

Lesson Notes: Philippians 1:20-26 (NIV based)

READ: Philippians 1:20-26, with vv.18-19 for context

v.20

Paul "will in no way be ashamed" of what?

- - That Paul will not be ashamed to speak the gospel, even under the threat or certainty of incurring beatings or death for doing so.
- - "Sufficient courage" is required to speak about Christ when in situations where there is a real threat or certainty of incurring beatings or death for doing so.

What does Paul imply here about the fortitude of his faith?

- - For Paul, violent opposers of Christ can inflict torturous physical harm upon his body, but his faith will not waver - no matter what kinds and quantities of torture they inflict upon him, even unto his death.

What reason does Paul cite here as an additional motivating basis for firmly holding this martyr complex?

- - That Christ will be both proclaimed and exalted within any physical torture or suffering Paul will incur.
- - And if no physical torture occurs upon Paul, then Christ will still be both proclaimed and exalted through Paul and his life.

v.21

What is Paul saying about his perspective on life and death as a servant of Christ?

Verse-by-verse, describe the line of reasoning that he uses. And what is the final conclusion he draws from this line of reasoning?

- - That there is value in both his continuing to live and contrarily in the termination of his life.
- - For Paul, to live is to exalt Christ (v.20), which is joy and blessing for Paul (vv.18d-19).
- - And similarly for Paul, to die for Christ is to exalt Christ (v.20), which is a gain of even more joy and blessing for Paul.

v.22

- - But yet, if Paul goes on living, then he will engage in doing more ministry work, and this labor will produce much fruit or successes at proclaiming Christ and contributing to the building of God's Kingdom.

- - The analytic conclusion then is that both of these paths possess the potential for the gaining of more joy and blessing for Paul, perhaps so equally compelling that Paul is having difficulty determining which one he wants to occur more.

v.23

- - Thereupon being torn in making this determination, Paul further reasons that ultimately the best state of existence clearly is to "be with Christ" in heaven.

v.24

- - But yet, for the benefit of the Philippian saints, it is "more necessary" that Paul "remain in the body" so that he can minister to them.

v.25

- - Paul is convinced that he will remain alive in order to continue ministering to the Philippian saints, helping them to "progress" in their faith and in their "joy in the faith".
v.26

- - And by remaining in this life to help the Philippian saints to grow in their faith, Paul is wanting that their joy may become abundant and overflowing "exultation and glorifying in Christ Jesus". (AMP)

So what is Paul saying his ultimate priority is within this pondering of whether it is better as a servant of Christ to be alive or to dead?

What is your ultimate priority as you live in this life?

Who and/or what do you live for? And why? What are you wanting to see become achieved during your time in this life for that priority person or thing which you are living for?

Today, do we see people who are willing to suffer on behalf of the spiritual growth of others, even to the extent of ministering to others without any reciprocal financial support or contributions? How do you respond to these selfless ministering people?

MAIN POINT: What would you say is the main point in these verses?

IMPORTANT SUB-POINTS: What are some other important points God is making here in these verses?

APPLICATIONS: What applications can you think of for how we should respond to the concepts in these verses?

PERSONALIZED APPLICATIONS: From these verses, what do you think God wants you to learn, or know, or remember, or put into effect in your life? How are you going to do that?

Works Cited:

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