

Is My Life All About Jesus?

Practical Picture, Discipline

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Bible Text: Philippians 1:19-26

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Amen.

Well, it is my privilege to stand before you today. It is always a privilege to open up the Word of God. We are in the third in a series of messages from the book of Philippians, a series that is going to take us right up to the Thanksgiving holiday. Pastor Phil has preached the first two messages. I will have the privilege of the third and then pastor Jim is going to preach next week in the fourth in our series.

I want to encourage you to do something. I encouraged our ministry team to do this as we began the study. It was something that had a tremendous impact on my life as a young pastor when I heard a teacher on the radio suggest that a way to read the Bible was to take portions of the Bible and read them every day for 30 days. I want to encourage you to do that with the book of Philippians.

What has been exciting for me as I encourage the ministry team to do that is in our conversation now as a ministry team, you will hear insights from the book of Philippians come up because they are becoming deeply embedded in our hearts and our minds. I would encourage you to do the same. Wouldn't it impress pastor Phil when he comes back if you knew more about Philippians than he does? He would be blessed by that I am sure. So I would encourage you to do that.

One of the things that has become very obvious in reading through the book of Philippians is that Paul has a very positive attitude about life. The words "joy" and "rejoice" keep popping up all throughout the letter. In fact, some scholars have said that is the theme of Philippians is joy. And that is true. There is more to it than that. There is the foundation for joy, but joy keeps popping up. He prays with joy. The people are his joy. And he experiences joy even in difficult situations.

And, by the way, as we got a taste of last week when pastor Jeff preached, his situation at that time could be described as rather difficult. He was in prison. He was in Rome in prison awaiting trial, a trial that could possibly, even probably lead to his death. And at the same time he rejoices that there is people outside of prison, believers in Christ who lived in Rome who are having boldness to preach the gospel.

Pastor Jeff did such a wonderful job last week of drawing our attention to the gospel and its impact upon our lives and the impact it should have on other people through our lives. And Paul rejoices that the gospel was being preached. But what was interesting is that there were some brothers and sisters in Christ who were proclaiming the gospel and they had ulterior motives. They didn't like Paul and they were using the opportunity to perhaps get him in trouble.

And Paul says, "I don't care. Even... I don't care what their motives are. The gospel is being preached and I rejoice in this."

He goes even further in Philippians in the fourth chapter to say, "Whatever my situation, I am content. I am satisfied."

Contentment, joy, rejoicing even when things aren't going well. In fact, maybe when they couldn't get much worse, how does that happen? That is the question I bring to this text.

Well, I think we get a strong clue in the passage we are going to explore together today and so I would like you to look with me, if you would, at Philippians chapter one and verses 19 through 26. And would you stand as we read the Word of God?

I want to begin with the last phrase of verse 18 because it leads right into what Paul is talking about. He says:

Yes, and I will rejoice, for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death.

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.¹

You may be seated.

Here is what I believe the message of this passage is in a nutshell. I will have a positive perspective on life when my life is all about Jesus. Paul's powerful summarizing declaration in verse 21 reads:

¹ Philippians 1:19-26.

“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”²

I think it might be good to take just a few moments to talk about perspective, our perspective on life and what produces a positive perspective.

The English word “perspective” come from the Latin—uh, oh—*perspicere*. Does that sound Latin? Yeah. Which means to see through. That is what it means, to see through. In other words, our perspective is our view of the end or of what ultimately is going to happen. Our perspective is our view of how things are going to turn out.

Now my wife and I were raised in two very similar households, but different in a very important way. The household I was raised in was a very positive household in the sense that they had a very positive outlook on life, almost to the point of living in denial. You know, it is kind of like nothing bad is every going to happen ever. And on her side it was the opposite. It was pretty pessimistic. Her household was a household where if it could go wrong, it probably will go wrong.

Now let me take a little survey before I go any further. How many were raised in the positive almost denial kind of house? Would you raise your hand? Yeah, ok. Isn't it great to be here in denial? I mean, hey, what, me worry?

How about you that you were influenced by the more negative pessimistic? Yeah. Ok.

So if I had a glass of water up here, which I had intended to have, but at this stage of my life I would probably spill it. You know what it would be? Half full or it would be half empty. Right? Half full? Can you relate to that, some of you? Half empty. All right.

My brother-in-law put it this way. My brother-in-law and I are good friends. We are two weeks apart in age and we have a great relationship. He told me this.

