

A Life of Single Focus

Philippians 1:21-26

21 For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. 22 But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. 23 For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. 24 Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you. 25 And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith, 26 that your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again NKJV

There are and have been very few men like the apostle Paul. A man so dedicated to Jesus Christ. He had spent the best years of his life in service to Jesus, but he was not yet finished. He was willing to spend and be spent for those who needed his ministry.

No, not all Christians are like Paul. We all come in various stages of development and growth. But hopefully we all would like to be a little more like Paul. Paul was one of the few people who could say he followed Christ as I follow Christ.

William Carey gave up all to bring the people of India to Christ. He worked so hard and suffered such disappointments. But finally after decades, God gave him what he had longed for in Christ.

Adoniram Judson was such a man. John MacArthur writes of him, "Adoniram Judson was the first overseas missionary sent out from America. In the early nineteenth century, he and his first wife went to India and, a short while later, to Burma, where he labored for nearly four decades. After fourteen years, he had a handful of converts and had managed to write a Burmese grammar. During that time he suffered a horrible imprisonment for a year and a half and lost his wife and children to disease. Like Paul, he longed to be with the Lord, but, also like the apostle, he considered his work for Christ to be infinitely more important than his personal longings. He therefore prayed that God would allow him to live long enough to translate the entire Bible into Burmese and to establish a church there of at least one hundred believers. The Lord granted that request and also allowed him to compile Burmese-English and English-Burmese dictionaries, which became invaluable to the Christian workers, both foreign and Burmese, who followed him. He wrote, "If I had not felt certain that every trial was ordered by infinite love and mercy, I could not have survived my accumulated sufferings.'" MacArthur New Testament Commentary,

But it is not just missionaries that are focused on Jesus Christ and His call on their lives.

Every Christian is focused on Jesus to a certain degree. Every decision we make is seen through the lens of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. There are certain things that will fit into that pattern and there are certain things that will not.

God gives us a lot of latitude in the decisions that we make but there are certain things that we have as common goals and there are certain things that we as Christians all avoid.

These things are plainly laid out in the Bible for all who will look into its pages.

So let us look this morning at our text.

- I. For to me, to live is Christ,
- II. And to die is gain.
- III. But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor;
- IV. Yet what I shall choose I cannot tell.
 - A. For I am hard pressed between the two,
 - 1. Having a desire to depart and be with Christ,
 - a. Which is far better.
 - B. Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you.
- V. And being confident of this,
 - A. I know that I shall remain and continue with you all
 - 1. For your progress and joy of faith,
 - 2. That your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again