

**“FOR TO ME, TO LIVE IS CHRIST, AND TO DIE IS GAIN”**

**Phil. 1:21-23**

I. WHAT DOES IT MEAN “TO LIVE IS CHRIST”?

A. Paul Equates Living as Co-Extensive With Christ.

1. The only real dead are those outside of Christ’s dominion.
  - a. The Death of Sin into which all mankind has fallen.
  - b. The Death of Ignorance.
  - c. Grim and bleak Death of Fear.
  - d. The Death of Despair.
    - (i) Beyond the pale of His Sovereignty all men are dead.
    - (ii) How pitiful and helpless is mankind apart from Grace.
2. Paul is the supreme example “to live is Christ” because:
  - a. His was a light that emanated Christ to dark Greeco-Roman world.
  - b. He demonstrated Christ in himself.
    - (i) Gal. 2:20: “I have been crucified with Christ; 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 for me.”
    - (ii) Col. 1:27-29: “To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.”

Note: “We are the only Bible the careless world will read,  
We are the Sinner’s Gospel; We are the Scoffer’s Creed;  
We are the Lord’s last message, given in deed and word,  
What if the type be crooked; What if the type be blurred.”

- (c) He Professed this Christ in him to the world in his day.

(i) Eph. 3:8: “To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.”

(ii) We see this great man as:

A Cosmopolitan.

A Persistent Persecutor.

A Profound Penitent.

A Powerful Preacher.

A Patient Prisoner.

B. In the Second Place: It means to understand the meaning of history.

1. It is to see the Providential Hand of God in the affairs of man.

2. It is to see the Majestic Scheme of God in redeeming fallen man.

a. Eph. 3:14-19: “For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints which is the width and length and depth and height -- to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”

3. Thirdly, “To live is Christ” means to properly evaluate the worth of man.

a. Christ showed His evaluation by going to the cross for man.

b. Apostles died to proclaim to lost mankind the glorious gospel.

c. A proper evaluation of man would solve many of the world’s problems.

(i) The Bible teaches the worth and dignity of the individual.

4. Fourthly, Christ in us gives purpose to every act of our existence.

- a. Phil. 3:7-14: “But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. But indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”
  - b. Every menial task has meaning if it is for Christ and His cause.
5. Fifthly, “To Live is Christ” meant separation from the world.
- a. Phil. 2:5: “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.”
  - b. 2 Cor. 6:17: “Therefore ‘Come out from among them and be separate’ says the Lord. ‘Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.’”
  - c. Rom. 12:2: “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. That you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”
    - (i) The world had no claim on Christ and Paul although they were in it. They maintained a separateness that all must maintain to possess Christ.

## II. WHAT DOES PAUL MEAN WHEN HE SAYS THAT “TO DIE IS GAIN?”

- A. The word “Gain” κέρδος Old word for any gain, profit, interest on money.
  - 1. “At death, Paul would cash in both principal and interest and so have more than when living.”
- B. To be with Christ “is far better.” πολλῶ μᾶλλον κρείσσον  
<sub>3</sub> is by much more better.

1. Robertson calls this a double comparative. Lightfoot a triple.

### III. WHAT IS DEATH?

- A. It brings earthly life to an end.
- B. It is a separation of body and the soul. (Eccl. 12:7)
- C. It is a transition from Time to Eternity.
  1. It is the swinging door into the Lord's presence.
    - a. Living or dead, we are the Lord's. Why should we then care whether we live or die?
    - b. Christ is the Lord over both the Living and the Dead.

Note: The two billion now living is only a paltry sum of the masses of the dead. So vast is their number that they can be counted only by the infinite mind of God.

### IV. WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS OF DEATH FOR THE CHILD OF GOD?

- A. He joins a select group - The Redeemed of all the ages.
  1. Abel, Noah, Abraham, Elijah, Moses, Peter, Paul.
  2. What a day of rejoicing that will be!
- B. He rests from his earthly tasks and responsibilities.
- C. He is conscious and happy - He has all his rational faculties.
  1. Seven faculties of rationality are listed in Luke 16.
  2. Only the body sleeps in the dust at death.
- D. He has won the battle against sin.
- E. He has entered into a richer, fuller life with God.
  1. Phil. 1:23: "For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better."
- F. He awaits the Master's invitation to enter into the joys of Heaven.

V. WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS DEATH FOR THE LIVING?

A. We cannot bring the dead back - We can go to them.

1. David in 2 Sam. 12:23.

B. Life is Uncertain. Death is Sure. Eternity is long.

1. James 4:13-14: "Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit'; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away."

C. Mankind must prepare to meet death.

1. 1 Sam. 20:3: "Then David took an oath again, and said, 'Your father certainly knows that I have found favor in your eyes, and he says, 'Do not let Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved.' But truly, as the Lord lives and as your soul lives, there is but a step between me and death.'"

2. We should make each day of our lives the best.

3. We should point our faces toward Heaven.

4. We should run the race with patience.

a. Heb. 12:1: "Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us."

D. Our influence continues after we pass from the scene.

1. Heb. 11:4: "By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks."

2. "I should be able His death to die  
If I were but able His life to live."

"Life is real, life is earnest  
and the grave is not its goal,  
Dust thou art, to dust returnest  
was not spoken of the soul."