

**DATE OF MESSAGE:** September 11, 2016

**MESSAGE TITLE:** It's All About Jesus

**SCRIPTURE:** Philippians 1:18-26

### **KEY TRUTH**

As Paul contemplates the possibility of death, he reminds us that life and death are all about Jesus.

### **GETTING STARTED**

In January 1956, a tragic but inspiring story appeared in headlines around the world. Five young men and their families had gone to the remote jungles of Ecuador to bring the Gospel to the primitive Aucas Indians. But the Aucas did not accept the missionaries or their teachings and savagely murdered them, including Jim Elliott. Elisabeth Elliott, her daughter, and Rachel Saint courageously returned to live among the Aucas to continue the mission work previously begun. As a result, many in the tribe came to faith in Christ. Jim is credited with saying, *"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose."* Compare Jim's quote to Paul's comment in Philippians 1:21. And check out a short documentary film about Jim and Elisabeth Elliott entitled *Through the Gates of Splendor* available on RightNow media.

### **OBSERVATION**

*Which option, life or death, does Paul personally prefer?*

*Is it strange for Paul to muse over death and life in this passage? Why or why not?*

*Why does Paul feel it's more necessary for him to do the opposite (24-25)?*

*What does he believe God will choose for him (verse 25)?*

*What does Paul hope to accomplish by remaining with the Philippians?*

### **APPLICATION**

*Describe how your faith in Jesus has made a difference in your attitude on death and dying? Who in your life has demonstrated a strong faith in Jesus even while facing death?*

*The title of Sunday's message is "It's All About Jesus." How can we glorify God in all things, including our deaths?*

### **PRAYER**

*Lord, I want to be able to say as Paul did that 'to live is Christ and to die is gain.' What a courageous statement of faith! Nothing can stop someone who has that kind of conviction and faith. Please stir up in our hearts the holy desire to fully honor you in life and in death. Help us put aside our own preferences and desires to serve the risen Jesus wherever He might lead.*

### **SHARE POINT**

Read and review the application questions. Share with someone in your life how God's Word is changing you into a growing disciple. Encourage that person to do the same. That person could be a family member, a friend, a co-worker or a neighbor.

### **COMMENTARY NOTES**

1:19-26 Paul expresses the grounds of his confidence that he will be released from prison. He assures the Philippians that he believes he will remain alive to minister to them.

1:19 Paul who has prayed for the Philippians, now solicits their prayers for deliverance. Some argue that his use of the word deliverance meant release from prison, while other Bible students maintain that Paul meant deliverance in terms of eternal salvation. It seems likely that Paul intentionally left some ambiguity here, in light of the eternal focus in the verses that follow. The tension between temporal deliverance and eternal salvation is, in fact, evident throughout this passage. Although Paul seemed to have alluded to his temporal deliverance, clearly his longing for eternal salvation is 'far better'. In this regard, Paul alludes to Job 13:13-18 in this passage where Job clearly speaks of his eternal destiny. Paul wanted the Philippians to know that even if his expected deliverance from prison fails to materialize, and he is executed, he will still be 'saved' to eternal life by God.

1:20 The crucial thing for Paul is not life or death. It is maintaining his faithful witness to Christ. the phrase 'or by death' indicates that Paul hopes to honor Christ even in the way he eventually dies.

1:21 Paul's life is not a matter of seeking his own comfort or advancement. It is all about seeking the advancement of Christ's kingdom: to live is tantamount to serving Christ. In fact, to die should be seen as gain because it would mean that Paul would be freed from his trouble-filled life on earth to rejoice in Christ's presence.

1:22-26 In light of verse 21, Paul is hard pressed as to which outcome he should desire. Being with Christ now would be more attractive for him, while remaining alive would enable him to help the Philippians further on their own spiritual journey. Since Paul knows that the way of Jesus is the way of service, he is convinced that his own preferences will be put aside so that he can remain and continue with the Philippians for their progress and joy in the faith. Paul is not merely musing on his own crisis; he is giving the Philippians a model of service-driven life.

### **SOURCES CONSULTED**

ESV Study Bible

Serendipity Bible for Personal and Small Group Study