

# FOUR WORDS WHICH DEMAND YOUR FULL ATTENTION

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PHILIPPIANS 1:21 • TV124B

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By

**HENRY T. MAHAN**

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## **Philippians 1:21**

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

I want to speak to you today on this subject, **“FOUR WORDS WHICH DEMAND YOUR FULL ATTENTION.”**

I’m not going to keep you in suspense. I’m going to turn in the Bible and read three texts from the Scriptures which set before us these four words that demand our full attention.

First of all: We are turning to **Philippians Chapter 1:21**, now listen to the Scripture: *“For me to live is Christ and to die is gain;”* there are two of the words right there, *“to live and to die.”*

Now, turn to **Hebrews 9:28**: *“And as it is appointed unto men once to die; after this the judgment.”* There’s the third word; *“To me to live is Christ and to die is gain: As it is appointed unto men once to die; after this the judgment.”*

Now, **Matthew 25:46**: *“And these shall go away into everlasting punishment but the righteous into life eternal.”* That’s the fourth word, eternity.

So, here are four words that demand your full attention, your undivided attention, life, death, judgment, and eternity.

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I have a life to live. It does not matter what my age, my condition, my health, and my attitude, I am alive. I may be a rich person; I'm alive. I may be a poor person but I am a human being and I am alive.

God has given me a life. This life has a beginning and this life has an end. I only have one life to live. I'm living that life right now. You have one life to live. You are living that life right now on this earth.

Secondly: I have a life to live and I have a death to die!

Now, I know that you mention death and the average person just goes to pieces. "Let's don't talk about that." Let's do talk about it. I'm going to die. It may not be long. I may die tonight and I may die tomorrow.

Somebody is going to die tonight. Somebody is going to die tomorrow. Every second many people die. People die young and they die old. People die in mid-life. Women die and men die.

Everybody who has ever lived has died with the exception of two men; Enoch was translated that he should not see death and Elijah was taken to heaven in a chariot of fire.

But everybody else; think of the millions, and millions, and millions, yea billions of people who lived on this earth like you and me, people who were born, people who lived and worked, and people who were 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, and then they died.

Everybody is going to die. We have a life to live and we have a death to die. You may as well face it. Let's talk about it. About the closest most people get to talking about death is joking about it, laughing about it and kidding about it.

It is no laughing matter, you are going to die. I'm speaking to somebody right now who is going to die before this week is over. Do you realize that? Several people will hear me on television on Sunday morning and be dead before that day is over, before the next week is out.

I preach to people all the time in the congregation for the last time. I wish I could take the time today to tell you how many people have heard me Sunday morning or Sunday night and I preach their funeral either on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday.

And somebody listening to me is going to die today or tomorrow or sometime this week. It may be you. You have got a life to live and you've got a death to die. God said: "*It's appointed*" (it's set; it's an appointment you are going to keep) "*it's appointed unto men once to die.*"

And I will tell you in whose hands this rests, in the hands of our God. The Scripture says: "*Man's days are appointed; the number of his months is with God. Thou hast set his bounds so that he cannot pass.*"

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Thirdly: Now listen to me, you have a life to live. You live it like you please. That's all right. I'm going to make some suggestions to you this morning. But, you have a death to die and you have a judgment to face, "*after this the judgment.*"

God will judge sin. The Scripture says: "*Every man, everyone shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ. God the Father judgeth no man. He hath committed all judgment to the Son.*" Almighty God is going to judge men.

Read **Revelations Chapter 20:11 through 15:** "*I saw the dead small and great stand before God. The sea gave up the dead which were in it. Death and the grave delivered up the dead which were in them and they were all resurrected and stood before God.*"

What a day, what an hour, and they were judged every man according to their works. The Book of Life was opened and the other books were opened and men shall be judged. "*Every transgression shall receive a just recompense of reward.*"

God will bring every secret thing into the open. God will bring every idol word into the judgment. God will bring everything spoken in the closet and shout it from the housetop: "*he will judge sin.*" That's what he said.

God is not going to send any man to eternal condemnation without him clearly being persuaded that this is the right thing to do, that he deserves it. He's going to be convinced that he deserves what he gets.

Fourthly: I have an eternity to spend!

Now, the body is going to die. I have a life to live and I'm going to live on this earth, however long I live, however long I am on this earth, the days that God gives me, I'm going to live and then I'm going to die. The Scripture says I shall be judged: "*after this the judgment.*"

Then, the soul is going to rejoin the body. The Scripture says: "*The day cometh when all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God and they all shall live.*"

There will be a resurrection unto life and a resurrection unto damnation. There will be a first resurrection and a second resurrection according to the Word of God.

I know that a lot of men spend their time arguing about the time between those resurrections but that's not what's important. The important thing is not how much times between the resurrection but which one I have part in.