“Yeah, in our family our pastern of life was to always to think of the worst possible thing that could happen and then to obsess on it.”

Can you identify with that? All right.

Well, can you imagine if that would have been Paul's perspective when he was sitting in prison? As a matter of fact, when I follow his life after he became a Christian, if that was his perspective in life, he would have been of most people most miserable. It most certainly would not have spoken of joy and rejoicing. It would not have reflected a contented state of mind, even when he was in prison.

Now, Paul found his way to a very healthy perspective, a very positive outlook on life, whatever his situation. And it all centered on his relationship with Christ.

² Philippians 1:21.

So the question is: How can we gain a positive perspective on life, Paul's perspective? And the answer, as I said before, I will have a positive perspective on life. When? My life is all about Jesus.

“For me to live is Christ.”³

What does that mean?

Now we are going to put a slide up there right now and it is not in your notes, but I would like, if you would, to write it down, if you would take this down. Relationship with Christ gives me a whole new purpose in life and the capacity to live it out. In fact, I think this is so important for us to get. I would like you to say it with me, if you would. Let's just say it together out loud.

Relationship with Christ gives me a whole new purpose in life and the capacity to live it out.

This is a life that we live by faith. The practical outworking of this is seen in Romans 6:1-11. You know what? Did I skip part of my message? Yeah, oh, yeah, ok.

I am just glad that Keith couldn't remember at his age what he was supposed to say up here. I am 67. I mean, we could go a long ways away from my message today without me even realizing it. Ok.

So I am going to go back. All right? All right? That is what our expiration of these verses in Philippians will be about today. Let's first look at those things which contribute to a positive perspective. I have a positive perspective on life when I live by faith in the reality of new life in Christ. Ok.

I want you to look with me at Galatians chapter two verse 20, if you would. It is going to be on the screen.

“I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”⁴

Paul said that, wrote that to the Galatian believers. Now what is he talking about here? He is talking about the miracle transformation that took place when he entrusted himself to Jesus for salvation. Salvation means the forgiveness of sins and the promise of eternal life. Here is what happens when we are identified with Christ. It is as if we have been crucified with him, have died to our old way of life and now have been resurrected to live a whole new life, in fact, to live his life on the earth.

This is the life that we live by faith. We live it by taking God at his Word.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Galatians 2:20.

Romans 6:1-11 talks about that and I want to read just a few of the verses here. Paul says this.

“What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?”⁵

Now what he is trying to say is, “Some people are saying grace means it doesn’t matter what we do. We can sin all want.” In fact, some wise guys that he was writing to were saying that, oh, grace covers all my sins. Why don’t I sin greatly so there will be more grace?

And Paul says, “You dummies.” This is in the Greek.

“By no means!”⁶

He really said, “You idiots,” but I am trying to... Ok.

“How can we who died to sin still live in it?”⁷

He is saying that is absurd.

How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.⁸

And, you know, in the Greek sense of it, the impact of it is, “We, too, may live a whole new kind of life.”

Now many of you have heard my testimony if you came to men’s breakfast or if you came to celebrate recovery, but I didn’t come to know Christ until I was almost 25 years old. And I was not a nice person and I am not proud of that. But I thought when I realized that I was responsible to God, I thought it is too late. I could never live long enough to do enough good to make up for the bad I have done.

How many of you had that misconception once? Yeah. And my mother shared the good news from the Bible with me that, yeah, you can’t live long enough. You could live a dozen lifetimes, you could never live long enough, but God has taken that upon himself in the person of Jesus Christ. And when Christ died, he died for your sins, was buried and resurrected so you could have a new life and you could live a whole new kind of life.

⁵ Romans 6:1.

⁶ Romans 6:2.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Romans 6:2-4.

The apostle Paul says:

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin.⁹

No, that doesn't mean set free from the battle.

Pastor Keith sang about the battle. It doesn't set us free from the battle, but it does set us free from the dominion of sin over our lives. We no longer have to be in bondage to sin. And what does Paul say at the end of that section, verse 11?

Now here is what I want you to do.

“So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.”¹⁰

You see, that comes back to faith. I need to consider myself dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

You know, after I... that miracle of new life came into my life on that Thanksgiving evening in 1968, when got up off my knees I still looked the same as I did when I got on my knees. As a matter of fact, my mother confessed later that as I walked away from her bedside she said, “Oh, Lord, I pray this will stick.” Even she wasn't sure and even in her later years she used to ask me when we would come to see her and she had to mention, “So, Paul, are you still a pastor?” Like I hope it is still sticking.

