



CAPITOL COMMISSION

Hope That Cannot Be Disappointed—Philippians 1.19-21

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PHILIPPIANS: CULTIVATING A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE AT THE CAPITOL

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INTRODUCTION

Paul held to a hope which could not be disappointed. Through his earthly suffering, God allowed him to see the progress of the gospel. Now, not knowing whether his current imprisonment would end in release or execution, Paul is sure of one thing. Christ will be magnified through either outcome.

You face an uncertain future yourself. And you are no stranger to disappointment. Dashed hopes and derailed dreams are the common fare of this life. We are prone to hedge our bets against future disappointments—we insulate ourselves from risk. “Don’t get your hopes up,” we continually tell ourselves.

Only God offers us hope that cannot be disappointed. When we embrace the life identified with Christ and the advance of the gospel we can never get our hopes up too much. God will accomplish His will, not only in the world and human history in a general sense, but specifically in my life and in yours.

Philippians 1.19-21—For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance, through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

I. HOPE’S CHANNEL (19)

Hope flows freely through the channel of the supplication of the saints and the supply of the Holy Spirit.

THE SUPPLICATION OF THE SAINTS

In at least 48 places throughout Paul’s writings he compels believers to pray. He understood that a steady stream of hope

flows to a believer through the channel dug out by the prayers of others. Our hope is renewed daily as we step to the banks of this stream and draw out the hope that refreshes our souls. You and I have found hope in Christ through the prayers of the saints and we have the privilege of carrying it along to the next generation of believers through our prayers.

THE SUPPLY OF THE SPIRIT

Along with the prayers of the saints, the Spirit becomes the means through which the hope that does not disappoint flows to us. Assuredly, any hope that derives from ourselves or from this temporal world will disappoint us in the end. Indomitable hope is not something we can manufacture in our emotions or extract from our circumstances—it is a product of the leadership of the Spirit in our lives.

Paul speaks here of the Holy Spirit. Jesus promised His disciples that the Father would send a Helper to empower them in living the Christian life. Still today, no matter how dire our circumstances, the Spirit comes along side us with strength, comfort, and wisdom. His Spirit abundantly supplies you and me with all that our current situation requires.

II. HOPE’S CHARACTER (20)

Though Paul doesn’t know the details of how his current predicament will be resolved, the character of his hope is seen in its intensity and its focus.

INTENSITY

Paul piles on the terms to express the magnitude of his hope. The first term paints a picture of a scout craning his neck forward and straining to see an approaching convoy. This is active rather than passive expectancy. It indicates an intentional, focused scanning of the horizon.

Paul states that his earnest expectation and hope is that in nothing, not in one thing, not in one single way will he be disappointed. Instead, with all—not some—boldness, he

BIBLE STUDIES (MEALS PROVIDED)

LEGISLATORS ONLY: WEDNESDAY @ LUNCH AT THE AUSTIN CLUB (11:30A.M. OR UPON ADJOURNMENT, WHICHEVER IS EARLIER)
OR THURSDAYS @ 7:30 A.M. IN THE MEMBERS’ LOUNGE (E2.1002)

CAPITOL COMMUNITY (ALL ARE WELCOME): FRIDAYS @ 8:00A.M. IN THE MEMBERS’ LOUNGE (E2.1002)

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hopes. As at all times in the past, not just occasionally, he knows that right now his confidence is secured in Christ.

FOCUS

Paul's hope is focused in one thing—Christ must be magnified in his body. This word means to make large and brings to mind Christ's warnings regarding the Pharisees. Jesus exposed their desire to be seen by others as worthy of great honor. "They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the hems of their garments." These religious symbols were made large to draw attention to the Pharisees themselves rather than to magnify God. Paul once shared in the guilt of the Pharisees before his encounter with Christ. Now he is intensely focused on magnifying Christ alone.

It is likely that most of us have used both magnifying glasses and field glasses or binoculars for magnification. Magnifying glasses make something that is small look larger so that we can see it. Jesus Christ seems very small to an unbeliever, the life of a Christian can enlarge it in the view of the unbeliever.

Field glasses or binoculars magnify something far away. It doesn't matter that the object is exponentially larger than glasses themselves, and make it look near so that we can see it. Christ is much larger than you, yet through the lens of your life, Christ can be brought into the clear view of others.

Paul understands that his body is the lens through which others will see Christ. He will magnify Christ through his life if released or his death if executed as a witness for Christ. Christ will be made large, whether by life or by death.

III. HOPE'S CERTAINTY (21)

Paul's hope is certain. Christ will be magnified in his life regardless of how his circumstances may change. Our hope in Christ holds the same certainty. Christ will be magnified in our lives as we walk with Him regardless of circumstances.

TO LIVE IS CHRIST

In his letter to the church at Galatia Paul makes it clear that he has already died to living for himself. "I am crucified with Christ, it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me (2.20)." To the church at Rome he writes, "or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?" He goes on to discuss the profound implications of the believer's union with Christ in His death.

Like Paul, you and I are like dead men walking. We no longer live unto ourselves. Our lives belong to Christ. Our life is not lived to suit our purposes, but His alone.

TO DIE IS GAIN

Paul's deepest yearning is to know Christ. In chapter three Paul makes it clear that He views all things as loss in comparison with the knowledge of Christ. He recognizes that in this life we know only in part...we see in a mirror dimly. Death, however, brings the believer into the presence of the Lord. Paul longs to be face to face with Christ his Savior.

CONCLUSION

The uncertainty of life works itself out in the unraveling of our daily lives. One day brings welcome developments without guarantee that the next day will not bring great hardships. Life is a process of continual adjustment to the new normal. But we can find a secure place to fix our hopes.

Does the uncertainty of tomorrow make you anxious? Do you fear some calamity will come and steal away your peace and happiness? These may be indications that you are not appropriating the hope available to you as a believer.

It may be that you are living as though your life is your own. Paul had no concern for his life. He was obsessed with making Christ large. He was prepared to die if necessary to magnify his Savior. What a hopeful perspective! You and I are to have the same hope-filled perspective.