

To Live is Christ, But to Die is Gain

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Date: 27 October 2024

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[0 : 00] Amen. Thank you. God bless each of you. It's good to be here.

Good to be together and to worship together. This morning I just was so blessed too with the songs and what was shared.

The testimony. And just for the goodness of God, confirmation from God that He is good, He is faithful, and I was inspired this morning already.

Very much so. We could have just kept on singing. There was a few songs there that just really spoke to me and just the one, I was going to bring my books up here, but I forgot, but the one about, I know whom I have believed.

There's a lot of things we don't know, but we can know whom we have believed. And that He is able to keep that, which I've committed. I thought of our sister and you, Mike, and just a word on that.

[1 : 20] The enemy will come and try to say things like, what if it doesn't last? Or what if it's not real? Or what if, what if? But the same God that saves us, the same God that speaks to us initially and delivers us is the same Jesus that will keep us.

So it's not, you know, if we, because in the past we've walked in our own strength and in our own way, in our own trying to do things ourselves, you know, and now I'm on.

But, that interrupted my thought. But we were, in our past we were doing everything on our own strength, is what I was saying.

And so based on that, it looks impossible. But that's not how it is anymore. We need to rely on the same Jesus that saved us to keep us and to grow us and to sanctify us and to make us more and more like Him into His image.

And, yeah, just the same God that changed us when we first believed will keep us, we cannot continue to be changed on our own, Tony said in his devotional.

[2 : 49] And, that kind of leads right into what I have to share this morning, that we need Him. I need Him.

Not just needed Him, I need Him. Every day, every hour. And, that has just been, really being spoken to me lately.

I believe, yeah, Brother Paul, our brother Paul, Apostle Paul, he said this, these words, he said, for him to live is Christ and to die is gain.

And it was in the context of him struggling to, with the church at, Philipp, Philipian, yeah, Philippi. Thank you.

He was struggling with, you know, I want to leave you. I want to go to Christ. I want to die. I want to just get out of these bonds. And, he was in bonds, in prison, much of his life actually.

[4 : 00] But, he said, he was struggling between that and he also knew, but, but you all need me. You know, you still need me for a while. But, then he ended with the words, you know, for him to live is Christ.

Either way, it's Christ, right? But, if he could die, then it'll be gain, which he died. So, he gained. He won both worlds.

You know, whether, there's a song even that talks about that. We're a winner either way. If we go or if we stay. Right? In Christ.

Only in Christ. To live is Christ. Christ. We want to look at what is, what does that mean to us today?

And how is dying a gain? Humanly speaking, neither of these are possible, but with Christ all things are possible through faith.

[5 : 00] Through faith in the shed blood of the Son of God. Let's turn to Philippians chapter 1. And, I think we'll start in verse 6.

Philippians chapter 1, verse 6. Paul writing here, he says, Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you.

Hallelujah. Did he begin a good work in us? He began that work and he'll finish it. Says he will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

Christ. Are we convinced of this, this morning? I think that's what the Lord wants to impress on our hearts or convince us if we haven't been, that he desires to complete that work.

He didn't just save us and now we're okay. Kind of like what Tony was saying, you know, we just, we fall back into that mindset that I have to live the Christian life now by myself somehow.

[6 : 09] Just, I got to figure it out. Are we convinced this morning that he will continue working in us and he wants to, let's just say he wants to and he will, he is willing if we are.

If we're willing. If I'm willing. Are we trusting Christ? Christ. Here's another question. Are we trusting Christ not only in ourselves for my life, but am I trusting Christ in your life?

Are we trusting Christ in each other? Do we look for that in each other or are we more just, well, that's just how you are, Aaron. I just have to put up with you and I just have to accept that you'll never change.

No. We don't want to do that to each other, right? We accept that God wants to continue to work in all of us and that, you know, as His grace is upon our lives that we change, right?