And some of the last words she said, she had three phrases. She said one was, “I love you,” which was nice. And the other one was, “Hi, peaches.” And then the other one was, “Now, you be a good boy.” And everybody knew who she was talking about.

No, when I got up off my knees I didn't look any different. In fact, that first Sunday when I went to church I had long hair and a headband and that was the 60s and I walked into a church where everyone was dressed in three piece suits and had crew cuts. I didn't look any different, but I was a new creation in Jesus Christ when I got up off my knees. Starting the process of living by faith in what God's Word said to me.

“You are a new creation. You are no longer in bondage to sin.”

I need to live by faith in the reality of my new life in Christ and that contributes to a positive perspective on life. Whatever happens, I am forgiven. Whatever happens, I have

⁹ Romans 6:5-7.

¹⁰ Romans 6:11.

an eternal relationship with God. Whatever others say about me, I have the capacity to live a whole new kind of life.

Can you imagine what went through Paul's mind when he was behind bars and there is people out there trying to get him in trouble? Do you think he might have had doubts cross his mind about, hey, what is this all about? Am I doing the right thing? Is this my fault?

What God kept doing was bringing back to him the wonderful truth that he was a new creation in Jesus Christ called to a whole new purpose, a purpose that he had been fulfilling in his life. That was why he was in jail.

Now this is just a side note because we can't develop it today, but it is in your notes. The Holy Spirit empowers the new life I have in Christ. So in Galatians two Paul will talk about dying with Christ and being resurrected and living a whole new life in the flesh. In Galatians five he will talk about the Holy Spirit and how following the lead of the Spirit is what empowers that life. In Romans six he will talk about considering yourself dead to sin and alive to God in Jesus Christ. In Romans eight he will talk about the Holy Spirit who is the resurrection power of God who enables us to live that kind of life.

Now the second reason for having a positive perspective on life is I live in hope, that is, anticipation of the resurrection and a glorious future with Christ.

Here is what Peter says:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.¹¹

In other words, we have a future that transcends any present negative situation or experience, a guaranteed future. I want you to write this down as well. It is not in the notes. We always have something better to look forward to no matter what our situation is right now.

I have had the privilege of standing before groups of people like you for many years and sharing the Word of God and as I look around the room and I have been a pastor for a number of years in a church I look around the room and I can pretty much know what is going on in many people's lives. But in a room like this I have no idea what is going on in your life. You may be going through what appears to be a hopeless kind of situation. But what the Bible teaches for those of us who belong to Jesus Christ, we always have something better to look forward to no matter what our situation is right now.

¹¹ 1 Peter 1:3-5.

I have the privilege. I live in Salem, Oregon. My wife and I live in Salem, Oregon. I have been commuting back and forth. I know everything about the Columbia Gorge now, 10 and almost 11 months every week back and forth. It is a beautiful drive.

And when I am in Salem, during the days of the week I am there, one of the days I meet with three young men. I call them young men because they are all in their early 40s. And they are godly young men. They are not perfect young men, but they are men who I have known all of their lives. I have known them all of their lives and they were actually meeting together and they invited the old man to come and sit in with them and so I do that. And they are committed to Jesus Christ and growing in Jesus Christ. And, ironically, every one of them is involved what would appear to be a bad marriage. They are basically married to women who don't love them. And they have expressed as such and they have demonstrated as such.

And so these young men in their prime of life—and I love these young men—and in the flesh, I want to say, “Oh, get out of those bad marriages and get into a better one. I mean, if you care about somebody you want them to be happy. But these young men because of their commitment to Christ and their commitment to the calling that he has placed on their lives have said, “We are willing to forgo the joys that we have a right to expect in marriage now because we believe that God has called us to love our wives and our children.

They do that.

My heart aches for them and yet I come back to the truth of God's Word and something, by the way, the three of young men and I are studying a book entitled *Heaven* now. We always have something better to look forward to no matter what our situation is right now.

“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”¹²

Please say that with me, if you would.

We always have something better to look forward to no matter what our situation is right now. In fact, having a future hope is an essential part of being a follower of Christ.

