

Not In Vain

Philippians 2:16-18

16 holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain. 17 Yes, and if I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. 18 For the same reason you also be glad and rejoice with me. NKJV

Holding Fast the Word of Life

Remember last time that Paul was telling the Philippian Christians that they were lights in a dark, crooked and perverse world. He now seems to have in mind the lights that were burnt high on a pillar outside of ancient harbors in order to guide the ships safely into port.

In the same way as those fires were placed high in the night so the Philippian Christians were being called upon to hold forth the word of life as the hope of entering the harbor safe. That was the only way for a secure salvation lest peoples lives were dashed upon the rocks and be eternally lost.

But Paul also has another motive in this. It was he that had preached that same Word of Life to them and God working in their hearts had brought them into the kingdom of Jesus Christ. But now with all the trials they are going through and they seeing their spiritual hero Paul imprisoned and in jeopardy of death he fears that some might relapse from the faith.

So he lets them know that they are his validation and for which he will give an account in the Day of Jesus Christ.

So That I May Rejoice in the Day of Christ

There is a reckoning day for everyone. For the Christian it comes at the Day of Christ. The day Christ will return and receive His own.

Paul refers to it as the judgment seat of Christ in 2 Cor 5:10, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." NKJV

We will not be judged as to if we are fit for heaven. That was already taken care of on the cross. But we will be judged according to our works.

1 Corinthians 3:11-15 (NKJV) 11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. 14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

So Paul wants to receive a full reward. As John said, "Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward." 2 John 8 NKJV

So he wants to be able to rejoice and not rather be ashamed.

That I Have Not Run in Vain or Labored in Vain

Paul thought of the Christian life as a race.

1 Cor 9:24-27 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. 25 And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. 26 Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. 27 But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified. NKJV

He did not want all the effort to be in vain.

I have to say that I have felt that some of my efforts have been in vain. I have invested hours and hours in peoples lives and did not see much fruit. I have the disadvantage of not being able to see what is in peoples hearts.

But Paul was sure of better things for these believers. But yet he admonishes them to continue to hold fast.

Tomorrow is Memorial Day. All across this land people will gather to honor those who have given their lives so that we can enjoy the freedoms we have today.

But you know that probably the greatest wish for those departed is that they might not have died in vain. For if they died and their purpose was not obtained they died in vain. Sad to say but I feel that America is going the wrong way. I think the Boy Scouts are going to have to remove from their oath the words "morally straight" after this week voting to allow openly homosexual participants.

This is not your grandfather's USA that we have today. And some are quite happy about. But we are fast coming to the point that those who have died for this nation will have died in vain. How many think that those brave men and women died so that a mother could kill here children? How many think that those brave men and women died so that we could celebrate gay pride month? How many think that they died so that young women could feel empowered to bring children into a world where they never would know their father.

These are not the things that they died for. These are not the things that define freedom, they are the things the ultimately destroy freedom.

Yes, and If I Am Being Poured out as a Drink Offering

In the Old Testament there were various sacrifices and offerings. There were also drink offerings that were never poured out on a sin sacrifice. But only on free will offerings or love offerings.

It is this that Paul has in mind.

The drink offering was poured on a blazing sacrifice, either on the sacrifice itself or on the altar as the sacrifice was being consumed. The result would be a burst of steam and vapor that would

ascend upward.

On the Sacrifice and Service of Your Faith

We do not offer sacrifices in the OT sense but in the NT sense.

Selfless service for Christ is a sacrifice only in the sense of being an offering to God. It is never a sacrifice in the sense of being a loss. A believer can sacrifice nothing for the Lord that is not replaced with something infinitely more valuable and gratifying

MacArthur New Testament Commentary, The - MacArthur New Testament Commentary –
Philippians.

Here is one of the most wonderful verses in the entire Word of God. It pictures what the Christian life really should be. He is referring to one of the earliest offerings in the Old Testament. When we go back to Genesis 35:14, we find that Jacob set up a pillar at Beth-el, “and he poured a drink offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon.” Then in the books of Leviticus and Numbers the sacrifices are described. We learn that there was a drink offering which was to be added to the burnt offering and the meal offering. It was never added to the sin offering or the trespass offering. It was a most unusual offering in that it had nothing to do with redemption; it had nothing to do with the person of Christ. They would bring in a skin of wine and just pour it on the sacrifice which was being consumed by fire. What happened to it? It would go up in steam and disappear.

Paul is saying, “I want my life to be poured out like a drink offering on the offering of Christ.” Paul knows that the Lord Jesus Christ made the supreme sacrifice. He wanted his life to be a drink offering—just poured out to go up in steam. He wanted to be so consumed and obscured that all that is seen is just Jesus Christ. He wanted Christ to receive all the honor and the glory. This was the mind of Paul. I can think of no higher wish for the Christian life. McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Php 2:17). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Psalms 69:30-31

30 I will praise the name of God with a song, And will magnify Him with thanksgiving. 31 This also shall please the LORD better than an ox or bull, Which has horns and hooves. NKJV

Psalms 107:21-22

21 Oh, that men would give thanks to the LORD for His goodness, And for His wonderful works to the children of men! 22 Let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, And declare His works with rejoicing. NKJV

Psalms 116:17-19

17 I will offer to You the sacrifice of thanksgiving, And will call upon the name of the LORD. 18 I will pay my vows to the LORD Now in the presence of all His people, 19 In the courts of the LORD's house, In the midst of you, O Jerusalem. Praise the LORD! NKJV

Ephesians 5:19-20

19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, 20 giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, NKJV

Colossians 3:16

16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. NKJV

Hebrews 13:15 (NKJV) 15 Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.

I Am Glad and Rejoice with You All

Paul is saying that if my life is poured out as a drink offering on your sacrifice of your faith then I am glad and rejoice with you all.

Paul has not regrets about his life and service to Jesus and would do it all over again.

He doesn't want them concerned about it, for he will rejoice in the will of God for his life what ever that may be.

For the Same Reason You Also Be Glad and Rejoice with Me.

Therefore Paul wants them to be glad and rejoice with him.

FOLLOW ME

By Ira Stamphill

I traveled down a lonely road and no one seemed to care,
The burden on my weary back had bowed me to despair,
I oft complained to Jesus how folks were treating me,
And then I heard Him so so tenderly,
"My feet were also weary upon the Calv'ry road,
The cross became so heavy I fell beneath the load,
Be faithful weary pilgrim, the morning I can see,
Just lift your cross and follow close to me."

"I work so hard for Jesus" I often boast and say,
"I've sacrificed a lot of things to walk the narrow way,
I gave up fame and fortune; I'm worth a lot to thee,"
And then I heard Him gently say to me,
"I left the throne of glory and counted it but loss,
My hands were nailed in anger upon a cruel cross,
But now we'll make the journey with your hand safe in mine,

So lift your cross and follow close to me."

Oh Jesus if I die upon a foreign field someday
'Twould be no more than love demands, no less could I repay,
"No greater love hath mortal man than for a friend to die,"
These are the words he gently spoke to me,
"If just a cup of water I place within your hand
Then just a cup of water is all that I demand,"
But if by death to living they can thy glory see,
I'll take my cross and follow close to thee.