

PHILIPPIANS 1:22-30

REVIEW...

- **PHILIPPIANS 1:4-11**

- o Paul was thankful for the church in Philippi...
 - He was in prison in Rome - but every time He thought of them it brought a smile...
 - Paul knew God would finish the work He had started in them many years ago...
- o Paul's prayer for the church in Philippi...
 - Was that they would overflow with the knowledge of the Love of Jesus...
 - That they would know what really mattered in life – a relationship with God!

- **PHILIPPIANS 1:12-21 – REJOICING IN SUFFERING**

- o Our natural reaction to trials is to want to complain – we want to curse and get mad...
- o But we are called instead to rejoice – because our trials have a purpose...
- o Trials spread the Gospel / give boldness to others / allow us to stand up for Christ!
- o Are only for a moment / and to live is Christ and to die is gain!

CONFIDENCE IN SUFFERING... (2 THINGS)

- **1ST – THE PROBLEM PAUL FACED... vs. 22-26 (4 THINGS)**

- o 1st - Paul was facing a dilemma – he had to make a choice... vs. 22
 - All of us have choices we have to make in life – in fact life is full of choices...
 - What to eat for breakfast / do we take the new job / who should we marry...
 - Some of these decisions we make without even thinking about it ...
 - But others can cause us stress – because we are afraid we will make the wrong choice...
 - The Bible gives us guidelines – but it does not give us the details...
 - The Bible tells us to marry a Godly woman – but it does not give us her name...
 - We can ask other people – we only end up with their opinion / no better than ours!
 - The answers often come from looking at our motivation – is our heart right...
 - If our desire is not selfish / if it is not motivated by sin or pride...
 - If instead it comes from a desire to serve the Lord – be a blessing to others...
 - Then chances are we should just go for it – trusting the Lord will work it all out...
 - We worry about whether to go right or go left – God says go either way...
 - Just make sure your looking to the Lord – and He will take care of the rest!
 - In fact I do not think we can make the wrong decision with the right heart!
- o 2nd - So long as Paul was breathing – he wanted his life to count for Jesus...
 - Life is a gift – and we are only given so many hours / so many days...
 - The question is what do we do with the time the Lord has given to us...
 - Ever spent a day doing nothing – when the day is over it feels like a lost day...
 - A lot of people do nothing their whole lives – and in essence have a 'lost life'...
 - Too often people waste their time investing in things that do not last...
 - We have the opportunity to live our lives to the fullest – making a difference for God...
 - The only thing we can take from this life - is the fruit that we bear for Jesus Christ!

- o 3rd - Paul was undecided – he wanted to go to heaven... vs. 23
 - The decision where we spend our eternity is limited to our time here on earth...
 - The moment we die our fate is sealed - there are no second chances...
 - There is no purgatory - the prayers of saints/priests/family cannot help you...
 - **Hebrews 9:27** - “It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment...”
 - Either we have received Jesus and have the hope of eternity with God...
 - Or we reject the Gospel - and have sentenced ourselves to eternity in hell...
 - Paul knew where he was going – and he was ready to see Jesus...
 - While we are in this body - we are absent from the presence of the Lord...
 - o But When we take our last breath here - we will open our eyes and see Jesus!
 - o **II Corinthians 5:8** - “To be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord...”
 - And it is FAR better to be in heaven – than stay here on earth...
 - o Paul had authority on this – he had been to heaven – **II Corinthians 12:4**...
 - o There in ‘Paradise’ Paul heard things he was forbidden to repeat...
 - o The suggestion is that what Paul heard was too wonderful to put into words!
 - o Life is hard – every day we have to deal with sin and other sinners...
 - o These bodies we live get old – and start to betray us – wear out...
 - o Life here is not what God intended – it is hard / and full of tears and heartaches...
 - o Yet in heaven there will be no more pain / sickness / or tears - **Revelation 21:4**
 - o **I Corinthians 2:9** - “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”
 - o Heaven is not the most amazing place we can imagine - beyond our imagination!
 - o It will take ages - literally 1000s of years - in heaven for God to reveal it all to us!
 - No wonder Paul was ready – makes you wonder why we insist on staying!
 - o Just before getting married – Jen and I would pray – Lord do not come yet...
 - o But in truth – what does this world have to offer compared to heaven...
 - o We need to keep a light touch here – so we are ready to go there!
 - Paul was saying he wanted to ‘speed up’ his departure – ‘commit suicide’...
 - Just that if Jesus came back / or his time was up – Paul was ready to go!
 - There can come a time in life when things are so hard – we consider ending it...
 - But the problem is – it is not our life – we belong to God – **I Corinthians 6:19**
 - God and God alone has the right to decide when our time here is over!
 - Suicide is a completely selfish act – it is the ‘easy way’ out of difficult times...
 - Leaving behind everyone else – loved ones – to suffer through the consequences...
 - But do not think that those who commit suicide go to hell...
 - Sin does not keep us out of heaven – it is rejecting Jesus that sends us to hell...
 - A momentary foolish decision – made in desperation – cannot undo God’s Grace!
- o 4th - Paul realized it was better for the church if he stayed... vs. 24-26
 - Paul realized there was still a HUGE opportunity for him here on earth...
 - Paul knew where he was going when he died – but many people did not...
 - So better for Paul to ‘delay’ his home coming for their sake!
 - I wake up every morning thinking – today would be a good day to see Jesus...
 - Yet I know there is still work to be done – people who need to hear the Gospel...
 - It might be better to go home – but not until God says our work here is done!

