

**Introduction:** Jesus, THE Savior, is magnificent. He is glorious beyond human comprehension. In our secular, materialistic age, this may be why so few people know Him. In the words of an epic Jethro Tull album from 1972, people are 'geared to the ordinary rather than the exceptional'. Humans are finite and have little place for, or understanding of, the infinite. \*\*\* Not so for the apostle Paul and the first century church. The Twelve had seen the resurrected King of kings. A few years later Saul (Paul) saw the glorified Messiah! (*Acts 9; 22:1-22; 23:1-11; 26*) As a result of this encounter all of Paul's life was focused on One Person and one task. He is IN Christ; Christ is in him. This relationship with the exalted Christ motivated everything he did. His one task is now to fulfill the mission he was given by the resurrected and glorified Christ. Paul was testifying to what he knew of Christ to the people of all nations. (*Acts 26:15-18; fulfilling Isaiah 42:1-9*) \*\*\* Paul planted the church in Philippi through: a prayer meeting led by Lydia, a miracle with a slave girl, persecution by imprisonment, and a second miracle with the soldier who guarded him. (*Acts 16*) In the planting of the church, Christ was exalted and magnified. \*\*\* Now, ten years later, he is a prisoner in Rome. He could be executed by Nero who was beginning his persecution of Christians. (Nero beheaded him seven years later.) Or, he could be released to continue to do fruitful labor (ministry) for Christ. His preference was to be executed so he could be with Christ face-to-face. But, Paul knew it was God's will that he remain alive for the progress of The Gospel and the church of Christ. \*\*\* Let's now look at this passage to understand Paul's reasoning. We do this because Paul realized his understanding was to be an example to his brothers and sisters IN Christ in Philippi. And, Paul's attitude is to be an example to all Christians until Christ returns! So, let's understand and DO God's will for us.

### **I. Paul knows his troubles will lead to salvation AND Christ being exalted in him. (Verses 19-20)**

A. Paul knows his imprisonment will turn out to salvation through their prayers and The Spirit, according to his looking forward hope. (*Verses 19-20a*)

1. I know this will turn to me for salvation. (*Verse 19a*)

**Full salvation:** Paul just wrote about the palace guard and his chains. He knows he will be saved, delivered from the chains. Paul is quoting the Greek translation of *Job 13:16* which was the translation used outside Jerusalem. Salvation includes deliverance, preservation and release. Paul expects to be released. In *Job 13*, salvation leads to vindication in righteousness (*verse 18*). Earlier Paul had prayed the Philippians would be filled with the fruit of righteousness (*verse 11*).

2. (This salvation will be) through your prayers and the supply of The Spirit of Jesus Christ. (*Verse 19b*)

**Prayer and Spirit:** Paul knows the church in Philippi is praying in the supply (with the help) of The Spirit of Jesus Christ. God inspired prayer is always effective.

**Trinity:** They are praying a Trinitarian prayer: They ask The Father that Paul would be given all the help he needs by The Holy Spirit sent by Jesus Christ.

3. According to my looking forward hope. (*Verse 20a*)

**Hope:** Paul's hope is the assured hope of his deliverance from Roman chains.

B. He will not be put to shame, but Christ will be exalted in his body: through life or death. (*Verses 20b-e*)

1. In no way will I be put to shame. (*Verse 20b*)

**Shame:** By this, Paul is saying his faith and trust in The Triune God (Adonai Yahweh) will never waver; and, therefore he will not be put to shame. He is referencing *Isaiah* (*chapter 28*, specifically *verse 16*; see also: *Romans 9:33; 10:11; 1 Peter 2:6*).

2. But in all boldness, as always even now Christ shall be exalted in my body, whether through life or though death. (*Verses 20c, d, e*)

**Boldness:** When the church had about 5,000 members, John and Peter boldly told the priests how they healed a man by The Gospel of Christ. After they were released, they joined other believers to pray they would be enabled to speak God's words with boldness; and, the place was shaken, they were filled with The Holy Spirit and they did speak God's Word boldly! (*Acts 4*) We need more corporate prayer at FCC so we will boldly proclaim The Word of The Gospel.

**Christ exalted:** Mary exalted The Lord after Gabriel told her she would conceive God's Son by The Holy Spirit (*Luke 1:26-55*); Cornelius' relatives and friends exalted God after The Holy Spirit came on them as they heard Peter in faith (*Acts 10:24-47*); Jews and Greeks in Ephesus exalted The Name of The Lord Jesus after the seven sons of Sceva were beaten for blaspheming Jesus (*Acts 19:13-17*). May Christ BE exalted in our cell of His Body!

**Life-death:** This is the first of three times Paul writes Christ will be exalted whether he lives or dies.

*Saved people are looking forward to Christ being exalted in them*

### **II. Having mentioned life and death, Paul elaborates on each from his perspective; but, understanding God's will.**

(*Verses 21-24*)

A. Life means fruitful labor for him for Christ, and death is his future gain. (*Verses 21-22*)

1. Because to me: to live Christ, to die gain. (*Verse 21*)

**Personal:** Paul is emphatically saying this is his personal attitude. However, because he and the church are in such close fellowship this is to be their attitude too. This is the second time he mentions Christ in both life and death.

