

“A Life Well Spent”  
Philippians 1:18-20  
(Preached at Trinity, August 21, 2016)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Paul was under house arrest in Rome, confined to his quarters and chained to a Roman soldier at all times. But he was allowed to have guests. He was allowed to preach and teach the Gospel. The Gospel is never without effect.  
**2 Corinthians 2:12-17 NAU** - "Now when I came to Troas for the gospel of Christ and when a door was opened for me in the Lord, <sup>13</sup> I had no rest for my spirit, not finding Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I went on to Macedonia. <sup>14</sup> But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place. <sup>15</sup> For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; <sup>16</sup> to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things? <sup>17</sup> For we are not like many, peddling the word of God, but as from sincerity, but as from God, we speak in Christ in the sight of God."
2. Paul had personally witnessed the effect of the Gospel.
  - A. Many of the praetorian guard were being saved.  
**Philippians 1:12-13 NAU** - "Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel, <sup>13</sup> so that my imprisonment in *the cause of Christ* has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else"
  - B. Many others were hearing and believing. And many of the brethren were being emboldened to stand without fear.
3. Paul heard that many from the Church of Rome were faithfully preaching the Gospel but with different motives. Some were jealous of Paul's influence and were preaching out of envy. Others saw Paul as a fellow laborer and preached as his partner in grace. Paul was joyful that the Gospel was being preached, even if some were doing it from sinful ambition.
4. Paul had a single ambition—that Christ be magnified through the faithful proclamation of the Gospel. Outward circumstances were judged only by the manner in which they magnified Christ.
5. Paul had hope for deliverance from prison. His trial was over and now he was patiently awaiting the verdict. It could be a sentence of death, or he could be released. Paul's hope was for a positive verdict and it was his expectation.  
**Philippians 1:25-26 NAU** - "Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith, <sup>26</sup> so that your proud confidence in me may abound in Christ Jesus through my coming to you again."  
**Philippians 2:23-24 NAU** - "I hope to send him (*Timothy*) immediately, as soon as I see how things go with me; <sup>24</sup> and I trust in the Lord that I myself also will be coming shortly."

6. He prayed for them but he also knew they were praying for him. This was one of the ways they participated with Paul in the Gospel. Paul also maintained confidence in the superintendence of Christ in his life.  
**Philippians 1:19-20 NAU** - "I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, <sup>20</sup> according to my earnest expectation and hope"
7. But Paul maintained a single-minded goal in all things. His greatest desire was that Christ be exalted through his life.  
**Philippians 1:20 NAU** - "that I will not be put to shame in anything, but *that* with all boldness, Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death"
8. Then Paul summarized his entire life in **Verse 21** – “For me to live is Christ.”
- A. Every human being has been created with a single purpose.  
 “Man’s chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.”  
 God’s design for man was for man to serve Him and take delight in Him. Paul’s desire was to live this kind of life. He summarized it “For me to live is Christ.”  
 David summarized it in Psalm 73  
**Psalm 73:25 NAU** - "Whom have I in heaven *but You?* And besides You, I desire nothing on earth. <sup>26</sup> My flesh and my heart may fail, But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever."
- B. Sin has stripped this delight from the heart of man. As soon as we are born we immediately turn eyes upon this world. Our hearts are captivated by this world.
- C. This becomes the sum of our life. Our days pass quickly as we go from one pleasure to the next and we seek the treasures of this world; treasures that decay before our very eyes.
- D. Finally, our life is over and we discover it all to be in vain. Our entire life has been wasted. We have forsaken the very purpose of our being, and far worse, we have forsaken our Creator.  
 Solomon wrote:  
**Ecclesiastes 1:14 NAU** - "I have seen all the works which have been done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and striving after wind."  
**Ecclesiastes 2:1-11 NAU** - "I said to myself, "Come now, I will test you with pleasure. So enjoy yourself." And behold, it too was futility. <sup>2</sup> I said of laughter, "It is madness," and of pleasure, "What does it accomplish?" <sup>3</sup> I explored with my mind *how* to stimulate my body with wine while my mind was guiding *me* wisely, and how to take hold of folly, until I could see what good there is for the sons of men to do under heaven the few years of their lives. <sup>4</sup> I enlarged my works: I built houses for myself, I planted vineyards for myself; <sup>5</sup> I made gardens and parks for myself and I planted in them all kinds of fruit trees; <sup>6</sup> I made ponds of water for myself from which to irrigate a forest of growing trees. <sup>7</sup> I bought male and female slaves and I had homeborn slaves. Also I possessed flocks and herds larger than all who preceded me in Jerusalem. <sup>8</sup> Also, I collected for myself silver and gold and the treasure of kings and provinces. I provided for myself male and female singers and the pleasures of men-- many concubines. <sup>9</sup> Then I became great and increased more than all who preceded me in Jerusalem. My wisdom also stood by me. <sup>10</sup> All that my eyes desired I did not refuse them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, for my heart was pleased because of all my labor and this was my reward for all my labor. <sup>11</sup> Thus I considered all my activities which my hands had done and the labor which I had exerted, and behold all was vanity and striving after wind and there was no profit under the sun."