- Paul would stay – so the church would continue to grow in Jesus...
 - Not only do people need to hear about Jesus – they need to grow in Jesus...
 - We are called to invest in the lives of others – help them mature in their faith!
- Paul would stay – for the joy of the church...
 - The saints were going to have bad days – and need someone to encourage them...
 - **Ecclesiastes 4:9-10** - “Two are better than one... if one person falls, the other can reach out and help, but people who are alone when they fall are in real trouble.”
 - If we see people struggling with trials – they do not have to face them alone...
 - We are called to come along side them – and bring them joy...
 - Pointing them back to Jesus when they get lost and forget their way!
- Paul would stay – so the church could see Jesus...
 - Paul knew the church would rejoice if they got to see him – delivered from prison...
 - But Paul did not want the church excited about him – but instead about Jesus...
 - People tend to put spiritual leaders / pastors up on a pedestal...
 - There is the impression they are somehow bigger / more holy - than others...
 - The danger in men looking to a person/pastor - is that they will fail...
 - We need to point people to a perfect Lord – rather than to an imperfect men!
- **2ND – PAUL’S DESIRE FOR THE CHURCH... vs. 27-30 (3 THINGS)**
 - 1ST - No matter what happened to Paul – whether he was there or absent... vs. 27
 - The church was to let their actions be worthy as ‘citizens’ of the Gospel of Christ...
 - We can only be citizens of one of two kingdoms...
 - We either belong to the Kingdom of God - or the kingdom of this world...
 - How do you know where your citizenship lies – by the actions from your life...
 - The person who refuses to listen to the Word / come to church...
 - Shows their true colors - they are not a citizen of the Kingdom of God...
 - When we light up because someone is teaching a Bible study...
 - Looking forward to those moments when we get a chance to read the Word...
 - It is because we are citizens of heaven - and we love to hear from our God!
 - **Psalms 119:97** - “Oh, how I love your instructions! I think about them all day long...”
 - They were to strive to have one spirit / one mind / and one faith...
 - People in the world love to divide - they have their groups / barkada...
 - In the world it is all about who is your family / town / county...
 - Men have fight and kill each other just because they are rival sports teams...
 - Just because someone does not go to the same church – or is not in our group...
 - Does not mean they are not saved – a Christian – going to heaven...
 - ‘The Church’ is HUGE and diverse – but it has one thing in common – Jesus!
 - Believers are to agree on the essential doctrines of the Bible - salvation in Jesus!
 - On non-essential issues - all believers are to agree - to disagree / not cause division...
 - Focus on the major issues - overlook the minor less important ones!
 - The triune nature of God / salvation only through the cross of Jesus - absolute!
 - Church on Sundays / praise songs or hymns / shoes or slippers - agree to disagree...
 - When we divide the church over denomination - we show we are like the world!

- But it should not be the same in the church - we are to be united by love!
 - **John 13:35** - "All will know you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."
 - There is only One Body - and all who believe in Jesus become a part of it!
 - The church of God is not a building - it is not a particular denomination...
 - There is only one church of God - the Body of Christ...
 - No matter what name - no matter what traditions - we are all part of God's church...
 - We need to be unified in Christ - because that shows we are citizens of heaven!
- o 2nd - The church was not to be afraid/intimidated of their enemies... vs. 28
- Because it will be a sign to them - that they are going to be destroyed...
 - Paul understood - he was in prison - perhaps facing a death sentence...
 - But he was not afraid of these men - instead he feared for them!
 - **Matthew 10:28** - "Do not be afraid of those who want to kill you. They can only kill your body... Fear only God, who can destroy both soul and body in hell."
 - There are parts of the world - muslims - where preaching Jesus can mean death...
 - But the worst they can do is kill you - then you go to heaven (*not a bad thing*)...
 - In most cases the worst thing that happens if we preach Jesus - we are made fun of...
 - People might accuse us of having 'changed our religion' - they miss the point...
 - More often they are just trying to change the subject to avoid conviction!
 - When we truly understand the fate of those who do not have Jesus...
 - We do not fear them - we fear for them...
 - We preach Jesus because we have the answer - the solution for the problem of sin!
 - Because it will be a sign to you - that you are going to be saved...
 - You and I know the trials are going to come - but we are not afraid...
 - Because we know how the story ends - we know that God will save us!
 - **II Timothy 1:7** - "God has not given us a spirit of fear -power, love, and sound mind."
- o 3rd - The church was to have the same dilemma as Paul... vs. 29-30
- To depart and be with Jesus Christ - or to remain here and serve Christ...
 - Where are we - is there a dilemma in our hearts - are we ready to see Jesus...
 - We do not choose where our heart is - we do choose where we put our treasures...
 - Wherever we put our time - is where our heart will also be - **Luke 12:34!**
 - Are we focused on the Lord - or caught up in the concerns of this world!
 - If we store up all our treasures here on earth - then we will not be seeking Jesus...
 - Are our treasures stored up in heaven - or is our heart focused on something else...
 - If we are focused on the Lord - then we will be anxious to see Him!
 - To help them in their dilemma - God had given them two gifts...
 - They were given faith - so they had confidence Jesus Christ saved them...
 - Given trials - so they would not hold on to this world - but want to go home!
 - God allows us to face challenges to remind us - this is not our home...
 - God has something far more amazing planned for us - home is heaven!