

July 13, 2014

Victory Over Death

Philippians 1:19-26

INTRODUCTION:

Our focus during the church service is

- to praise God through song,
- to remember during communion what he did for us by sending his Son for our sins,
- to encourage each other in our faith,
- and to look at the Word to mature in our Godly wisdom so we can make the correct decisions in life.

All Stand and Read Scripture

Philippians 1:19-26

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

¹⁹ for I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, ²⁰ 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.

²¹ For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. ²² But if *I am* to live *on* in the flesh, this *will mean* fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose. ²³ But I am hard-pressed from both *directions*, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for *that* is very much better; ²⁴ yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake. ²⁵ Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith, ²⁶ so that your proud confidence in me may abound in Christ Jesus through my coming to you again.

Prayer

Paul, by example of his life, shows us how we should think and work for Christ. He put Christ first in everything. We know that when we accepted Christ as our lord and savior, we subjected ourselves to Him. We turned away from worldly ways and started a new life in Christ. If you are a true believer in Jesus Christ, it will radically change your life. You cannot be like everyone else in the world. You must be radically different. You are following a course of life that is totally

different from what we see in the news, our neighborhood, the workplace, and with many of our friends and relatives. The world does not understand it.

All of us will eventually die if Christ does not return first.

This morning I would like to talk about how we can know that we are going to die and not be fearful of our death. We can look at death as the **finish line** to our **victory over death**.

We are not to be in fear of death. The world is terrified of death. They do everything that they can possibly do to avoid death.

Why? It is because of the uncertainty of what happens after death.

If you were to ask people about what happens after death, you would get many answers.

- Some people believe that you simply cease to exist.
- Others believe in reincarnation. Your spirit returns to be in another person.

We do not know when we will die, but I want to tell you that you do not need to fear death if you are in Christ. Once you conquer the **fear of death**, you will encounter the **death of fear** in your life.

One thing I love about Paul is that he had this concept down. He was not afraid of death. Why? He had a confidence in Jesus Christ. This life is not all that there is. We will all be changed to eternal beings when Christ returns.

ILLUSTRATION:

Life and death is a reality for each of us. Most of us will be told at some point in our life by a doctor, a nurse, or someone, that you have contracted a deadly disease or have experienced a very serious injury and you are probably going to die. Some of us may die quickly and not go through it, but many of us will.

Will you be able to look death right in the face and rejoice without fear?

This morning I would like to consider **three mindsets** we must have in order to find **victory over death**.

BODY:

I. Seek Wisdom through the Spirit.

Last Tuesday, in Bible study, we talked about the three parts of man (Body, Soul, and Spirit).

- The **Body** is a perishable part that experiences the five senses of “Sight”, “Smell”, “Hearing”, “Taste”, and “Touch”.
- The **Soul** consists of our “Conscience”, “Memory”, “Reason”, and the “Affections”.

- The **Spirit** consists of spiritual understanding such as “Faith”, “Hope”, “Prayer”, and “Worship”.

Man was created by God in His image.

Genesis 1:26

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

²⁶ Then God said, “Let Us make man in **Our** image, according to **Our** likeness;

Man was made after the image of God. We know that God, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are three entities, yet they are one.

I would like to read two scriptures that clearly state that man also has three parts.

1 Thessalonians 5:23

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

²³ Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 4:12

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

¹² For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Life after death cannot be understood without the correct understanding of the nature of man.

When Adam and Eve ate of the Tree of Good and Evil, sin separated us from God and the window of the Spirit within us was closed, if you will. When we accept Christ as our Savior, we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and we begin a new life led by the Spirit within us.

1 Corinthians 2:12-14

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, ¹³ which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, ¹⁴ combining spiritual *thoughts* with spiritual *words*.

¹⁴ But ^{1b}a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually ^{1c}appraised.

So, it is through the Spirit within us, that we can know God's ways. We must **Seek Wisdom Through the Spirit.**

It is through God's Word and the leading of the Spirit, that we can understand that everyone will live eternally. When Christ returns in His glory, our bodies will be changed from a corruptible body to a new eternal body. Where we spend our eternity will be based on our fruits and the grace of Christ.

Paul was given extra life after this imprisonment. He realized that it was for a reason. Every day is a gift from God. Every day has a reason for it. As for Paul, our focus and passion must be on Jesus Christ.

Paul, said if I do not die here in prison, then I am going to come to Philippi and help you. He says, "**to live is Christ and to die is gain**". It didn't matter to Paul. He is torn between the two. Actually, for Paul, to die would be better. He would be going to a paradise that God has created for him and his suffering on earth would be over.