"*Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection.*" It won't matter whether God will put a second one off for a thousand years or ten million years. I don't want any part in that thing. I want to be raised the first time and enter into the glories of our Lord.

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Satan is a subtle, crafty individual. He takes men's minds off of the really important things and gets them arguing about time and tradition and custom and ceremony, prophecies, and all of these things when the important thing is do you know Christ?

Notice how closely related these four words are: **life, death, judgment, and eternity.** In my text there is a comma between them that says: *"to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."*

But, in reality there's not even a comma between these words. There is no separation. It's all one continuous, one continuous thing; those who live, die and those who die come to the judgment and those who come to the judgment come to eternity.

Somebody said: "Life is but death's vestibule." Nobody enters death except through life. Life is death's vestibule. Death is but the vehicle that conveys us to the judgment and judgment is but that which separates the just from the unjust and sends men to their final destination.

Eternity is the main thing. This is what it's all about. This is the final stop. This is where it all leads, eternity, eternity. Somebody said that this life compared to eternity is like a snowflake in a blizzard or a drop of water in a flood or the vestibular of a great palace hall. It's nothing!

Abraham said to the rich man in hell: *"Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed and no one can come from you to us or from us to you."*

Eternity; can you imagine, no you can't and I can't either, eternity, on and on and on and on for ions of time, eternity, millions and millions of years and we just begin.

So, these are the four words that you and I need to spend a lot of time thinking about, **life, death, judgment, and eternity.**

Now, it would be a waste of time for us to argue today over the reality of these things and to try to prove them. You know that you are going to die. There is no need for me standing here and giving you proof and logic that you are going to die; you know that you are going to die.

Your relatives have died and your friends have died. Your neighbors have died and they died every day. How do you think the florist makes the most money supplying flowers for dead people, the cemeteries, and the funeral homes that dot the countryside?

And there's no need for us spending our time to establish our part in this. The old black spiritual song use to go:

**"You've got to walk that lonesome valley  
You've got to go there by yourself.  
You've got to stand the judgment trial  
You've got to stand there by yourself."**

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And there's no need trying to find a way out. There's no need to try to find a way out of death. I know that we are talking today about extending man's life to 80 years and 90 years and 100 years.

Some Chinese recently said man ought to live 150 years. Well, what is 150 years, you are going to still die. You may prolong life until 90 or 100 and you may live to be 120 but you are still going to die. They may take you out kicking and screaming but they are going to take you out.

They may take you out boasting of your righteousness but they will take you out. They may take you out boasting of your works but they will take you out. They may take you out trusting Christ but one of these days they will take you out, you will die.

My friend; what we need to spend our time is doing this; we need to try to find but there's one life to live, a way to find happiness in this life, try to find a happy life, a peaceful, joyful, life and to find some comfort in death, and to find deliverance from judgment.

I don't want to die in my sins. I don't want to come to the judgment and face my sins. I don't want to hear God say: "*depart from me; I never knew you.*" I want to live eternally with God. I want to find a hope for eternity.

True spiritual life is what I need. I need comfort in death, deliverance from judgment, and hope for eternity. The apostle Paul gives us one word that holds the key to all of this, one word that holds the key to life, happiness, death's comfort, judgment's deliverance, and eternity's hope.

What is that one word? "*To me to live, for to me to live is Christ and to die is gain.*" That's the word right there. If Christ is your life, you have true life. "*He that hath the Son of God hath life.*"

If Christ is your life you have no fear in death, you have no death to fear. There's no sting in death. The sting of death is sin and sin has been removed. You have no fear in death.

Paul said: "I really look forward to death." That's what he is saying, he said: "*The time of my departure is at hand. I fought a good fight, I've kept the faith. There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness. I have no fear.*"

Really and truly he said: "*I'm in a straight betwixt the two. (I'm in a quandary) I have a desire to die and go be with Christ. While I know that to stay here is more profitable for you and for those to whom I minister but I'd be happy to leave here for to die is gain.*"

If Christ is your hope, you have comfort in death, and "*there's no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus.*" That's what the Bible says. There's condemnation to those who rest on their own works, who trust their feelings or their experiences but "*there's no condemnation to them who are in Christ.*" Then in Christ we have hope for eternity.

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*“We are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ.”* Now, Jesus Christ is God’s heir. If you ever inherit anything from the Father it will be through Christ. God has vested everything in Christ.

The Scripture says: *“In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily and you are complete in him. In Christ we have wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.”* It’s all in Him and God’s put it in Him.

Jesus Christ is the heir of God. We inherit God’s blessings in Christ. We are joint-heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul sums it all up; he says: *“To me to live is Christ.”*

Now, I know what some of you are saying; I can tell what you are saying. The business man is sitting out there and he’s living in all of his wealth, plush, luxury, and comfort and he’s saying: *“to me to live is gold, to me to live is silver, to me to live is my possessions.”*

You’ve already read the paper this morning and checked on your stocks and your bonds, you know. Let me tell you what it’s going to be worth some day. You wouldn’t even stop on the street to pick it up if the street was covered with stocks and bonds and paper money and silver and gold.

