that preach from good will, with a right heart, and proper motives. Now the former, he says preach Christ from selfish ambition, now think about that, is it possible to preach Jesus Christ from selfish ambition?

You bet it is, if the scriptures didn't declare it, it would be seemingly a pretty hard pill to swallow because it seems like an oxymoron or a contradiction in terms, to use the words "Christ" and "selfish ambition" in the same sentence would seem practically impossible. But here it is, ulterior motives in the ministry are a killer, I encourage you to allow the Lord to search your heart. David prayed, "*Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.*" See if there's any selfish ambitions or ulterior motives in me that I might confess them to You and You might deal with me and give me a repentant heart concerning them. You see why is it that we do what we do? Why are you on the worship team, so that people can see you, so that they can be awed and complimentary of your musicianship or wonderful voice?

I remember the 1<sup>st</sup> worship conference I went to one of the pastors said don't be deceived, "the flesh loves the holy place." The flesh loves recognition and a sense of accomplishment, but what do we have that we haven't received? and If we've received it from the Lord and the Holy Spirit has done the work then why do we boast with in ourselves as if we've done something (you see)? Why are you an usher or a greeter, what's your motive for running sound or being here early every Sunday? Do you like to hear, "my it's always good to see you" or "hey, that sure was a sweet mix this morning or this evening". Or maybe you like everyone thinking, "wow, that guy must be real spiritual, he must really be close to the Lord because it seems like no matter how early I get here he's already here and has his seats marked out." Do you like to hear, "I sure appreciate your investment into the lives of my children, we're so blessed by your service."

Now is it wrong to encourage one another or even show genuine appreciation for a brother or sisters service? No, but you see to the one's serving - why are we doing the things we're doing, do we preach Christ from selfish ambition? Do we take care of the grounds or sweep the floors out of our love for Jesus Christ or for self-gratification and a pat on the back to be seen by men, you see is there something for you in it. Be careful, Paul speaks of those who consider godliness as a means of gain, doing things out of selfish ambition, seeking to establish a platform for themselves, and none of us are exempt, temptations of envy, strife, and selfish ambition can run wild in the ministry. Now ambition in and of itself isn't a bad thing, but it's when your ambitions are *selfish* and motivated by self and not the Love of Christ that the problem comes in.

There is a zeal and ambition that's healthy, we're to press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus, and we're not to grow weary or apathetic when it comes to doing good, but you throw that little word "self" in there and it corrupts the whole thing. It's like money, money in and of itself can be a wonderful thing, it can be used to propel the gospel and impact lives for Jesus Christ But you throw that little twist in there; you see money isn't the problem, it's *the love* of money that will destroy you, it's the love of money that is the root of all kinds of evil, not every evil, but all kinds of it.

Well how is it that people can do the things that they do, preach Christ or whatever they do in the name of Christ out of selfish ambition? Paul answers that next, because they're not sincere, and you remember what that word means, we discussed it last time. They're not genuine or pure in their motives, what did Paul say in vs 10, that we're to be sincere, but these people aren't sincere, but rather when you boil it all down they aren't seeking for Christ to be glorified. They want themselves magnified and placed on a pedestal of power and influence of recognition so that they can be somebody, again it comes down to pride but what does the bible say. God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble, and again Luke 18:14, "*everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.*"

But in vs 17 Paul says there are those who have legitimate Christ centered motives and that's what it all comes down to, it's possible to have a right on message with a radically wrong motive and so as far as the Kingdom is concerned it's wood, hay and stubble and it's all going to burn. Now God will honor His word (as we'll see in a minute) but as far as your personal part in it, it will avail you nothing eternally. God is always searching our hearts, and testing the motives for why we do what we do, Jer 17:10 *"I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings."* So you see it's not what we do that's necessarily the main thing (when it comes to the Kingdom) but why did you do it, that's what God is looking to. and Paul says here that there were those who were just coming along side him, not seeking to draw attention to themselves, but rather seeing a brother in a bad situation, knowing that God was doing an awesome work through his life.

