

Shedding Light on Living Above Your Circumstances, #3

(COVID LOCK-DOWN STUDIES)

The Joy of Not Caring

Philippians 1: 21-30

Introduction

A dilemma could be a choice between equally unsatisfactory alternatives or between the known & the unknown.

Sometimes our choice is between two very good alternatives & sometimes our dilemmas can be over life & death issues.

In this section of Philippians Paul illustrates how a Christ-centred purpose in life should give every believer both a unique dilemma & determination in life.

I. Paul's dilemma (Phil. 1:21-26)

A. Paul's dilemma stated (1:21)

“For to me to live is Christ & to die is gain” was a genuine expression. At any moment the verdict in his two-year-old trial would be handed down.

Would he live or die? His purpose in life gave him the joy of not caring about the outcome.

B. Paul's dilemma weighed (1:22-26)

Are you familiar with the expression: “Between a rock & a hard place”? He was faced with the two alternatives of living & dying.

If our life purpose is to glorify Christ, even unwelcome circumstances can be marvellous opportunities in disguise.

(i) The Advantages of Dying (1:23)

In this body we groan... longing to be clothed with our body from Heaven. That is why he says that dying is actually better.

(ii) The Advantages of Living (1:24-26)

There are a lot of advantages to being alive, but Paul zeroes in on one that has nothing to do with personal pleasure, but with serving Christ.

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II. Paul's Determination (Phil. 1:27-30)

Paul understood the conflict in which he & the Christians in Philippi were engaged, so beginning in **verse 27** he shares three essentials to winning the battle.

A. **Consistency in Conduct** (1:27).

Although we are residents of earth, our true citizenship is in heaven. Even though we are residing on foreign soil, we need to conduct ourselves as children of the King.

B. **Co-operation in Service** (1:27)

The Church is like an athletic team... we can accomplish more together than we can individually. The strength of the Church is the Christian... & the strength of the Christian is the Church.

C. **Courage in Suffering** (1:28-30)

Suffering is a Christian's calling, but it is also a Christian's gift. It has been granted us to suffer. Just as the ability to believe in Christ is a gift from God, the ability to suffer for Christ is a gift from God.

There are three benefits of suffering:

(i) **Suffering provides assurance of our Salvation.**

A true believer will persevere in suffering... & the fact that we are able to endure a trial gives us assurance that we really belong to Christ & at the same time it frustrates the enemies of God.

(ii) **Suffering ensures eternal rewards.**

There is a special crown reserved for you in Heaven. **James 1:12** says:

“Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.”

(iii) **Suffering amplifies our witness.**

If our life purpose is to glorify Christ, then sufferings only amplify the message of Christ.

Conclusion...

Do you desire that kind of courage in the face of persecution & suffering? It is only available to those who can say, *“For me to live is Christ & to die is gain”*.

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