

Evotional

Date: 15th October 2006 (pm).
Speaker: Neil Durling.
Message title: “A life and death situation.”



Bible passage: Philippians 1:21:

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

The message in brief:

Paul was the chief persecutor of the church until his dramatic conversion experience on the road to Damascus (Acts 9). He was then hidden for 3 years by the church before he began his missionary journeys, earning money as a tent maker. Paul has written this letter, whilst under house arrest in Rome, to one of his favourite churches which he started through a lady called Lydia (Acts 16). In the first chapter Paul battles with a tension in his life just as the Philippian Christians were battling with the tension of following Jesus instead of worshipping the Roman Emperor.

The verse that shines forth in this passage is verse 21. Paul writes:

“For to me, to live is Christ”:

Is life really all about Christ? For Paul the answer is “yes”. He wants to personally experience Jesus but, just as importantly, he wants to magnify (share) Jesus to the prison guards through his life in chains.

“To die is gain”:

Excuse me Paul; is dying really a gain and, moreover, isn't it dangerous to say that kind of thing? Paul's answer again is “yes” because he will experience Jesus fully and possibly magnify him greatly in death. This is a powerful statement in light of the Old Testament's “vague” view of the afterlife (it's hardly ever mentioned). So what is the gain? To be “with” (1 Thes. 4:14) and “in” Jesus (1 Cor. 15:18). Death cannot separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:38).

“And”:

Paul uses two Greek words that sound similar: Christ = Christos. Gain = Kerdos. He seems to be saying that whether he live or dies he wants to personally experience Jesus and magnify him through his life or death. We would be wise to do the same in life, especially in the places where we “feel imprisoned”.

A question:

Death is not the end: Why isn't this on the evening news and why doesn't it impact our lives more than it does?

A prayer:

Father God, thank you that I can experience life with Jesus now and magnify him. Please help me to do the same when the end comes. Amen