They were seeking to propel that work, to carry the baton so to speak so as to see the race to its completion, just wanting to minister to him and be a blessing to him not allowing the work to lie dormant and Paul said hey, that's right on. But regardless of the motive (he was able to say in vs 18) whether it be for an outward show or a legitimate inward working of God, Christ was being preached and in that isolated fact he could rejoice. Why, because anytime Christ is being preached there's going to be something happening, seeds are being planted, hearts are being watered, lives are being changed, and souls are being saved from eternal separation from God. and We can all rejoice in that fact because regardless of the motive of the individual (again) God will always honor His word. Isa 55:10-11 *"For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And bread to the eater, So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it."* Now that's not to say that God won't deal accordingly with that particular individual, but that persons motives have no bearing on God's word.

So then what's the conclusion, that just because God is moving doesn't always mean that God's approving, remember that. You can't look to the fact that so many people are being touched or affected in a certain movement and just automatically assume that it's right on and godly with out even knowing what's happening. I could name several people who have huge followings, that as far as I'm concerned they couldn't be much more out of line with the teaching of the totality of the scriptures, but they're preaching Jesus and people are being saved. When we was in Nigeria we seen pictures of men holding a crusade in Lagos and there were literally over a million people gathered in one place listening to this man preach the gospel. People were coming to know Jesus and being eternally impacted, but the guys that were holding the crusade were prosperity, health, wealth and faith movement evangelists who as far as I'm concerned are way out of balance, if not heretical in their understanding and teaching of the scriptures, many of them using godliness as a means of gain.

Profiting off the people making merchandise of the people of God, taking these peoples desperate condition and capitalizing off of it for their own selfish purposes, pleasures and gain.

But what do you tell these people who look to what God has done and is doing, how this nation is being turned from darkness to light and yet the majority of the means by which this change is taking place isn't approved of by God? All they see is millions of people being changed, the message being preached and how can so many people be legitimately impacted if God's not behind it or in it? It's because God honors His word and when His word goes out it will not return void and He will deal those who inundate and saturate them with false doctrines, but He honors His word nonetheless. and When I returned home God reminded me of a certain event in the life of Moses that impacted literally millions of people (even to the good) but God was not in approval of his actions nor his words and dealt with Him accordingly.

Turn to Num ch 20 (Vs1-11)

Now what are we seeing here, we're seeing God's love for the people, overriding the misrepresentation of Moses. Moses did everything wrong, He misrepresented the Lord, didn't speak the word that God told him to, smote the rock rather than spoke to the rock and yet still, because God wants to satisfy the deep thirst of all men, God in His mercy did a work that quenched the deepest thirst of literally millions. God was moving, but He wasn't approving, but notice Moses' deeds didn't go with out ramifications (Vs12) That little episode cost Moses his inheritance, he wouldn't enter the Promised Land, so don't think that God is overlooking what these guys are doing, or justifying the means by the end and don't be fooled by mass numbers of people. The work that Moses did in the name of God satisfied millions, but he still suffered the repercussions of misrepresenting God to the people. But Paul rejoiced that Christ was being preached and he said that he would rejoice why?

Vs19

Vs 19-26 deal with the crisis that Paul found himself in, so vs12-14, "the chains" vs 15-18 "the critics" and now the crisis. Now in vs 12 he spoke of his situation "turning out" for the furtherance of the gospel, now in vs 19 he says there's something else that's going to turn out, and that's that I'm going to be delivered, maybe your bible uses the word "salvation" but in the context we know he's not speaking of the fact that he'll be saved in the eternal sense, he already is. But he'll be delivered out of his crisis, how? Through their prayers and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ But as long as we're speaking of the eternal sense the application is the same, you (if you know Jesus Christ) are a result of someone's prayers and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ Because you can't come to Christ unless the Father draws you and how does He draw you, by the supply of the Holy Spirit, but Paul says that I know that I'll be delivered through your praying for me, again we need to pray for one another. 2 Vitally important things for us as believers, prayer one for another (boy I'll tell ya when we were in Nigeria, your prayers were so important to us) but you know what they still are, just because we're back in America doesn't mean we should slack off in our prayers for each other.

