



Philippians

Living in the Joy of Knowing Christ!

The Joy of Knowing God's Purpose!

Philippians 1:19-26

Message #4 of 16 – S990

Sermon given on March 27, 2022



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

The Joy of Knowing God's Purpose!

Philippians 1:19-26

Opening Comments

- Turn to **Philippians 1**
- Today, we continue our series through the book of **Philippians – Living in the Joy of Knowing Christ!**

- It was **Mark Twain** who said:

To a man with a hammer, everything looks like a nail.

- Our perspective or worldview is how we interpret the things of the world around us
- And that will determine what we do in and with our lives
- And how someone acts in the world is an indication of their worldview or perspective
- For example: In the confirmation hearing of Ketanji Jackson for the Supreme Court of the United States
- When asked to define what a woman is, she refused to give a definition
- That suggests to us that she doesn't believe what humans have believed to be true for thousands of years
- There are two genders, male and female
- Males are born as boys and grow up to be men
- Females are born as girls and grow up to be women
- This also suggests that Ms. Jackson will bring a very liberal worldview to the highest court in the land
- As a Christian, that is not ideal, for our country, for the flourishing of people, and ultimately for the cause of Christ
- As we continue to study through the book of Philippians, we need to keep in mind that Paul was writing from a less-than-ideal situation
- He was in Rome, the capital of the Roman Empire, that had conquered most of the known world
- He was a prisoner there, chained day and night to a Roman soldier
- Ketanji Jackson's worldview is a product of her environment, education, and experiences
- Paul's worldview had its source beyond those things

- Paul’s perspective on life and his circumstances came from a divine source
- And it was that perspective that allowed him to see his circumstances in the light of God’s divine purposes
- That made it possible for him to write this radical book on joy, from circumstances that, humanly speaking, were void of human joy
- Paul’s divine purpose lifted him above his circumstances
- The question I would all of us to consider today, ‘Do you know God’s divine purpose for your life?’
- Let’s pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help us answer that question
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **The Joy of Knowing God’s Purpose!**
- In **Philippians 1:6** Paul said God is doing a ‘good work’ in His people ... **being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete *it* until the day of Jesus Christ...**
- The question is, why is God making us into the image of His Son Jesus Christ?
- The moment we are saved, all our sins are forgiven, and nothing can keep us from heaven
- Once we get to heaven, we will be perfected, regardless of how far we have progressed in our faith
- So, why go to all the trouble of changing us at all
- This life is not all there is, and compared to heaven, this life is but for a moment
- This life matters – how we live this life matters
- It matters to God, and it matters to the people God wants our lives to touch
- We saw in the previous text that God’s ways are not our ways
- Paul would not have planned to be falsely accused, arrested, and sent to Rome, and await trial chained to a Roman soldier
- And what did Paul do while he waited to find out what was going to happen to him – he did what he could **Philippians 1:12-13**

But I want you to know, brethren, that the things *which happened* to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, ¹³ so that it has become

evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ...

- Paul's divine purpose was to further the gospel as an apostle of Jesus Christ
- His circumstances didn't change his purpose – they just changed the way Paul accomplished his purpose
- And because his purpose was being lived, even if it wasn't the way he would have planned it, he could rejoice **Philippians 1:18**

What then? Only *that* in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice.

- Paul had a confidence that we all should aspire to
- **Philippians 1:19-20**
- Even though Paul's circumstances looked grim, he was confident in God's ultimate salvation.
- Paul's confidence came from his awareness of their prayers for him which would release the infinite supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.
- God has not told Paul if would be released from prison, but Paul trusted God would deliver him
- For Paul that meant God might deliver him from his temporal circumstances, but he knew for certain that God would deliver him to heaven
- Either was okay with him
- The symbol for the American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society is an ox standing between an altar and a plow with the motto, "Ready for either".
- Paul was ready to serve God furthering the gospel or to die as a martyr of the faith
- Paul expresses that as a simple but profound declaration
- **Philippians 1:21a**
- '...to live is Christ...'
- As long as there was breath in his lungs, he would live for Christ
- Christ was his reason for being, He was the center of Paul's life, Christ was why Paul kept going, no matter how hard life got
- Every morning Paul woke was another day for Christ – to further the gospel of Christ