Paul indicates this strongly in another place when he says:

“If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.”¹³

People have said that even if you don't believe in Christianity, you will probably have a better life if you live like a Christian. It ain't necessarily so. As matter off fact, the apostle Paul says in 2 Timothy which he wrote just before he was to be executed:

¹² Philippians 1:21.

¹³ 1 Corinthians 15:19.

“Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”¹⁴

How am I doing? Am I selling it to you? He never promised us, what is that? A rose garden. He has promised us heaven.

This is really going to date me, but Renee and I were talking about it yesterday on our way up to the Gorge to come here. When I was a little kid we didn't have Novocain. Now, I don't know if it existed or not, but it didn't exist in our world, in our dentist's world. So my experience with the dentist was extreme pain.

Does anybody remember the days before Novocain? Yeah. Ok. We are all scarred, aren't we? And, you know what honestly used to get me through the dentist is this. And I remember this even as a little kid. I would say, “This is not going to last forever. It is going to end.”

Well, as followers of Jesus Christ we have much more to look forward to than just the pain ending. He has promised us the glories of heaven.

Paul had a positive perspective on life even though in prison and surrounded by betrayal because he had entrusted himself to someone and he was anticipating a glorious future. He knew that no matter how things looked now, in the future ultimately everything was going to do much more than work out all right.

And so he says:

“Yes, and I will rejoice, for I know that through your prayers...”¹⁵

It is always good to have other people on your side.

“...and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ...”¹⁶

It is always good to know that God is at work.

“...this will turn out for my deliverance.”¹⁷

As it happens, most of us believe that he was delivered from that imprisonment. He was released for a time, but then he was imprisoned again and when you read through the book of 2 Timothy you read his heart as he was facing the certainty of death and it had not changed.

“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”¹⁸

¹⁴ 2 Timothy 3:12.

¹⁵ Philippians 1:18-19.

¹⁶ Philippians 1:19.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Philippians 1:21.

Now in verse 20 he comes back to the present, actually the near future where he would stand before Caesar at judgment. He is not as concerned about the outcome of his trial as he is about his own behavior. He wants to take into that test that he is in the faith in what God has done in his own life and the hope and anticipation of the future. And so he says:

“...as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death.”¹⁹

Paul is not so concerned about what will happen to his body, life or death, as he is about how he will behave in his body that Christ will be honored.

“For to me to live is Christ.”²⁰

What he wants more than anything is to bring to bear on this situation his faith in Christ and his hope in the future so that Christ will be made known through him no matter what the outcome.

What this brings to my mind is the challenge of truly living by faith and in hope, especially when we are in difficult situations. It isn't automatic. It doesn't just happen. We can't do it alone. We need God and we need his people. We need to know that God's Word, what it says and we need to own his promises for ourselves.

That is why we need to immerse ourselves in the truths of God's Word.

You know, even after all these years of serving the Lord and all these years of preaching God's Word I have found that when I don't take the time to immerse myself in the heart and mind of God and his Word, then I lose sight of eternity and lose sight of the fact that I am a new creation in the Lord Jesus Christ.

This God has given us is the mind and heart of God. It is more than just a book. It is more than just information. It is more than just a reference volume so that we can gain knowledge. It is so that we can know God intimately and we can live our lives daily in the reality. This was not denial of new life in Christ. And the hope of eternity.

I have a positive perspective on life. It comes down to his. When I live by faith in the reality of new life in Christ and I live in hope anticipation of the resurrection and a glorious future with Christ.

And then Paul makes this famous declaration.

“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”²¹

¹⁹ Philippians 1:20.

²⁰ Philippians 1:21.

²¹ Ibid.

So how is this demonstrated? Well, the verses that follow illustrate that for us a little bit. He says:

“If I am to live in the flesh...”²²

That is, if I am going to continue in this life,

“...that means fruitful labor for me.”²³

You want to jot down in that passage “a meaningful life,” fruitful labor for me.

Let me pause here just a moment, a promise that God gives us. The word “fruitful” means something meaningful, it counts. Your life counts for something. Labor means it is tough.

Let me illustrate two kinds of days for you. I had a good day the other day with my son. He has two old cars and one of them had broken down and it got fixed and then it broke down again. I had to go pick him up and follow him home and the car was heating up and everything was going bad about it.

So I haven’t done mechanical work in many years. I used to do a lot of mechanical work, but I haven’t done it in years, but it dawned on me that maybe it was something as simple as the thermostat. So let’s find out where the thermostat is. You know, in the old cars it was easy to do cars. Complicated.