It's vital for our spiritual health and well being as is the supply or the help of the Holy Spirit, last weekend we were privileged to have Jim Hesterly out here for an entire "walk in the Spirit conference" where he spent a lot of time speaking about the Helper, our Helper, the Holy

Spirit. But with out the supply of the Spirit we would be absolutely weak and anemic if not lost. Jesus said with out Me you can do nothing, and Paul is firmly aware and sensitive to that fact, that even in the details of His life whatever happens is simply by the allowings and workings of Jesus Christ in his life and so even when it comes to his deliverance from prison he acknowledges the Spirits work in that event taking place. So God meets whatever needs we may have through the supply of the Spirit, but He so often chooses to communicate that need through the prayers of His people, so don't underestimate the power and impact of your prayers.

Vs20

Did you catch that, Paul is on trial for his life, and he just said that he had a firm conviction that he was going to be delivered and yet he's open to the fact that he could be wrong, because he just said I *might* be put to death. But in the previous vs he said he'd be delivered, so I appreciate the transparency of the apostle because it helps me as well. There's a lot of things I have firm convictions on when it comes to the ministry or the direction that God is taking us, but I'm open to being wrong, I'm human and prone to error and make mistakes. Paul said I believe I'm going to be set free, but even if I'm put to death my desire is that Christ will be magnified in my body.

Question: Is Christ being magnified in your body? Are the things that you are doing; taking part in physically, personally, are they magnifying Christ? What a sobering, challenging, convicting and confrontational question to consider, is Christ magnified in my body. What am I doing on the weekends or when I'm not at work, what are the things going on in my life, are they magnifying Christ? These are the types of things we need have continually stirred up to our remembrance and to be reminded of, why because you are not your own if you're a Christian, you've been bought with a price, the price of the shed blood of Jesus Christ and now you belong to Him so if you want to get straight concerning the things we do, we don't have a choice, He's the dictator of our lives, that's why we call Him "Lord."

Now He allows us by His sovereignty to operate with in our free-will because He desires that we desire to serve Him, so that our relationship with Him is personal and intimate, but don't be deceived you belong to Him. Now this principal of magnifying God in your body goes well beyond things sexual but lets look at 1<sup>st</sup> Cor 6 Vs12-20 We belong to Jesus Christ therefore we are to do those things even in the physical that will magnify Him, whether it be in life of death and that's where Paul was at, notice

Vs21

This is the key vs to this entire ch and there's no way we can sum it up in a few minutes, but lets just say there's a 2-fold truth here because only when you're living for Christ can you truly say to die is gain. and Yet simultaneously when you understand that as a believer, that to

die is gain, you'll have no problem living for Christ. and So the question is, what is life for you, what is the master passion of your life and in that you'll find out for you what to die is? So I'd encourage you to write out, "To live is \_\_\_\_\_ and to die is \_\_\_\_\_" and think about it for a while before you fill in the blanks. Maybe for you to live is to amass a fortune and to die is to lose it all. Or maybe to live is fame and to die is to be forgotten, to live is power and influence and to die is lose it all, or it could be that to live is question upon question and to die is absolute terror and fear.

When you figure out what life is to you, you'll find your answer concerning death, Paul the apostle came to the place we all need to be as believers for him to live was Christ, or more literally "to live – Christ" which meant, "to die – gain" and what does it mean to gain, it means to get more of whatever it is that you're in reference to. So to live – Christ, to die – more Christ, to die is gain, (we'll explore these vs a little more next week) but I want to leave you with a question, is death gain for you this morning? Or would death bring shame to you if you were to meet Jesus Christ today, if your soul should be required of you today, will you hear well done good and faithful servant? Have you magnified Christ in your body, either through the things you do or say? Will you be ashamed at His appearing? What will you place in that blank, to die is \_\_\_\_?(Or maybe you don't even know Jesus Christ and you know that if your soul were required of you today, for you to die would be a total loss, loss of your very soul, loss of eternity with God being eternally separated from Him.)

I encourage you this morning to consider these questions and if God is searching and probing your heart, don't harden your heart against His urging you to repent and be made right with Him, you come to the cross, confess your sin, and He is faithful and just to forgive your sin and He'll cleanse you of all unrighteousness.