

Philippians, Chapter One, Lesson Four

DEPENDENT ON THE BRETHREN Philippians 1:19-26

STIMULATE

** We saw last week that our circumstances cannot limit God from performing His will in our life and that they should not limit us in our effort to stay in the center of that will. Did you notice a more victorious walk through the difficult circumstances of life this past week? How was your contentment?

My heart was very encouraged by the reality that my circumstances were ordained of God (Proverbs 16:9) and could actually be used to encourage others.

** What were some examples from last week's passage that would help us to better view our circumstances?

V.12 - We can encourage other Christians by telling what God has done in our life through our circumstances.

V.13 - Our circumstances can be used "in the cause of Christ".

V.14 - We trust more when we see a godly example.

V.16 - We should show love and support based on the knowledge of a fellow Christian's lifestyle.

V.18 - We must rejoice when "Christ is proclaimed" through our circumstances.

MOTIVATE

** One of the main characteristics of the apostle Paul, for which I am very thankful, is his transparency. Even when he is being used mightily for "the cause of Christ", he is willing to show us that he was very "**Dependent on the Brethren**". As children of God who love Jesus Christ and desire to know Him more through the study of His word, we will study many different subject matters throughout the course of our life.

However, few will be as significant as what we will see today. As Christians, how are we to view death? How can our view of dying effect our daily walk with the Lord and how is that related to our dependency upon one another?

Today we hope to gain the wisdom of Paul's supernatural insight into the glories of both the life and the death of a Christian, while he demonstrates for us that he was indeed "**Dependent on the Brethren**".

Read passage (V.19-22) (V.23-26)

Opening Prayer

Dependent on the Brethren

INVESTIGATE

V.19 ** As our passage for today begins, what is it that Paul knows for certain?

His circumstances will "turn out for [his] deliverance". soteria - lit. salvation (translated 42 times in the N.T. as "salvation", twice as "deliverance" and once as "preservation").

** Does he mean that he "knows" he will be released from prison?

Not necessarily. cf. the end of verse 20, "whether by life or by death".

** Then what is he saying?

He is absolutely certain that he will be delivered out of his difficult circumstances. He is not sure at all as to how he will be delivered.

** What does that say to us as we are praying for the difficult circumstances in our life or the lives of those around us?

We do not know the details of the path we are on, we only know (for certain) the destination.
cf. 2Timothy 1:12

** What are the two things mentioned here by Paul, through which his deliverance will come?

1. The Philippians' prayers - Paul is completely "**Dependent on the Brethren**", in that his future needs their prayers. deesis - lit. supplication or cry for help in a definite need.
cf. Philippians 4:6, 1:4

2. The provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. God [the Holy Spirit] is faithful to meet our every need and to then bring us to glory. cf. John 14:16-17 and Romans 8:26-30

V.20 ** Paul says that he has an "earnest expectation and hope" - very strong language indeed. About what is he so confident?

1. That he will not be put to shame.
2. That he will be bold!

** Given his present set of circumstances, how could Paul be "put to shame"?

By giving in to the pressures of the unsaved world around him, by giving in to the expediency of self preservation, to the point of denying Christ. cf. 2Peter 2:1 with Titus 2:6-8, 1Peter 3:16

** We know of course that Paul was always bold, what impact did that boldness have on the name of Christ?

Christ was exalted in the body of Paul.

** Was this something new that Paul was asking for?

No - he said, "even now, as always". It was the general pattern of life for the apostle to bring glory to Christ through his own body. cf. Galatians 6:17, - "the brand-marks of Jesus"
2Corinthians 4:7-11, - "the dying of Jesus"

** What are the two general methods by which we can exalt Jesus Christ with our bodies?

1. "...by life..."
2. "...by death..."

** Is it possible to so live out our Christian lives, that we only care for His exaltation in us and not be concerned with life or death?

It is not only possible, it is the norm for His children. It should be the pursuit of every heart.
cf. 2Corinthians 5:6-9

V.21 ** What perspective of life and death does now Paul share with us, which is designed to make us bold?

"For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain".

** Let's look at these two statements one at a time. How can the phrase "to live is Christ" make a Christian more bold in his daily walk?

If my only concern is Christ's desire and will, if my passion is for His exaltation, then I will be bold on His behalf because of the absence of self-centered fretting! cf. Psalm 37:7-9

In Psalm 37, David encourages us to not look at the world around us, but to look boldly to the Lord for His provision and care.