So we looked and I thought, you know what? I really believe the thermostat is under this pipe. If we could take these two bolts out, it will be there.

Are you sure, dad?

No, I am not, but I am almost 100 percent.

So long story short last... on Friday he and I got together. I bought the thermostat, 16 bucks, isn’t that wonderful? And brought it over there. I bought the thermostat in faith because I was really hoping that under this little elbow there would be a thermostat. And so we took the two bolts out, popped the old thermostat out. It was broken actually closed. Pulled that out, put the new one in, put the two bolts in and locked her up.

Have you ever had a mechanical day like that? They are few and far between. That is not labor. That is not what Paul is talking about. Do you know what labor is? Labor is the time I was going to tune up my Dodge Dart and just when I got started I can’t believe I did this. I pulled the distributor out and I dropped the rotor down into engine. I had it all planned how I was going to do this great tune up and it was going to take me a couple of hours. I had all the parts. By the way, it was a holiday. Everything was closed. And not

²² Philippians 1:22.

²³ Ibid.

five minutes into the job the rotor is sitting down probably in the pan of my car. That is what labor feels like, wearisome toil that doesn't produce anything. And one of Paul's favorite words in the Bible is labor. As a matter of fact, he uses it here.

But here is what he adds to the Christian's labor, the tough days, the wearisome toil, fruitful labor.

In 1 Corinthians 15:58 he says this. "I promise you this, that your labor in the Lord is never a waste of time."

That is a meaningful life.

If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.²⁴

Sure it would, especially when you are in jail.

But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.²⁵

Listen to this. My life is all about Jesus. When I no longer live strictly for myself, but for the one who died so that I might have new life.

You want a meaningful life? Stop living for yourself. God has given us the capacity and the power to live for others.

Paul says this in 2 Corinthians:

For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.²⁶

You know what Paul says right after that?

He says, "That changed my life." He said, "I don't judge people in the flesh the way I used to. I don't value people like I used to. In fact, I don't value Christ like I used to." And it is after that he says:

²⁴ Philippians 1:22-23.

²⁵ Philippians 1:24-26.

²⁶ 2 Corinthians 5:14-15.

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.”²⁷

He wasn't just talking about himself. He was talking about everybody. A new image of people and their importance, a new vision of his purpose in life.

You know, by the way, if you really want to be happy, quit trying to be happy. You really want to find fulfillment? Quit looking for fulfillment. We weren't created for that. We were created to entrust ourselves to God and to give ourselves to him and to others. That is what we were created for. You want to do good for yourself biologically? Quit thinking about yourself. You weren't created for that.

Let me give you just a little preview of what pastor Phil is going to have the privilege to preach to you about in Philippians chapter two. He says:

“So if there is any encouragement in Christ...”²⁸

This is not going to be on the slide. Just listen.

...any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.²⁹

He came all the way down.

Remember I said earlier I described a leader as someone who places themselves under? Mark [?] our general director for CB Northwest has said it like this. He said, “We live in an upside down world and in our upside down world we are the most important people on the face of the earth and it is important that we be happy and find fulfillment and we are not to let anybody push us around or get in the way of what we want or what is ours, because it is an upside down world. And what God has called us to do, he has given us new life to do. He has given us the power of the Spirit to do. He has given us the hope of heaven for is so that we can live right side up in an upside down world.”

Hebrews said that Jesus did this for the joy that was set before him. I mean, I know there is no comparison between the cross and the dentist, but it just comes to my mind. For the

²⁷ 2 Corinthians 5:17.

²⁸ Philippians 2:1.

²⁹ Philippians 2:1-8.

joy that was set before me I went to the dentist to get that baby over with. Jesus went to the cross for the joy that was set before him and Philippians goes on to say:

Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.³⁰

I preached a whole series on the book of Philippians. I have in the past. And I entitled the series this. And this is the last thing you have to be have to write down today. Paul's letter to the Philippians shows us how to be free from it is all about me. There is your last fill in and you can add this. And free to be who God created and saved us to be.

For Paul is in prison behind bars. And he says, "You know, I know there is people out there that want to hurt me and cause me harm, but you know what? I don't care. The gospel is being preached. And you know what? If I die, all I care about is that as I face my death, that I will do it exemplifying the reality of new life in me and the hope I have in eternity. Whether by life or by death, I want my life to demonstrate in every way the calling that God has placed on my life to represent Jesus Christ."