And so, I know sometimes we look at people, you know, like from my past and somebody might have had a bad habit or just was, had an ugly side if you will.

[7 : 31] Maybe not even saved, maybe saved, but just wasn't living victoriously, whatever, that type of a life. And so, He had made Himself a reputation, he or she.

And then 15 years later, we, that person's name comes up or we see them somewhere and we have this mindset that they're still like that.

and we don't, we don't think about, no, God has changed me. I mean, He wanted to, maybe He changed them. And if not, He still wants to.

But we need to look at each other, church, that way more. Paul said, I would know no man after the flesh, but after the Spirit. So, he wants to know where we're at with God, in other words.

And, and to be changed from glory to glory, we'll get to that some more. But let's try to remember to look at each other that way. If God's changing me, then He's probably changing you too.

[8 : 38] Verse 7, even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, even as, what He's saying is, it's necessary for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart inasmuch as both in my bonds and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace.

For God is my record, how greatly I long after you in the bowels of Jesus Christ. He's longing after them, to be with them.

And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment, that ye may approve things that are excellent, that ye may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God.

Hi listeners, sorry, but about ten minutes of the message got cut out because of some malfunction. Right? But let's just say it was somebody he knew and he's going to just harbor this.

He's just going to, till it becomes hatred. And he didn't deal with it. According to this, he would be walking in darkness. You can put your own experience in there.

[10 : 11] I just thought of that. But when we hate somebody, anybody, sister, brother, we are in darkness and we can't see.

We can't even see where we're going because that darkness has blinded his eyes. I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

I write unto you, fathers, because you have known him that is from the beginning. And then he says, I write unto you, young men, because you have overcome the wicked one.

I write unto you, little children, because you have known the Father. Again, he says in verse 14, I have written unto you, fathers, because you have known him that is from the beginning.

I have written unto you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and you have overcome that wicked one.

[11 : 21] The word of God abideth in you, and has made you a godly man, godly woman, strong character, love of God.

Let's go on and read verse 15. Familiar? We know this chapter, don't we? Verse 15, Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. What is the world to us?

You know, some of us grew up hearing this verse probably every Sunday almost, maybe not, but often, and it was always in our minds the world was out there somewhere.

It was the fancy truck or whatever, the fancy whatever. It was the things that were bright and shining and glittery.

[12:40] That was the world. Things we weren't allowed to have. Am I saying that's not the world? No.

I'm not saying that. But it's more than that is what I'm saying. It's much more than what we thought or what I thought as a young teenager.

You know, if I just have these items in my life and I drive this and I dress like this, then I obviously don't have the world. You see, we could do all that in the flesh.

We didn't need, you know, we just need to narrow it down to what wasn't the world. And we got it. Now we're not worldly.

But it says here, I'm so thankful for the word of God that we can just look at it and just say this is what it is. According to the Bible, this is what it is.

[13:43] It says the lust of the flesh. Wow. That's not really out there now anymore, is it? That's something that is in the heart of man.

The heart of mankind. The lust of the flesh. Things that the flesh desires. That's the world. The lust of the eye.

And then there's that thing of pride. The pride of life. And that could even be the fact that we had all these things separated out so we're not worldly.

But if there's any ounce of pride in how we live or how we're not of the world, we're of the world. According to this.

The pride of life. Just proud that we're better. Proud that we're better than our friend, our neighbor, or whatever. Just a thing that creeps up inside that, you know, it's all about the heart actually.

[14:51] Isn't it? It's all about the heart. I'm not saying that there's not worldly things, but if we love things we shouldn't, desire things we shouldn't desire, those are heart issues.

I remember I didn't like that verse too much because there's a lot of stuff I wanted that I couldn't have. But I didn't have it because it's the world.

And all the while I was so worldly in my heart. And the world passeth away in the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.

Really, that's what we should focus on. That really should be the focus in this passage. The will of God. He that doeth the will of God abideth forever.

