

Philippians 1:22–26

“Why Believers Are Still Alive”

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Philippians chapter 1 our portion for this afternoon is versus 22 through 26, let's pray.

Our father in heaven we pray that you would help us now a little later in the day. We have. Enjoyed much blessing from you in the means of grace, especially. In the public worship. We come now with some of our energy spent. But thankful that you have warmed our hearts by your spirit and by your word by your sacrament by prayer.

Even by the fellowship of the saints. So we pray that you would help us body and mind that you would help us and do that work in our soul for which we come to you by your means to do grant that we would know you in your word and grow by your grace and by knowing you for we ask it in your name.

Lord Jesus, amen.

Philippians 1 verses 22 through 26, these are God's words, but if I live on in the flesh this will mean fruit from my labor. Yet what I shall choose. I cannot tell. For I am hard-pressed between the two having a desire to depart and be with Christ which is far better.

Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you. And be in confident of this. I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith that your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again.

So far the reading of God's inspired and in Eric work.

If you're if you're a believer. Then why are you still alive? Haven't you believed in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of all your sins. Haven't you been counted righteous in Him? Are you not being repaid according to the blessedness that He deserves on your behalf? And is it not even as He says, Far better.

To depart and be with Christ far more pleasant at least and enjoyable. Especially with your sin go on. It is. But the Apostle knows what it means when a believer is still alive, or why a believer would still be alive. If I live on in the flesh, this is fruit from my labor.

This will mean fruit from my labor. If you're still alive, it means that God still has work for you to do. That means that God is still accruing fruit for you from that work. If you depart you will finally love Christ perfectly. And if you depart you will lay aside your corruptible flesh this if I live on in the flesh your flesh will remain here and your soul you the part of you that is your soul will depart and you will be with Christ.

Indeed you must lay aside that flesh because it needs to be sewn into the ground and you want to put on that incorruptible and immortal flesh later. It's no wonder that the apostle says yet what I what I shall choose. I cannot tell now it's important for us. Because we live in a time and a place where the value of human life has been much diminished in the eyes of many and not only murder of others but self-murder is very common and many are confused as to how wicked it is.

It's important for us to note that the Apostle doesn't actually get the choice between what God will do. He just knows that either God will take him and that will be enjoyable much better for him by far or God will make him remain and if God makes him remain, that means he still has work to do.

It is not biblical to come to this and say well the apostle. Paul said he could have chosen to take his life. No, he's talking about the competing desires in his art for the too goods that the Lord might do him either granting him to depart and be with Christ or granting him to continue to labor with fruit and notice how he reasoned.

He reasons that this Christ who has begun a good work in him and will bring it to completion and has begun a good work in the Philippian believers and will bring it to completion that he is doing what's best for all of them and he says aha it is more needful for them that I would remain in the flesh and that's how he concludes what he thinks God will do.

And so we see that the selflessness the desire to be used of God is what is shaping his his thinking here that reminds us that suicide is not just selfish apart from God claiming for yourself a position that belongs only to God. The scripture says that is God who numbers are days and rights them down in his book and it is a great witness against him but it's also a great wickedness against others.

How much your brothers and sisters in Christ might be encouraged by your counting Jesus' worth suffering for and suffering well as you hope in him how much good you might do then by doing nothing else but enjoying the fact that Jesus makes it worth living for you that for you still to live is Christ and so we all if the Lord has left us here caused us to live on in the flesh we know what it means for us.

It means fruit from our labor the apostle doesn't allow a believer to say well. I feel useless well great part of the Christian faith is continuously overruling our wrong feelings by God's right writings his word and if he says that you being alive means you have fruitful labor remaining you don't get to argue against him with your feelings.

Do you see that on the one hand? I feel useless on the other hand the Bible says if I'm still alive. Jesus has used for me. And so you don't get to

argue against Jesus so what is this this fruitful labor or what would make his labor fruitful to things we can see here one especially in verse 24 and then another especially in verse 25 and 26 the first his labor is fruitful because it is needful for the church needful for his brothers and sisters in Philippine nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more.

Needful for you the gathering and perfecting of the church is the great project of the remainder of human history. Jesus when he is ascending and he says, I'm going to be with you always even to the end of the age, what is he going to be with them in?

Going into all the nations and making disciples teaching baptizing them and teaching them to keep all that he has commanded the glory of of God in the gathering and perfecting of the church Ephesians 1 verses 20 through 23, we read. That God worked as mighty power in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him and is right at his right hand in the heavenly places far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that his name not only in this age but also in that which is to come that he put all things under his feet and gave him to be head over all things to the church.

Which is his body the fullness of him who fills all in all and so what does God doing right now what is Christ's doing right now is he sits at the right hand of the father he is ruling all things for the church the souls under the altar in the fifth seal in Revelation 6 and they cry out to God how long how long until you have injured and he says well until the number of your brothers is completed, this is the project that defines the rest of human history.