**Christ:** All who are IN Christ (and have Christ in them) have Him as the single and ONLY focus of their lives. BY Faith they know their lives now are all about Christ, whatever they may be doing; and, when their lives with the suffering of this earth are over, they will see Him face-to-face to never suffer again (*Revelation 21:1-6*)

**Final healing:** No healing in this life is final; but, all who die IN Christ have access to the healing Tree of Life. (*Revelation 22:1-2*)

2. IF to live in the flesh: this fruitful labor to me; and I am not knowing which I will choose. (*Verse 22*)  
**Fruitful labor:** Paul is saying that what Jesus said about those who abide IN Him bearing much fruit to His Father's Glory (*John 15*) was not just for The Twelve, it is for him too. Again, by extension it is for ALL who are IN Christ BY The Faith. What good fruit are we bearing at FCC?  
**Choice:** Paul knows this is God's will for him. He fully accepts and he will do God's will. His talk about 'choice' is purely personal; and, maybe meant to encourage any believers in Philippi who may not be as fully surrendered to accept God's will as he is.

B. If it were his choice, to be with Christ is best for him; but, to remain alive with his brothers in Philippi benefits them. (*Verses 23-24*)

1. I am constrained from both: I am having the desire to depart and with Christ to be, because much more advantageous. (*Verse 23*)

**Personal desire:** Because Christ is the consuming passion of his life, Paul would want to be in His presence now.

2. But the, to remain in the flesh (body) (is) necessary on behalf of you. (*Verse 24*)

**God:** God desires that Paul continue in fruitful labor to proclaim The Gospel of Christ with the brothers in Philippi. This one and ONLY passion of Paul overrides his personal desire. So he concludes this third personal reflection on life and death by choosing fruitful life IN Christ.

Because Jesus Christ is all to Paul, he accepts God's will for him with joy, as we shall now see:

### III. He is convinced they will make progress in The Faith SO they glory IN Christ because of him. (*Verses 25-26*)

A. Convinced I will stay alive and remain with all of you for your progress and joy IN The Faith. (*Verse 25*)

1. And this I have been convinced that I know I will remain and with-remain all of you. (*Verse 25a*)

**Live-remain:** Paul uses two similar words. He uses remain to mean he will continue to live; and, he uses with-remain to mean he will live with them for their benefit (*verse 24*).

2. (I will live with you) to the progress of you and joy in The Faith. (*Verse 25b*)

**Purpose:** The main purpose God has for them all is progress in The Faith in The Gospel of Christ. (See *verse 27*) This will involve their love for one another increasing (*1:10; 2:2*), humility to put others first (*2:3-4*) and continuing to work out their salvation in fear and trembling (*2:12*); and, more.

**Joy:** And the result of growth and progress in The Faith is joy – a theme of the letter. All this is not just for the first century church in Philippi. It is for all churches until Christ returns, including FCC!

Faithful obedience always produces joy.

#### *Let's encourage one another to joy and progress in The Faith*

B. SO your boasting may abound IN Christ through my visiting you again. (*Verse 26*)

1. So that the boast of you may abound IN Christ Jesus. (*Verse 26a*)

**Boast:** Paul is referencing the Greek translation of *Jeremiah (9:23-24)* where the verb form of his noun is used five times: 'Thus [says Yahweh], Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, and let not the strong man boast in his strength, and let not the rich man boast in his wealth; but let him that boasts boast in this, the understanding and knowing that I am [Yahweh who] exercises mercy, and judgment, and righteousness, upon the earth; for in these things is my pleasure'. As always, for Paul, Christ is deserving of abundant boasting!

2. (This will happen) through my coming again to you. (*Verse 26b*)

**Encourage-exhort:** When he comes he will both encourage and exhort them in all Christ is and all he has done for them to progress in The Faith with joy.

#### *Let's encourage one another to joy and progress in The Faith*

### IV. Fruitful labor and progress in Gospel Faith.

A. Fruitful labor. (*Verse 22*)

**Harvest of souls:** Jesus told His disciples the harvest was plentiful, but the laborers were few – so ask The Lord of the harvest to send laborers! (*Matthew 9:37-38*)

**Paul and Apollos:** Paul said both he and Apollos had tasks to do to bring the planted seed to harvest and they were fellow laborers of God. (*1 Corinthians 3:5-9*) This illustrates that both team-work and role-playing are essential in the church.

B. Progress IN Faith. (*Verse 25*)

**Church:** People in the church of Christ are being transformed into the same image [as The Lord] from glory to glory, just as from The Lord, The Spirit. (*2 Corinthians 3:9-18*) We must all progress together IN Christ-likeness.

**Leader and people:** Paul urged Timothy, as bishop in Ephesus, to persevere in the spiritual gifts he was given so all the brothers would see his progress and they would all be saved (the opening sentence of our passage – *1 Timothy 4:6-17*)

#### *Let's encourage one another to joy and progress in The Faith.*

**Conclusion:** Paul tells his partners in The Gospel in Philippi that their prayers will result in his continuing in fruitful Gospel ministry and their progress with him. The result will be that Christ will be exalted and they will have more joy.

#### *Let's encourage one another to joy and progress in The Faith*