- E. As we enter eternity we will immediately see the futility of a life lived without Christ.
1. All earthly riches will be left behind for others.  
**Psalm 49:10 NAU** - "For he sees *that even* wise men die; The stupid and the senseless alike perish And leave their wealth to others."
  2. We will discover that Christ should have been our greatest treasure but we denied His worth. We will hear the most dreadful of words, "Depart from Me, I never knew you."  
**Mark 8:36-37 NAU** - "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? <sup>37</sup> "For what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"
9. Paul's heart had been captivated by Christ. He had discovered the meaning of his existence—to glorify Christ.  
Paul draws our attention to two realities in **Verse 21**. He speaks of life and he speaks of death. "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain."  
This morning I want us to consider the first.  
What does Paul mean by the statement--"For me to live is Christ."
- I. First of all, when Paul says, "For me to live is Christ" he is describing a Christ-centered life -
- A. A Christ-centered life is a life filled with the recognition that Christ is the source and sum of all things  
**Galatians 2:20 NAU** - "I have been crucified with Christ; and 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 up for me."
    1. The essence of our being rests in Christ as our Creator
    2. We praise Him for every aspect of life and dedicate all to Him  
Thank you for my eyes – may I use them for Thy glory  
Thank you for my ears – may I use them for Thy glory  
May I use my mouth, my tongue, my hands, my feet for Thy glory.
    3. If my very life is the result of Christ in me may my life reflect Him.
  - B. A Christ-centered life is a life full of a desire to be conformed to all that is pleasing to Him
    1. A Christ-centered life seeks to maintain holy appetites – a hunger for the Word of God, for righteousness. It fills us with a desire to be continually changed. We listen to preaching with a desire to be changed.
    2. John Owen: "Some people hear preaching merely in order to have their own ideas confirmed. Others go to pass judgment on the preacher. Only a few prepare themselves to receive the word of God into their hearts."
    3. It fills us with a holy longing – a longing to be delivered from this world of sin, a longing to see our Lord face to face.  
**2 Peter 3:13 NAU** - "But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells."

- C. A Christ-centered life is a life lived with every moment under His watchful eye
1. It is to live in light of eternity. It is to live with an eye upon His judgment seat. Listen to Paul in **Romans 14**  
**Verse 10** - "For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God."  
**Verse 12** - "So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God."
  2. When Paul says in **Verse 20** that he will not be put to shame he is saying that he will not be ashamed as in embarrassment over the Gospel. He told the Romans.  
**Romans 1:16-17 NAU** - "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."  
Paul boldly faced his opponents with confidence because he stood with Christ as his focus.
  3. Oh that we would live every moment with our eyes upon Christ!  
"For me to live is Christ."

- II. Second, when Paul said, "For me to live is Christ" he was recognizing his life under God's Divine purpose. The Christian must be driven by a sense of purpose
- 1 Corinthians 9:24-26 NAU** - "Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but *only* one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. <sup>25</sup> Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then *do it* to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. <sup>26</sup> Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air"
- A. Some athletes train their entire life for a single event
    1. Their goal is clear – nothing is allowed to interfere
    2. They maintain a consistent focus
    3. In **1 Cor. 9:26** Paul states that his race is not without aim, not without direction or purpose
  - B. The Christian must maintain a keen sense of purpose – he must maintain an intense focus  
The Christian must live under the reality of eternity
    1. He must keep a proper perspective  
**Philippians 3:20 NAU** - "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;"
    2. We must never become bogged down with trivial matters  
We are in a great spiritual struggle with eternal consequences
      - a. What occupies your attention? What directs your life?  
What do you consider as being of the greatest importance?
      - b. What occupies your time?
    3. Too often Christians go from day to day without a sense of purpose, no clear direction. Life just passes by with no plan.
  - C. What about the work of the Kingdom?
    1. What about reaching lost souls for Christ?
    2. What about laboring for the good of the church?
    3. This is the age of labor. This is the day of service. We are servants of Christ and of one another.  
Do you see yourself as a servant?

- D. Is Jesus the focus of your life? Are you God centered – Theo Centric
1. This is in contrast to being egocentric or self-centered  
The self-centered man is motivated chiefly by the desire to serve himself and satisfy his own needs, wants, desires
  2. The Christ-centered man centers his whole life upon Christ. He sees the purpose of his life as glorifying Christ. This was Paul’s heart.  
**Philippians 1:20-21 NAU** - "according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but *that* with all boldness, Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. <sup>21</sup> For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain."
  3. Jesus stated it as a heart issue.  
**Matthew 6:21 NAU** - "for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."
    - a. For Paul, Christ was his chief interest – his highest pursuit
    - b. His greatest desire was to be closer to Christ
    - c. He committed all that he had to Christ  
**1 Corinthians 2:2 NAU** - "For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

#### Conclusion:

1. For Paul, his life was consumed with Jesus – “For me to live is Christ”  
Everything was about Christ. His chief goal was to promote the glory of Christ.
  - A. Paul wrote in **Romans 14**  
**Romans 14:8 NAU** - "for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's."
  - B. John the Baptist’s words are boundless  
**John 3:30** – “He must increase, but I must decrease.”
2. To say “For me to live is Christ” is to declare that the entirety of our life is about Christ.
  - A. What is your hope in life or death? Upon what do you rest your salvation? Is it Christ alone?
  - B. To declare “For me to live is Christ” is to declare Christ’s hold upon your life.  
This is salvation—Christ’s hold upon our lives.  
Spurgeon: "Remember, sinner, it is not thy hold of Christ that saves thee-it is Christ; it is not thy joy in Christ that saves thee-it is Christ; it is not even faith in Christ, though that is the instrument-it is Christ's blood and merits; therefore, look not to thy hope, but to Christ, the source of thy hope; look not to thy faith, but to Christ, the author and finisher of thy faith; and if thou doest that, ten thousand devils cannot throw thee down."
3. When Christ is at the center; when we can say, “For me to live is Christ” then our life is about glorifying Him in everything. The factory worker glorifies Christ in his work. Mom’s and Dad’s glorify Christ as the nurture and train up their children. The teacher glorifies Christ as he instructs his students. All is about Jesus, whether in work or recreation. “For me to live is Christ.”
4. Paul is saying, “As long as I am alive I will glorify Christ.”  
This is a joyous prospect. This is a life well spent.