Praise the Lord. John here is telling us that if we love these things, then Christ is not our life, but the world is. Dying is not our gain if this is where we're at.

[16:09] And if that's the case, then death would be a horror to us. Thinking of dying would be awful, awful if we love the world.

But if we live for Christ, then death will be great gain like Paul said. Death is his gain. Do you love the world this morning?

Do you have a love in your heart for the things of the world? I think maybe we'll turn back to Philippians chapter 2.

If there be therefore any consolation, in verse 1, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels of mercy, fulfill ye my joy, that you be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord and of one mind.

I believe that we have, probably most of us in here have experienced church life in the past that wasn't maybe one mind, I don't know, you know, just wherever we're from, wherever we've been in the past, we've probably experienced that.

[17:37] we've also experienced, I believe, what it means to be of one accord, of one mind, at least to a degree. God has a larger degree, I think, for myself and for all of us.

I believe there's always more. But, Paul says that, how does he say here, that it's a joy. It's a joy to Him.

Fulfill ye my joy, be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory.

There's those two words again. Nothing. Nothing through strife or vain glory. You know, for self, in other words, lifting up self.

But in lowliness of mind, let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

[18 : 42] In other words, we look out for each other. That's what he's saying. We look after each other. You know, if somebody's struggling, if somebody's having a hard time, then we would all admit sometimes we just need somebody.

Sometimes we need some help. We need prayer. We need strength. We need courage. And we're supposed to look out for each other.

And then in verse 5, let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, the mind of Christ.

Remember, to live for Him is Christ.

to live for Christ. I mean, to live is for Christ. And it says here that He is to live in lowliness of mind.

We'll read on here, getting ahead of myself. Verse 6, He became a man.

[20 : 02] He became a man. He was God. He is God. But He became man. That took great humility, I believe.

And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself. There it is. He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

I believe Jesus was so humble. Not even an ounce of pride.

Does anybody here have pride? Nope? Well, good. Nobody raised their hand. Okay. I didn't expect you to raise your hand too quickly.

But Jesus had no pride. You know, is it possible for us to sit here this morning and be humble and have no pride? You believe that?

[21 : 03] I believe that. I don't think we need to have any pride. In fact, we're called to be like Him. But we do have pride from time to time, don't we?

Pride is the root of all sin and it wants to get us. It wants to trip us up. But is it possible to be here without pride? I believe so.

Absolutely. Because without that we couldn't live. We'd be sinned every day, right? And God wants to cleanse us of these things. So, Jesus was humble.

We're talking about living like Jesus in this world. Living, you know, having Him as our life. verse 8, And being found in fashion as a man, I'm sorry, I read that and humbled himself.

Verse 9, Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in the earth and things under the earth.

[22 : 19] Praise the Lord. Lord, that name. I just remembered something. We had printed that verse out and put it behind our desk on the tire shop on the wall, laminated it, and put it up there at the tire shop and, you know, mostly unbelievers now.

And last I checked, it's still there. They left it up there. Wow. I wish they'd read it. But customers can read it at least.

That surprises me that it's there. I figured that'd be down like right away. Verse 11, At the name, and at, I'm sorry, And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do His good pleasure. I'd like to just explain that verse a little bit because it can be twisted.

[23 : 38] People will take that and say that we have to work out our salvation. And we know that we're not saved by works. So what does it mean? How does, how does it work?

But then in verse 13 kind of answers it. It says, For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do His good pleasure. I believe that working out our salvation simply means that you've been saved.

You have salvation. Now walk it out. I believe that's what He's saying. He's not saying you do good works and now you're saved. We know that from other scripture.

Verse 14. Do all things without murmurings and disputings. Are we free from murmuring and disputing? Christians that complain and start disputes or arguments are carnal and Christ is not being magnified.

In fact, we make God look small when we do these things. I've wondered already just my own life, my own family, my own where I live and churches as a whole.

