

# Christ is Bigger than our Circumstance

Philippians 1:12-26

Trust in the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ \_\_\_\_\_. (vs.12-18)

<sup>[12]</sup> I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, <sup>[13]</sup> so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. <sup>[14]</sup> And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

<sup>[15]</sup> Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will. <sup>[16]</sup> The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. <sup>[17]</sup> The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. <sup>[18]</sup> What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice.

It is \_\_\_\_\_ than the seeming \_\_\_\_\_ of our circumstance.

The Gospel is more \_\_\_\_\_ than the malicious \_\_\_\_\_ of our enemies.

Live in the \_\_\_\_\_ that comes from a life determined to \_\_\_\_\_ Christ. (vs.18-26)

Yes, and I will rejoice, <sup>[19]</sup> for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, <sup>[20]</sup> as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. <sup>[21]</sup> For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. <sup>[22]</sup> If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. <sup>[23]</sup> I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. <sup>[24]</sup> But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. <sup>[25]</sup> 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 in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again. (ESV)

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April 26, 2020

**Open:** What sorts of things have frustrated you in the last week?

**Read:** Philippians 1:12-26

1. From what you see in this passage, what reasons might Paul have had to complain about his situation? Why isn't he upset or frustrated (v. 12)?
2. Paul says that his imprisonment "for Christ" (v. 13) has prompted others to become more "confident in the Lord" (v. 14). How have you been encouraged by the testimony of other believers? Are there specific areas in your life in which you hope to serve as an encouragement and model for other believers?
3. How would you compare the motives of the two groups in verses 15-18? Why isn't Paul more concerned about the first group? Can you think of similar circumstances that we face today?
4. When have you been critical of the methods or motives of others who have shared the Gospel? In light of Paul's comments in verses 15-18, what advice might Paul give to you? When (if ever) might it be right to be concerned about others' methods or motives for sharing the Gospel?
5. From 19-21 how would you describe Paul's goal in life? How is Paul successful in his goal if he is put in prison? If he is killed? If he is freed? How should Paul's perspective shape our own attitude as we consider the challenges that we face in life?
6. In assessing his situation, Paul says that to "die is gain" (v. 21) and that his "desire is to depart and be with Christ" (v. 23). What reasons would you give for how a believer can say such things? How should fully embracing this truth impact the choices we make while we are still alive?
7. One reason Paul values staying alive is that it will allow him to labor for the good of others (v. 25). What are some ways your life leads to "progress and joy in the faith" in others? What are some ways we could potentially do this better?

**Apply:** In light of what Paul says in this passage, what advice might Paul give to you about how you can prioritize proclaiming and honoring Christ in your current situation?

**Pray:** Pray that we (individually, in our family, in our small group, and in our church as a whole) would see that pursuing the glory of Christ will bring us more joy than anything else ever could.

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