

SOUTH GROVE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH LONDON

Lord's Day Morning

Date 27th November 2022

Preacher Rev Philip Knowles Ps/Hymns Ps 40:1-5 394, 196, 480

Read: Philippians 1:12-21 Text Philippians 1:21

Series: Philippians (30) Title : For To Me To Live Is Christ

In writing to the church at Philippi, Paul teaches all that has happened to him including prison has happened unto the furtherance of the gospel.

Paul is chained to a Roman soldier, yet God's truth goes marching on.

The unconverted are hearing those things concerning Christ, and as the result of God speaking with that voice that awakes the dead, making His people hear, and willing in the day of His power, they are turning from their false idols to serve the true and living God.

Paul could be executed at any time. Paul didn't know how long he had left on earth, but he does know he only has one life to live, and he will not withhold it from God.

For this reason, Paul said the words at the end of **verse 20** "**Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.**"

The word **magnified** means **to make great, to enlarge**. The overall idea **is to raise, lift up and exalt**.

By Paul's life, Christ will be exalted, and, lifted up.

Then he follows on with some of the deepest and well known of words, in **verse 21** "**For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.**"

Verse 20 is **what Paul desires to do for Christ, to magnify Him, far above all.**

But **verse 21 is Paul's delight in Christ.**

Paul is saying Christ is mine in life and Christ is mine in death.

Christ is with me in life, and I am with Christ in death.

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

And while these words certainly have application to serving Christ, yet they mean much more, **as they focus on Christ Himself.**

You will see the words **is** mentioned twice is in italics, that means they are not in the original Greek language, but have been put there by our translators to help the flow of English, that's why they make the distinction of italics, but can be read without them.

It would read as such, "**For to me to live Christ, and to die gain.**" The emphasis is in life or death the Christian never loses out but always overcomes.

I live on earth, I have Christ in me and with me, but when I die, I am with Christ in heaven that is gain.

For that reason, Paul's words are quoted by believers, in the most challenging of times.

Read missionary accounts, of jail sentences, harsh treatment, persecutions of various kinds, and this words are written on walls or stone.

However, to Free Presbyterians **verse 21** has personal application, because these words were quoted by the late Dr Alan Cairns, before the Lord called His faithful servant home to glorify, **for to me to live is Christ and die is gain.**

For today's message I only want to preach on the first half of the verse, and then next time God willing preach on the second half of the verse.

I do this because many lessons are to be gleaned and feed our souls.

“For to me to live Christ...” The word **live** as in the original Greek language, is in **present tense** meaning, **living is Christ**, serving is Christ, preaching is Christ.

Oh! May Paul’s words be our motto verse, to challenge, transform and renew our minds, to be able not just to say but to live day by day, **“For to me to live Christ...”**

Why could Paul say such words.

I FIRST, PAUL’S LIFE WAS CHANGED BY CHRIST

When Paul spoke these words they were spoken by a life changed by Christ.

Previously, Paul was known by the name called Saul of Tarsus. To Paul or Saul in his unconverted days, Christ meant nothing to him.

He was spiritually dead to God, and blinded by sin. He was a child of wrath, a worker of disobedience.

He viewed the church of Christ in opposition to God. He followed his man-made religion.

The more Saul persecuted the church, he believed the more favour it gave him with God. He hated Christianity.

Had the Saviour not spoken to Saul that day on the road to Damascus, Saul would have continued his rebellion against Christ and left to hell’s punishment.

However, when the risen Saviour met Saul, and confronted him about his sin, the Holy Spirit brought conviction, and conversion applying the saving benefits of Christ to His life. He received Christ as Lord and Saviour.

At that moment in the twinkling of an eye, Saul was quickened, he received new life, spiritual life, not by the will of men nor of the flesh but of God.

Saul was brought from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light, from the power of Satan unto God.

He who once persecuted the faith now preached the faith.

Paul was a new creature in Christ. He had peace with God through the blood of Christ. His transgressions all blotted out.

Paul's life was changed by Christ, and that's why he can say **for to me to live is Christ**. He was set free to serve Christ, empowered and enabled to live Christ.

Therefore, believer, before we received new life, a new principle given within by the Holy Spirit, our old and natural life was spiritually dead in trespasses and in sin.

Our sin separated us from God and condemned by God.

It is unnatural for the carnal man to live for Christ, because he lives for self and sin as he walks the course of this present evil age.

That is because naturally and spiritually all humanity are joined or in union with the first man Adam and his sin.

However, Christ the last Adam, came to undo and reverse the effects of sin, by lifting sinners out of union in Adam and bringing them into union with Himself, to secure a full deliverance, declare a new, and legal standing with God.

Believer Christ changed our life, by giving eternal life, granting a perfect pardon, a legal change of position, fully freely and forever forgiven from *sin's deadness, direction, domination,*

disobedience, defilement, and damnation. We are saved from wrath to come by Christ's blood.

Unsaved one you too can have your sins forgiven, by believing on Christ with your heart and confessing Christ as Saviour with your mouth.

Look to Christ and Live for all eternity.

Christ is the only foundation by which we can say for to me to live is Christ and to die is gain.

(Charles Spurgeon who pastored Metropolitan tabernacle in London for 38 years, said *“a man who is really saved by the grace does not need to be told that he is under solemn obligation to serve Christ, the new life within him tells him that.”*)

Not only was Paul's life changed by Christ.

II SECOND, PAUL'S LIFE WAS COMPLETE IN CHRIST

When Paul said *for to me to live is Christ*, he meant that all He needed to live the Christian life was supplied by Christ through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

From Regeneration through to Glorification rests in Christ.