- Paul said this differently in **Galatians 2:20**

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

- Paul found his identity in Christ – nothing else in life mattered
- Only that Christ be glorified, and that the gospel of Christ was furthered
- The more we understand what Christ did for us, the more we want to do for Him
- Not to earn salvation, or to earn favor from God, but because it is our expression of gratitude for God saving us, it is how we show God our love for the love He showed us
- It is our duty to live for Him **Romans 12:1-2**

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is your reasonable service.* ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

- To live is Christ
- Our daily prayer ought to be that we elevate Christ to this place in our lives – the center, the purpose, our very reason for being
- To live is Christ – then Paul says there is an option that needs to be considered

- **Philippians 1:21b**

- ‘to die is gain.’ – seems like an odd statement
- Most people, even many believers have a very terminal view of death – as the end of life
- Death is not the end of life; it is just the end of our life on this earth

- Jesus in the High Priestly Prayer **John 17:3**

And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

- Eternal life is not something we are waiting to get after we die – it is something we possess the moment we receive Christ as our Savior
- What we are waiting for is for our work on this earth to be completed and Jesus coming to get us to take us to be with Him **John 14:1-3**

Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father’s house are many mansions; if *it were not so*, I would have told you. I go to

prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also.

- Only a true Christian could make this claim.
- Paul knew that death frees him from all sin, from all doubts and temptations.
- It frees him from pain, physical, emotional, spiritual.
- There is no fear or worry. No more suffering or persecution.
- He would be out of the reach of all enemies and safe from any harm.
- It would also mean that
- And the greatest gain of all is to be in the presence of his Blessed Savior. **Robert Mounce**

“To die is gain because in the absence of life’s limitations union with Christ will be completely realized.”

- Paul didn’t have a morbid fascination with death
- Because Christ was everything to him, Paul was drawn to be with Christ
- I totally get that – I love Kelly – and my love causes me to want to be with her
- But his desire to be with Jesus was countered by another desire
- **Philippians 1:22-24**
- God had given Paul a purpose – to further the gospel
- As long as he lived that was his purpose
- Paul is sharing his heart here.
- He is comparing the glory of eternity with Christ and a life bearing spiritual fruit to Christ.
- Both are good, one is better for Paul and the other is better for those Paul is called to minister to.
- In the previous message we saw that Paul was gospel-focused, and here in this text we see he was also others focused.
- These two things are two sides of a coin.
- You cannot be gospel-centered without being others-centered.
- Paul is expressing this almost like he has a choice
- Paul knows that his life is in God’s hands
- And so Paul senses that God is not finished with him yet
- **Philippians 1:25-26**

- Paul did eventually get released
- And he went right back to his former ministry of taking the gospel to people who had not heard of Christ
- He would eventually be arrested again, and that time he sensed he wasn't going to be released again **2 Timothy 4:6-8**

For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. ⁷I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

- He would eventually be executed
- And his greatest desire would be fulfilled – Paul was/is with Jesus
- God's highest purpose for all of us is to be with Jesus in heaven forever
- And while we wait for Him to come and get us, Jesus wants us to be busy doing what He divinely purposed us to do
- And that is why God is doing a good work in us
- So that a good work will come out of us
- And that good work has something to do with the gospel
- It has something to do with someone being exposed to the truth of who Jesus is and what He did for them
- Paul knew that he might die while he was there in prison
- He was okay with that because his greatest desire was to be with Jesus
- He had a complimentary desire of serving Jesus in this life
- One was better for him, the other was better for others
- And that's where joy is found
- Once Jesus becomes your greatest desire and you find your divine purpose while you are here, you will know His joy
- And even if you don't know what your divine purpose is, seeking it will bring joy into your life
- That is if Jesus is your greatest desire
- Seek Jesus with your whole being and seek to be used by Him while you wait for Him
- God will be glorified – others will be blessed – and faith will grow
- **Pray**