"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."³¹

I wonder where you are today in all of this. There is a series of questions at the bottom of the notes that I ask that I give you for your reflection. Do you have a positive perspective on life? Can you honestly say that your life is all about Jesus? Have you entrusted yourself to him in his death on the cross for the forgiveness of your sins? Do you really believe that because of his resurrection from the dead, wherever you have been and whatever you have done and now you have a whole new life to live? Do you want to live out the purpose for which you were created?

Let's pray together. Shall we?

Our Father, thank you for revealing to us your mind and your heart, words of salvation, words of forgiveness, words of eternal life. And, Lord, I just want to pray for people who are sitting before me today who you know and perhaps I don't know who need to welcome your gift of grace into their life by faith right now.

And even our heads are bowed and our eyes are closed, I invite you to accept God's free gift through Jesus Christ by faith. All you need to do in the quietness of your heart this morning is say, "Yes, God, yes, God, I welcome your gift. I accept for myself."

And, Lord, there are so many of us that are followers of Christ and yet we still live in the bondage to our old life and live in ignorance of the hope that you have laid out for us. And there may be those who are here today before me who are laboring under

³⁰ Philippians 2:9-11.

³¹ Philippians 1:21.

misconceptions about what it means to be a follower of Christ and I pray that through the truth of your Word today you would deliver them from that bondage, that you would move them and all of us in the direction of faith and hope, that we could take our eyes off of ourselves and live and trust, then, our lives to you and lead meaningful lives whatever our situation.

I pray your comfort for those who are suffering. I pray your courage for those who are afraid. I pray your deliverance for those who are in bondage. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

We are going to participate in the Lord's table together.

A Practical Picture of Discipleship from Paul's Letter to the Philippians #4

Is my Life all about Jesus?¹ Philippians 1:19-26

The Message in a Nutshell:

I'll have a positive perspective² on life
when my life is all about Jesus.

What does it mean for my life to be all about Jesus?

I have a positive perspective on life when . . .

- I live **by faith** in the reality of new life in Christ (Galatians 2:20; Romans 6:1-11).
 - The **Holy Spirit** empowers the new life I have in Christ (Galatians 5:16-21; Romans 8:9-13).
- I live **in hope** (anticipation) of the resurrection and a glorious future with Christ (1 Peter 1:3-5).
 - "If **in this life only** we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied." (1 Corinthians 15:19).

My life is all about Jesus when . . .

- I no longer live strictly for **myself** but for the one who died so that I might have new life (2 Corinthians 5:14-15)
 - see 16-21 for the implications of no longer living for ourselves).
- I live for **Him** by living to **serve others** on his behalf (Philippians 1:22-26; cf. 2:1-11).
 - Paul's letter to the Philippians shows us how to be **free** from its all about **me**.

Some serious food for thought:

Do you have a positive perspective on life? Can you honestly say that your life is all about Jesus? Have you entrusted yourself to Him and his death on the cross for the forgiveness of your sins? Do you really believe that, because of his resurrection from the dead, wherever you have been and whatever you have done, you now have a whole new life to live? Do you now want to live out the purpose for which you were created?

¹ Message shared with South Hills Church, Kennewick, WA, by Dr. Paul Null, Sunday, July 31, 2011.

² The English word "perspective" comes from the Latin, "perspicere" which means "to see through." In other words our perspective is our view of how things are going to turn out.

“Is my Life all about Jesus?”
Philippians 1:19-26

Questions for further thought and study:

1. Think carefully about your perspective on life. Has it been positive or negative? How does the apostle Paul instruct the Philippian believers to deal with worry in Philippians 4:4-9? Why shouldn't Christ's followers worry?

2. What special role does the Holy Spirit play as we live our new life in Christ? (See Romans 8:1-17; Galatians 5:16-26)

3. How does the hope of the resurrection fit in with a positive perspective on Life? Read through the 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians. How does this impact your perspective on life? Look carefully at verse 58, the last verse in the chapter. What impact should this have on your desire to serve the Lord?

4. What was the one thing that motivated Paul to continue his life on the earth rather than go home to be with the Lord? (See Philippians 1:22-26)

5. What is the greatest challenge to putting the welfare of others above our own? What could motivate you to do so? Read through Philippians 2:1-11 to answer that question.