



# CAPITOL COMMISSION™

## To Live is Christ

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**The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians** (60-62 A.D.), Paul is imprisoned (one of four Prison Letters, the others being Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon) in Rome addressing the established Christian (mostly Gentile) church in Philippi, the first founded by Paul in Europe. In this letter, Paul, having a fondness for the people of the church of Philippi, because of their faithfulness and generous nature, wanted to thank them for their gifts, letting them know why he was returning Epaphroditus to them, sharing his situation in prison, urging unity in church, and warning them against false teachers. While false doctrine had started to plague many of the churches, he wanted to provide encouragement for practical living and support for sound doctrine. While much of the letter deals with spiritual growth, the tone throughout is that there is joy in Christ and Paul rejoices in Christ being proclaimed regardless of his circumstance. (Php 1:19-26 NASB)

*“... for I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, 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. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.” (1:19-21)*

**Putting Christ first.** Paul shares that regardless of his circumstances he finds joy and ultimate deliverance in Christ. He was in prison and in chains; yet he considered this circumstance worthy as a bond-servant of Christ and that the gospel was shared with Caesar’s household and the whole praetorian guard. Additionally, he rejoiced that through his imprisonment example other believers became bold to share the gospel. His enemies, while they preached the gospel, envied him and caused him strife; yet he rejoiced that the gospel was preached, Christ was proclaimed and he didn’t care who got the credit.

Paul understood that he could die as a result of his circumstances; yet he rejoiced that if he lived he lives in Christ and if he died he gains because he lives eternally with Christ. Paul joyfully put Christ first in every circumstance earnestly expecting and hoping that he would be delivered by and to Christ. Paul struggled with his earthly purpose and his heavenly home.

*“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. But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better; yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith, so that your proud confidence in me may abound in Christ Jesus through my coming to you again.”(1:22-26)*

**The need on earth and the desire for heaven.** Paul shared that he was ‘hard-pressed’ with his desire to be dead and gone from the world and fleshly problems and be with Christ; yet he understood that his remaining would be better for the believers and their faith journey. He was ‘convinced’ that he should be in the circumstances that he was in for the greater good and found his joy in Christ in all that he did.

### For Your Consideration:

- Do you put Christ first in every circumstance?
- Would it be a surprise to people that you find joy in Christ?
- Do you have a desire to be with the Lord; yet understand that He has work for you here in the world?

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### BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS: SESSION OR HEARING WEDNESDAYS AT 7:30AM, STATEHOUSE RM. 44

STAFF, LOBBYISTS AND CAPITOL SQUARE COMMUNITY: WEDNESDAYS AT NOON, STATEHOUSE RM.44