Therefore this is the project that defines to a large extent the rest of your personal history in this world. The fruitful labor that you have is whatever is needful for the church, that's what God is aiming it in his son, that's what his son is aiming at in you by his spirit.

So if you can attend corporate worship you must attend corporate worship why because it's there that we stir one another up to love and good works it's there that we gather together and admonish and our admonished by one another it's there that we show forth together at the Lord's table his death until he comes it's there, especially that he has ordained for us to to be used by him in building one another up and the public means of grace.

You must be careful to attend upon it to attend upon and heed your theology stabilizing the theology stabilizing ministry of your elders Ephesians four 11 through 14 talks about the gifts that Jesus has given after you rose on high and apostles prophets evangelists and who else pastor teachers that's your elders why because otherwise we are tossed to and fro by winds of doctrine and we need to be.

Stabilized why because verses 15 and 16 in that chapter he is meant for the whole body to be held together by every joint supply. What happens if you have one joint that is all wonky and is out of place. The whole body is messed up, isn't it? You know try having a hip or a knee or a shoulder or an elbow out of joint sometime.

And so all the parts need to be theologically stable. Not only because that is how he designs for the body to be strengthened, but also because every part does its share for the building up of the whole unto Christ. You are needful as part of his body. And yet what he has given you is?

Not just the public worship generally but the the shepherding and teaching ministry of your elders. If you can sing and that doesn't mean that if you can sing beautifully if you can't sing beautifully you should sing as beautifully as you can doesn't help the church to sing worse than you otherwise could but if you can sing you must sing because isn't that a specific part of the worship in which he says you're admonishing your brethren and their admonishing you and he's using that time in which we all address one another with God's word and song and he fills us with his spirit and he makes his word to dwell.

Richly in us. Think about it the apostle says here Philippians chapter one the reason you're still alive is because it's needful for the church. Well, what does the church need me to do needs me to attend meet me to listen to the preaching teaching shepherding ministry of my elders?

It needs me to sing it needs me to take the supper. We're actually literally not allowed to take the supper without each other. It's a covenant meal. It's a meal of the body and so you attend well upon the supper and you ought to be asking God for faith and asking God to grow you in faith and Eagerly looking forward to the day when you are going to confess Christ and come to the table and not just come to the table and participate in the meal by observing but by eating the bread and drinking the cup together.

And you can add to that the hearty. Amen when we sing or when we pray which means you can't give an insincere amen. God doesn't want in sincere worship means you have to listen while we pray. It means now that we're praying from the Bible that you're paying attention to those passages and you have them ahead of time see you can agree with the elder as he leads you from that passage and give that amen and you can add to all of these all of our private dude.

Ies of faithful as faithful Christians and all the one another commands that go beyond corporate worship. The so there are all these things that we know are needful for the church that he tells us to do well that's the first way that Paul's labor was fruitful because it was needful for the Philippians.

The second way is because it was increasing their joy in Christ being confident of this he says in verse 25, I know that I shall remain and continue with you with you all for your progress. Progress with probably handled already to some extent and joy of faith that your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again.

He knows that they love him in Christ and they love seeing what Christ does in him. You imagine how often it would have crossed the believers' minds as as they worshiped with Paul, can you believe this guy used to hunt down Christians? So that they could be hauled away put in jail.

Can you believe that this guy was a proving them killing of Stephen the first martyr of the church? Look what Jesus has done in him. And it ought to gladness to see one another and to see what Christ is is doing in one another's lives. So not only for the the progress of faith, but also

for the the increase of their joy in Christ to the joy of their.

Faith. This should be a motivator for us and whatever our daily tasks are. Wait, until other believers find out how faithful Jesus has been to me and I can I can tell them about how good Christ has been and how he's been working in my life and they will rejoice over what Jesus has done in my life and I will hear what he is been doing in their life and how he was growing them this week and helped them to serve him and I will rejoice over what he has done in their lives.

So, why are you still alive? Because your assignment from Jesus doesn't completed yet. And a great part of that assignment is participating in the progress of the church in faith. It's needful for the church and promoting the increase of the church's joy. In Jesus Christ that you would help your brothers and sisters grow in Christ and rejoice in Christ.

A man, let's pray Our Father in heaven how we thank you for what you how you have designed your church, we thank you for the example of Paul and the Philippian church and there being helpful to one another and God. Ening one another in Christ, we pray Lord that you would do the same for us I pray for every single one in here that that you would by their faith in Jesus Christ and there certainty that you are doing whatever is best for them.

Grant to them to love the idea of departing and being with him, but Lord help them also to see that if they're still alive it's because they're assignment from their master isn't complete yet and help us all to joyously diligently zealously do all of the different things you have given us.

Ashley as parts of your church for the progress of our brothers and sisters in the faith and for the for the rejoicing in Christ that you help use each of us to help the others increase in grant that we would be an example of this kind of work that you do in your church we ask in Christ's name.

Amen.