[25 : 01] There's so much complaining, so much grumbling about things. You know, things don't maybe quite go our way or whatever and I often think back of the Israelites and how we judge them for their, you know, God did these amazing things and delivered them from the Egyptian army and all those things, brought them through the river and on dry ground to see and miracles with Moses and they would revert right back to grumbling and complaining and we've judged them over the years probably.

Like, how could they do that? They just had God in their midst and doing these wonderful things, but what about us? God did amazing things. He saved us.

He's delivered us from hell and bondage and do we complain, grumble? Probably too much.

Probably way too much. You know, that convicts me that we aren't a complaining people, but that we're joyful rather, that we are full of joy, disputings.

God is not magnified in our lives when we do these things. Verse 15, that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world, here we are with this life that magnifies God, that glorifies Him in a dark and perverse nation.

[26 : 56] He wasn't talking about America either. He was talking, well, but he is. But what I'm saying is the nation we live in, doesn't that just describe our nation?

Perverse, crooked, wicked, and we're supposed to shine as lights in the world. Holding forth the word of life, that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain. I believe Paul was telling the church here that, you know, he's labored among them, he's taught them, he's preached to them, he wrote these letters and he's just saying, look, he doesn't want to do all this in vain, just walk right so that Christ is glorified.

Remember, Paul suffered a lot. He suffered for Christ. Christ. Do we shine as lights in our world?

That is the question. Yes, the world hates us, but do we shine for them? Do we give them hope? Do our lives give hope that they too can be changed?

[28 : 23] They don't have to live in defeat. I believe that we are as much a light as we have the mind of Christ.

We are as much a light to the world as what we have the mind of Christ, the heart of Christ. Is to live Christ and death gain to us.

If we would die, would we be gaining but if we stay living, is it Christ? If we are guilty of these things, some of the things that we read here and mentioned, God can change us.

God can change any person. If that person is willing, God is willing. I thought about it this morning, there's things that I want God to change in my life.

And am I willing? Am I available to Him? The question is like, okay, but you're 52 years old, you're pretty set in stone in your ways.

[29 : 41] Some of us are older than that. Can God change us? it's not a problem with Him.

This is not the problem, is it? 2 Corinthians chapter 3.

A few more scriptures here. Here. Here. Here. Here. Here. Here. Here. Here. Here. Here. Here.

Here. Here. Here. Here. Here. Here. Here. Here. Here. Here. Here. Here. Here. Here. Here.

Here. Here. Here. Here. Here. Here. Here. Here. Here. Here. Here. Here. Here. Here. Here. Here. Since we have such a glorious hope and confident expectation.

I believe this is in the Amplified. We speak with great courage. We are not like Moses who used to put a veil over his face so that the Israelites would not gaze at the end of the glory which was fading away.

[30 : 50] Remember, he used to cover his face. Yeah. Verse 14, But in fact, their minds were hardened, for they had lost the ability to understand.

And until this very day, at the reading of the Old Covenant, the same veil remains unlifted because it is removed only in Christ.

But to this day, whenever Moses is read, a veil of blindness lies over their heart. But whenever a person turns in repentance and faith to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. It says here, Emancipation from bondage, true freedom, can we be completely free? Where the Spirit of the Lord is, I believe we can. God's heart is that we are free from bondage. And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. When we don't have liberty, then what is that saying? [32 : 06] When we're in bondage, what is it saying? According to this verse, we all with unveiled face, continually seeing as in a mirror, I think King James says glass, the glory of the Lord, and are progressively being transformed into His image from one degree of glory to even more glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

I wanted to read this in the Amplified. This kind of spells it out a little different. Yes, if we continue to look and we reflect on Christ, Jesus, then He is able and willing to change us and make us more and more like Him.

That's the key, that we look unto Him. We look like we heard earlier, we look to Him for our strength because we can't change ourselves. We can try, but inwardly, from the inside out, He's the one that changes us.