Paul had been brought into a saving union or oneness to Christ, therefore He would not lack anything to live the Christian life, because there is no lack in Christ.

Peter said in **2 Peter 1:3** *“According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.”*

The Lord Jesus spoke of such a union in **John 15:5** *I am the vine and ye are the branches*. The vine is the stem, the root, the life and fruitfulness of the branch. The branch depends upon

the vine for all it needs. The branch without the stem is nothing, can do nothing, produce nothing.

Christ said **John 10:10** “...*I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*”

Paul said to the believers at Colossi, words which apply to all believers, **col 1:9** *ye are complete in Him*. In Christ we live we move we have our being.

Paul is saying for to me to live is Christ because Christ is everything to me.

That's why Paul said in **Galatians 2:20** *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

It was Christ, and living Christ that led the preacher and hymnist **Charles Wesley** to write, *Jesus lover of my soul... Thou O Christ art all I want more than all in thee I find...*

Men and woman None but Christ can satisfy.

We need strength for the life's journey, Christ is our strength, supply. Wisdom for making decisions, Christ is made unto us wisdom.

Paul said in **Romans 11:36** “*For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever*”

Believer, to live Christ or living Christ is, **enjoying** Christ, **enriched** by Christ, and **encouraged** by Christ.

Paul's life changed by Christ and complete in Christ.

III THIRD, PAUL'S LIFE WAS CENTERED UPON CHRIST

To Paul there was no thought of life apart from Christ, ***For to me to live is Christ.***

It is clear from Paul's letter to the Philippians as any of His letters, his life centred upon Christ.

His purpose for life was Christ. His focus was on Christ, his entire being was taken up with Christ.

When Paul travelled it is at Christ's command,
when he suffered it was in Christ's service,
when he preached it was for Christ's exaltation,
when he wrote it was Christ in every page.

To preach the gospel was to preach Christ,

to encourage believers to walk in the newness of life was to point them to Christ.

For the saving of sinners, the forgiveness of sins it was to preach Christ.

Paul defended the gospel because of Christ.

For to me to live is Christ means no matter what happens to me and, around, in life or approaching death, Christ is my focus.

Whatever is falling apart, Christ remains centre, whoever else loses focus, my focus is Christ, He is centre, **for to me to live is Christ.**

Only a believer who is Christ centred can say the words of **verses 20-21** "**Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. ²¹ For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.**

Paul lived to do the will of God. In living for Christ, he was centred upon honouring Christ His King. Christ was his whole purpose for living.

Remember, in **1 Samuel 15**, King David had loyal men, servants who remained faithful to him. Serving in David's army was their centre focus, they lived to serve King David.

We read in **verse 16** “*And the king's servants said unto the king, Behold, thy servants are ready to do whatsoever my lord the king shall appoint.*”

In a sense these are Paul's words **for to me to live is Christ**, Paul a faithful servant to Christ was *ready to do whatsoever His lord the king shall appoint.*”

Can you say the same believer, have you surrendered all to your Eternal King, given all to Christ your King, are you ready to do whatsoever Your lord the king shall appoint.

King David also had faithful servant named Ittai.

In **1 Samuel 15:21** *Ittai answered the king, and said, As the LORD liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be.*

Ittai, was devoted to King David, and his service, in life or to death.

Therefore, believer, is our life Christ centred, are we devoted first to our Master and then secondly to His service.

Can you say like the Hebrew servant, I love I love my Master.

Have we presented to Him our bodies a living sacrifice which is our reasonable service. Have we surrendered to Christ who demands our life our all.

F. B. Meyer a Bible commentator said that **Christ is** “*the essence of our life...the model of our life...the aim of our life...the solace of our life...the reward of our life.*”

In other words, we live, **in** Christ ... **for** Christ ... **by** Christ ... **through** Christ ... and **from** Christ. He is the **beginning**, the **middle** and the **end** of life.

Believer, Christ is the reason for living, Christ is the reason for coming church services and prayer meetings, Christ is why we get out of bed and to go about our day, to live is Christ.

Christ is the reason why we can face the trials of life, for by His hand He leadeth.

Paul's life Changed by Christ, Complete in Christ, Centred on Christ.

IV FOURTH, PAUL'S LIFE WAS CONFORMED TO CHRIST

For one to be able to say, for to me to live is Christ, means their life is being conformed or shaped by Christ. It is Christ likeness.

Now on earth, we will not be perfectly conformed to Christ's likeness, until we meet Christ in heaven, when we shall be like Him.

But on earth, we read the scriptures, pray and labour towards becoming more and more like Christ, in His life, as possible for a saved sinner to become.

Paul said the church as Rome in **Romans 8:29**, "**For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son...**"

In this letter, to the church at Philippi, Paul said in **Philippians 1:6** **Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ,**

God is always working in the lives of His people by the power and help of the Holy Spirit, to shape them more and more like Christ, and testify **for to me to live is Christ.**

What theme, topic, gets you excited, thrills your heart? who stirs you up? what makes you comes alive, gets your attention, brings you out of sleep?

For some to live or living is Politics, business, sports, hobbies, activities, and much more, and these have their place in life, and nothing wrong with such, **though remember, in them we are still to glorify God, but we are not to live for them.**

But never lose sight of Christ, live Him.

Believer, may we continually labour in the word and prayer and say **for to me to live is Christ.**

If you cannot say for to me to live is Christ, then come ask Him to give you new life to live for Him.