When we lose focus and start living for ourselves. We use our time and resources for ourselves. Then if there is anything left over, I will "**consider**" giving it to the Lord. "I am going to use what I have for **ME** first". That is a self-centered life.

We live in a world that is seeking "instant gratification". "**I want what I want, and I want it now**". **The commercial says, "It is my money and I want it NOW!"** When you experience that way of life, you begin to realize that there is emptiness in your life. You realize that it did not satisfy me as I thought it would. So we want more. We try to fill this vacuum that is within us. But, only God provides that. You can push possessions, prestige, and things into that vacuum, but it will never satisfy. Only one thing will fill that vacuum and that is a passion for Jesus Christ. **To love Him with your heart, mind, soul, and strength and to love others as yourself.** That begins to fill that vacuum in your life.

We should be **Seeking Wisdom Through the Spirit** to serve Him and give Him the honor and glory. "**To live is Christ.**"

II. Focus on an Eternal Fruitful Labor.

You don't want to miss the opportunity to make a difference for eternity.

²¹ For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. ²² But if *I am to live on* in the flesh, this *will mean* fruitful labor for me;

When your focus is on making a difference for eternity, you have the joy of knowing that your life counts for something. You have a purpose. You are fulfilling what God has called you to do in your life.

The question is, “Are you producing fruit?” Our “fruit” should be a byproduct of our faith in Christ.

Luke 6:43-49

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

⁴³ For there is no good tree which produces bad fruit, nor, ⁴⁴ on the other hand, a bad tree which produces good fruit. ⁴⁴ For each tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they pick grapes from a briar bush. ⁴⁵ The good man out of the good ⁴⁶ treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil *man* out of the evil *treasure* brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from ⁴⁷ that which fills his heart.

Builders and Foundations

⁴⁶ “Why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say? ⁴⁷ Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and ⁴⁸ acts on them, I will show you whom he is like: ⁴⁸ he is like a man building a house, who ⁴⁹ dug deep and laid a foundation on the rock; and when a flood occurred, the ⁵⁰ torrent burst against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. ⁴⁹ But the one who has heard and has not acted *accordingly*, is like a man who built a house on the ground without any foundation; and the ⁵¹ torrent burst against it and immediately it collapsed, and the ruin of that house was great.”

III. Ground Your Faith on the Promises and Power of Christ

We need to consider death, when we plan our life. The unbeliever believes that **“If I live, it is for myself and if I die, that is something to be feared.”** How many billions of dollars are spent here in America just to try to avoid death?

For the believer, death is not to be feared. When we die, it is a step up. It is far better. It is gain. It is not a death wish.

John 14:1-3

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

Jesus Comforts His Disciples

¹⁴ “Do not let your heart be troubled; ¹⁵ believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. ³ 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.

What a wonderful promise that God has made to us!

1 Corinthians 15:50-58

New International Version (NIV)

⁵⁰ I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹ Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— ⁵² in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. ⁵³ For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. ⁵⁴ When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.”^[a]

⁵⁵ “Where, O death, is your victory?
Where, O death, is your sting?”^[b]

⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁵⁸ Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

Romans 8:16-18

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

¹⁶ The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him* so that we may also be glorified with *Him*.

¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

I am glad that God has told us as much as He has about Judgment Day.

- That He is going to judge the world.
- Everyone will give an account of their life before Him
- He is going to reward each person based upon what he has done whether good or bad.

I am thankful that He has told us these things and that He has given us what we need to prepare for it and be ready.

There is nothing better for anyone to do than to get ready for Judgment Day. Nobody has anything better to do.

It is very tempting to want to participate in the pleasure of sin. Satan has made it very enjoyable. There is nothing worldly that we could have or enjoy that is worth what you will have to exchange for it. You must consider the eternal VALUE!

On Judgment Day we would be willing to exchange **ANYTHING** in order to be glorified together with Christ! But, then it will be too late. What we want to hear on Judgment Day is “Well done, my good and faithful servant!” The time of our salvation is NOW!

CONCLUSION:

If you follow God’s lead and use every situation in your life to serve Christ, you, like Paul, can confidently face death and have assurance that “to die is gain”!

For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

If there is anyone here today who has not accepted Christ as your Lord and Savior, he is waiting for you to surrender yourself to him. In Acts, Peter was preaching to the Jews on the day of Pentecost. He said in Acts 2:36-38...

Acts 2:36-38

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

³⁶ Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified.”

³⁷ Now when they heard *this*, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?” ³⁸ Peter *said* to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

We are also here with open arms, if you would like to identify yourself as part of this family of God in the Greenwood Christian church.

The Family of God

I’m so glad I’m a part of the family of God.
I’ve been washed in the fountain, cleansed by His blood!
Joint heirs with Jesus as we travel this sod,
For I’m part of the family, the family of God.