God’s going to destroy it with the whole world the Scripture says, *“the canker of your gold, the (rust of your gold) will stand up against you in the judgment.”* *“To me to live is gold,”* says the wealthy man.

Then out yonder there are men who have worked all week. You get up every morning and go to work and you come home and you read the paper and you go to bed. You get up and go to work and come home, read the paper and go to bed.

You go all through these rituals. Sunday’s kind of an off-day and you sit around with your feet propped up but for you to live is to make a living; that’s all you are interested in.

You are interested in a 10% raise next year. You are interested in fringe-benefits, you are interested in hospitalization, and you are interested in this, that, and the other. You are interested in making a living and that’s all. For you to live is to make a living and that’s the end of it.

And to the athlete, to you to live is fame; you want to see your name in the paper. You want to hear the crowd yell. To you to live is fame.

The student, to you to live is an education and learning. That’s all you are interested in. You are going to college or you are going to get your master’s degree.

You are working on the books. You are reading Plato and Aristotle and you are reading all the rest of these fellows, you know, the philosopher’s and you are reading this and that. To you to live is learning.

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And to the entertainer; to you who live is fame and glory and to the worldly, to you to live is pleasure. You are planning the pleasure that you are going to have this afternoon. You are going boating or fishing or something else. That's what it is to you to live.

The apostle Paul comes into our midst today and he says: *"to me to live is Christ, to me to live is Christ."* I imagine that you are laughing about that, maybe you are. Maybe you are laughing into scorn and you are saying: "well; answer me a question Paul, will your Christ give you gold?"

He replies with the apostle Peter: *"Silver and gold have I none."* I have no bank account, I have no saving's account; don't need it. *"My God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in glory through Christ Jesus."*

David said: *"I've been old, I've been young but I've never seen the seed of the Lord begging bread."* *My God shall supply your need;* (He will take care of you. I don't need silver and gold. I don't need to hoard these things). *"Give us daily our bread;"* isn't that what the Scripture says?

You know, back in the wilderness when the manna fell, they gathered it day by day. They didn't have to store it up. God was faithful every day. *"Sufficient of a day is the evil thereof."* God will meet your need.

"Well, Paul; tell me this: will your Christ give you a comfortable living," perhaps, perhaps not. *"I know how to be abased; I know how to abound,"* my living comfortable is being wherever He is. Where Christ is there is joy:

**"Content with beholding his face  
My all to his pleasures resign  
No changes of season or place  
Would make any change in my mind."**

Paul says, *"Wherever I am I'm content, for me to live is Christ."* If He blesses me with plenty I'm happy. If the Lord in His providence gives me trial and poverty; I'm happy there too. *"To me to live is Christ."*

"Well, Paul, will your Christ give you respect and fame?" No, no, He said: *"Marvel not my brethren that the world hate you; they hated me before they hated you. A man that hateth me shall be of his own household. I came not to bring peace among men, but a sword."*

Men will be divided, homes will be divided. *"They that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. In this world you will have tribulation."* I don't promise you a bed of roses or a road paved with roses. It may be tough.

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They laugh some more and they say: “Well Paul, will your Christ give you freedom from sickness?” I hear preachers preach that. “Freedom from death,” no, all who live in Christ die and all who love Christ die; all that believe on Christ die.

The Scripture says: *“These all died in faith,”* but they died. Paul was sick and in prison. Epaphroditus was sick, Calvin, Spurgeon, Luther; keep naming the great men of the past, the men who knew God.

They knew times of great trial and great suffering. God doesn’t promise you freedom from sickness and death. I would be a fool to tell you that and you would be a fool to believe it.

Our Lord said in **James 5**: *“Is any sick among you, let him first send for the elders of the church and let them pray for him.”* God does heal sickness.

Then, what do you have? Well, I have these four things. Let’s go back to our four words again: I have life, I have comfort in death. I have deliverance from judgment and I have eternity to spend with Christ.

**First of all:** Life; let me ask you this: what is your life?

Paul said: *“To me to live is Christ.”* My life is Christ. Christ is the source of it, Christ is the substance of it, Christ is the sanctification of it, Christ is the joy of it, Christ is the peace of it and Christ is the heart of it.

Christ is my life; what’s your life? Well, James says in **James 4:14**: *“Your life is a vapor.”* And David in the **Psalms** says: *“A vapor is a wind that passeth away.”* That’s what your life is, *“it’s a wind that passeth away.”*

You go out in the yard and you are working in the garden. The wind comes up and the clouds darken and you run in the house. Then the trees begin to bend and the corn tops bend over and everything blows and the weeds blow and the leaves blow.