Let's go still to Psalm 103. I think we'll end with that. Psalm 103, end with that scripture.

Can God change us? Does God even want to? Does He understand us, our need? Psalm 103 is a very familiar psalm, and it just blessed me this morning as I read it.

[33 : 59] The heart of God towards His people. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits, who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases, who redeemeth thy life from destruction.

Have we been redeemed? Who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies. Because He's a redeeming God, a life-changing God.

Just hear the love in these verses. Loving kindness, tender mercies. Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagles.

The Lord executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed. He made known His ways unto Moses, His acts unto the children of Israel.

[35 : 03] The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and has lots of mercy. Plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide, neither will He keep His anger forever.

He's giving us that warning. You know, He does have an anger. Verse 10, He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.

And this is all before Jesus. The heart of God. Before Jesus came. Before salvation. Before the cross.

Isn't it amazing? That this reveals the heart of God to His people. Removing our transgression.

[36 : 09] We know that that doesn't happen outside the blood of Jesus. Verse 13, Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him.

If you fear God this morning, He has sympathy. For He knoweth our frame.

He knows. He remembers how we were made. Why wouldn't He? He made us. He remembereth that we are dust.

He knows how weak we are without Him. How desolate. How empty. How hopeless.

How absolutely hopeless we are without Him. He knows all that. That's why He sent His Son. It's like these people need me.

[37 : 08] They need salvation. They need hope. They need deliverance. They need my blood. To cleanse them. As for a man, his days are as grass.

As a flower of the field, so he flourishes. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone. And the place thereof shall know it no more.

But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him. And His righteousness unto the children, children's children.

The mercy of the Lord is forever and ever. To such as keep His covenant, to those that remember His commandments to do them.

The Lord hath prepared His throne in the heavens, and His kingdom ruleth over all. Bless the Lord, yea, His angels, that excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of the Lord.

[38 : 20] Shall we stand together? If you can. Bless, yea, the Lord, all ye His hosts, ye ministers of His that do His pleasure.

Bless the Lord, all His works, in all places of His dominion. Bless the Lord, O my soul. is your soul blessing the Lord this morning?

Are we blessing Him for His compassion, His mercy that lasts forever? His pity on us?

Because He remembers how weak we are. But now He also made a provision that says we can do all things through Christ and that we have no more excuse.

He made the provision, all the provisions that we need. But that's the heart of God. He does have mercy. He does want to change us from glory to glory.

[39 : 33] Let's pray that God would do that. Father God, in heaven, we just ask You, Lord, I ask You, Lord, to change me.

Lord, I pray that You would change us where we need to change. Lord, help us to reflect on Your image, to reflect on Your life, Your humility, Your love, Your grace.

And Lord, we ask You to make us like that. that we could have Your strength. Lord, that we would magnify Your name among the heathen and among those that don't believe.

Lord, help us to be delivered from earthly bondages and forgive us for our unbelief. Lord, we thank You for the miracles that You have wrought or worked right here in our midst for salvation that You've brought to many.

And then, sometimes we become negative and we complain, we murmur, we forget so quickly how good You are, Lord.

[41 : 19] And truly, God, You are good. You're wonderful. And You deserve our praise. You deserve our joyful praise.

Lord, I pray You'd just be with us and bring us what we need this morning, Lord. Speak to our hearts. And thank You, God, for drawing me to Yourself.

I just pray You'd draw all of us to Yourself, Lord. And God, that truly Your name would be magnified and people would be drawn to You because of our life, Lord.

Because of what You have done for us. Give us strength, Lord. You said that You are able and that, Lord, that You promised that the work You began in us, You would complete it.

All we need is just a surrendered heart that says, Yes, Lord. Yes, I'm willing. I'm willing to even suffer for You, Lord.

[42 : 29] Willing, whatever it takes, that You make us more Christ-like. Help us, Lord, to see that. We commit ourselves to You in Jesus' name.

Amen. You may be seated.