

**Let us Study Philippians (8)****Paul's Preference between Two Good Options**

I. His options II. His preference

**I. Paul's Options**A. His first option: *Stay to live Christ* (vs. 21a)

1. 'To live Christ' was not always Paul's life-motto (Acts 9)
2. 'To live Christ' is primarily not Paul's *trust* but the *obey* part of his life
3. 'To live Christ' was far from easy for this spiritual trooper
  - a. included constant *warfare against wiles & woe of Satan* (Eph. 6:12)
  - b. included *weary battle against own indwelling sin* (Rom. 7:14-25)
  - c. included *constant care of all churches* (2 Cor. 11:29)
4. Consider these facts, then his desire to depart is not surprising (vs. 23)

B. His second option: *Depart to be with Christ* (vs. 21b; 23)

1. To depart was only gain (1 Peter 1:4; HCat. q/ 42)
  - a. death is no *payment nor punishment* for Christ's people
  - b. death is *abolishing of sin and the entry into glory*
2. What is included in this *gain*?
  - a. the glory of total transformation (Phil. 3:21)
  - b. the deliverance from vile body (Rom. 7:24-25; 2 Cor. 5:1ff)
  - c. the deliverance from Satan, sin, and temptation
  - d. the entering into rest (Ps. 23:6; Rev. 14:13)
  - e. Mostly to *die is to 'be with Christ* (Phil. 1:23)

**II. His preference**

A. To depart is (very) far better (2 Cor. 5:1ff)

B. To stay is more needful (profitable) for believers (vs. 24)

C. Paul is at a loss (vs. 22b) though there is preference (vs. 22, 25-26)

**Living these truths ...**

A. What is to live for us? What (or who) define your life?

B. If God gave you the choice today: *live longer or die today?*

C. Is Paul's spiritual tug-of-war anything like ours?

**Discussion Questions for all:**

1. What are a few key markers identifying a 'living Christ life'?
2. Does to 'live Christ' mean that someone is permanently thinking about Jesus?
3. Can there be wrong reasons to long for death?
4. What are your most common hindrances in living like Paul?
5. Can to 'live Christ' be in tandem with loving your spouse, children and doing your work?

**Discussion Question for our younger ones:**

6. Augustine prayed when young, *Lord, convert me but not yet*. What was he thinking to pray that?
7. Death can be a gain or a loss. What makes death a (everlasting) loss?
8. What do you need to do to be enlisted in Jesus' army?