V. 7 - Rest in the Lord

V. 7 - Wait patiently for Him

V. 7 - Do not fret because of him who prospers in his [evil] way

V. 8 - Cease from anger and forsake wrath

V. 8 - Do not fret, it leads only to evil-doing

** And secondly, how does the phrase "to die is gain", produce boldness in the heart of the believer?

If we truly believed what Scripture tells us about our future in eternity with Christ, we would fear no man in the here-and-now, but would be bold for the sake of Jesus Christ.

cf. Matthew 10:28, Colossians 3:2-4 and 1Peter 3:6

V.22 ** Paul now starts to reason with himself about the profound truth he has just written. What is it that he is considering?

If he continues in this life, God will grant him fruitful labor for "the cause of Christ" (V.13), and if he were to die he would experience immeasurable gain. That's a difficult choice for the likes of the apostle Paul.

** What does that say about Paul's desire for a lifetime of "fruitful labor"?

It is just as strong as his desire to be with the Lord - which is why he says, "I do not know which to choose"!

** From Whom did Paul get his strong desire for fruit?

From the Lord Himself! cf. John 15:8 and 16

V.23-24

** In these next two verses, Paul will continue the inner examination or searching of his soul. Do you think this is an easy decision for the apostle?

No - he is "hard-pressed" from both directions.

sunecho - lit. "to hold together, or to hold fast"

The two choices before him were pressing in on both sides of Paul.

** At this point we need to stop for a clarification. What is it exactly that Paul is considering? Is he contemplating suicide?

Absolutely not! Paul's life and death are totally in the Lord's hands - he is merely considering which would be best for this time and circumstance. Either life in Christ, here and now or to depart and be with Him throughout time and eternity. cf. 2Timothy 4:6 and 2Peter 1:13-14

** In verse 23 Paul uses an unusual term or phrase for death. What is it?

"...to depart and be with Christ..."

** How does that description of "death" for a Christian differ from the death of the lost or unsaved individual?

Ours is an instantaneous transition from life to life, while theirs is an appointment to eternal death! cf. 2Corinthians 2:14-17, Hebrews 9:27

** How does Paul feel about his upcoming transition?

That will be "...very much better"(V.23).

** Even though Paul realizes how wonderful being with Christ would be, what selfless statement does he make in verse 24?

"...yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake." Paul's devotion to ministry in the name of Jesus Christ exceeds his desire to please himself. cf. Galatians 2:20

V.25 ** Being convinced of the greater "necessity" to remain and minister to the flock of God, what two things does Paul want to build up in the Philippians' faith?

Their "progress" and "joy" - Not only was Paul "**Dependent on the Brethren**", but they were also dependent upon him. Paul fully understood that a Biblical perspective of life and death will always free us to minister to the needs of each other. cf. Romans 15:14

V.26 ** What will be the result of our progress and joy in the faith, as we live our life "**Dependent on the Brethren**"?

For the Philippians, it would be - lit. "that your rejoicing may be abundant in Jesus Christ for me", when they would see him again and see the effects of Christ's working in him and not because of anything he himself did by his own ability.

For us it is the same. When we observe the Lord's work in the lives of brothers and sisters in Christ we should abound in joy (proud confidence) toward the Lord for what He has done.

EXTRICATE

** We need to follow the example of the apostle Paul that we have seen today. What have we learned about his view of life and death, and how did that relate to being "**Dependent on the Brethren**"

1. Our life is supported by prayer. (V.19)
2. Christ should always be exalted in my body, whether by life or death. (V.20)
3. To live is Christ. (V.21)
4. To die is gain. (V.21)
5. My boldness can produce progress and joy in the faith for other believers. (V.25)

DELINEATE

** How does understanding all of this, like Paul did, affect our view of death?

There is nothing to fear! It is of no concern or worry. Our only desire is for Jesus Christ to be exalted in our life.
cf. 1Corinthians 15:55-57

EVALUATE

** Are you truly dependent on your brothers and sisters in Christ? Do you realize how important their prayers on your behalf are in the battle for Christ's glory? Are you available and faithful to the call of being there for them to be dependent on you?

ACTIVATE

** If we can answer "yes" to those questions, we need only to ask ourselves if we have a Biblical perspective of life and death. If that too is correct, then we can live our lives "**Dependent on the Brethren**" to the glory of Jesus Christ.

Closing prayer