Just a hard wind comes through and in a few moments it is all still and the wind’s gone and it’s not there anymore. That’s your life.

But, the believer’s life is not a wind. The believer’s life is a person, a real, living person, who never passes away, who never fades away, and who’s always here, omnipresent. Jesus Christ is my life. He’s not a wind.

The unbeliever’s life is *“a wind that passeth away.”* The believer’s life is Christ, a person. Job says, *“What is your life? It’s a flower to be cut down.”*

It’s blooming today. We grow flowers out at our house; (we love flowers) they don’t last long do they? You cut one and take it in the house and put it in water and a few days later, look at it. It’s drooped over and it’s dead. You throw it out. *“The place thereof shall know it no more.”*



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The believer's life is not a flower it's a rock. Christ said, "*It's a rock, a living stone, immovable, incorruptible, unchangeable, a rock.*" We are built on the rock Christ Jesus."

What is your life? In **Job 14:2**: "*It's a shadow,*" a shadow? A shadow is nothing. Our life in Christ is not a shadow; it's a substance. It's real, reality. What is your life, a wind, a flower, a shadow? The believer's life is a person, a rock, a substance; it's Christ.

Let me ask you this: where is your life? Well, you say: "It's right here, here it is preacher. It's right here; I can touch it, and I can see it. Anybody can see my life:

"I can measure it and I can measure the length of it. I'm 75 years old, robust and healthy." Yes, that's your life. You can see it, you can touch it, and you can feel it and you can measure it. All you have is right there. That's all you have. When that's gone you are gone, your life's gone.

Not so to the believer. Listen to **Colossians 3:3**: "*My life is hid with Christ in God.*" You can't see it. This real, spiritual life; you can't see it. You can see my flesh and touch my flesh and measure the length of my days but my spiritual life in Christ, you cannot see any more than you can see Him.

You cannot hear it any more than you can hear Him. You cannot measure it any more than you can measure the length of His life, having no beginning and no ending. It's hid with Christ in God.

You can't see it, touch it, or measure it. "*Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered the heart of man the things that God hath prepared for them that know him, that love him. God has revealed them to us by his Spirit.*"

There are times I can't see it when the temptations are violent, when the trials are heavy, when God seems to hide His face, but it's there. It's hid with Christ in God.

This denotes the secrecy of it and the safety of it and the certainty of it. My life is hid from the gaze of this world, from the knowledge of this world, from the eyes of this world. It's hid with Christ in God. What a place of safety!

You talk about the vaults of your bank and your security, your keep places; they are not safe places. But, "*My life is hid with Christ in God.*"

When will it be manifested? Let me ask you: "What about your life?" Your life is manifested right now; that's all you have got. You better hold to it.

No wonder men fear death; when this life is over that's it, they've got nothing else. They've got a son or daughter and that son or daughter dies, that's all. Do you know why people go to pieces when they lose a son or daughter, wife or a husband? That's all they've got.

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Well, if you have Christ, He never leaves you, He never forsakes you, and He's never gone. If your loved ones in Christ he's not gone; he's just away for a while; he's not gone.

Where is your life? When will it be manifested? That's all you've got right there. But the believer; listen to this: *"Our life is hid with Christ in God and when Christ shall appear then shall we appear with him in glory."*

Oh, our life is going to be manifested. The believer's life is going to be manifested. This is not it. This is not all; we shall be revealed in the image of His Son. When we shall see Him we shall be like Him.

Life, you talk about life; *"he that hath the son hath life."* Flesh is not life. Christ is life.

Then, we have comfort in death. Yes, I'm going to die. I'm going to die and you are too. But, I will tell you; we are going to die with hope and joy and peace because Christ said: *"because I live, ye shall live and blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."*

Death for a believer is Carnation Day. One great old preacher was on his death bed and someone came to see him and they said: "well; you almost are leaving the land of the living."

He said: "No sir; you've got it all wrong; I'm leaving the land of the dead and I'm going to the land of the living." This is my Carnation Day. This is Graduation: *"I'm going to be with Christ which is far better."*

We have deliverance from Judgment. *"There's no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus."* Paul said, *"Who can condemn us, who can lay anything to our charge? Who can separate us from the love of Christ, if God be for us who can be against us?"*

Last of all: We have eternal life!

*"This is the record; God hath given us eternal life and this life is in his Son. He that hath the son hath eternal life."*

*"God will wipe away all tears from their eyes. There will no more sorrow, no more crying, no more death, no more disease, and no more parting. We shall forever be with the Lord."*

What a prospect; that's happiness, that's comfort, that's deliverance and that my friend is hope.

And the words, the key words, are Jesus Christ our Lord, our substitute, our sacrifice, and our sin-offering!