

To Live is Christ

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Preacher: Keith Knowlton

[0 : 00] Well, now we come to the preaching of God's Word, and we're going to pick up where we left off a couple weeks ago looking in the book of Timothy. Excuse me, Timothy. The book of Philippians, chapter 1, starting in verse 18 through 26.

So if you have your Bibles, you can turn there or look on the screen behind me. As you turn there, I wonder, have you ever struggled with making a big decision? Maybe you've been confident in the outcome that you want, but you don't exactly know how that's going to come to pass.

And so there's different strategies for making decisions. Maybe you've done a pros and cons list before. There's a lot of things to consider. There's a lot of uncertainty. So you write on one side of the paper all the considerations, a positive aspect of one consideration.

On the other side, you write the cons, why this may be a bad idea, something you want to avoid, something that's not ideal for you. You may do this for a variety of situations, thinking about being an adult.

There's lots of these kind of decisions you have to make. Maybe it's the purchase of a car. You know your family needs a car, so how are you going to make this decision? Are you going to get a smaller vehicle or a larger vehicle?

[1 : 06] Are you going to get something that is maybe the color is important to you or the gas mileage is important to you? Probably the price or if it's a used car, the mileage that's on the car is important.

Perhaps buying a house, you may consider the pros and cons of different choices that you have. Maybe something that's close to the city center is important to you. Or maybe you want new construction that's a little bit further out.

Maybe how many bedrooms it has or whether it has a garage or a garden. All these things you may take into account. Maybe if you're a student or youth, you think about the future for yourself.

Where you might go to university. What you want your career to be. There's a lot of uncertainty. A lot of decisions to be made. Where do you want to go to school? Close to home or do you want to be far from family?

Are you going to study a particular subject that will lead to a certain career like a doctor or a nurse? Or would you rather be a teacher or an engineer? There's a lot of uncertainty in the decisions that we face on a daily basis.

[2 : 07] And so that's what we see in our passage today. This uncertainty that Paul faces with when he's faced with this big decision. But it's not a decision about what house he's going to buy or his future at university.

It's something much more important. It's his future regarding his life and death. Because we see as Paul writes this letter, he's sitting under house arrest. It remains certain.

There's a certainty that he knows as to his continued purpose. That God may be honored in his life. But he also is faced with great uncertainty. Because he doesn't know what's going to happen to him.

He's awaiting trial in Rome. What is the outcome of that trial going to be? Is he going to be found innocent and released and receive his freedom? Is he going to be convicted? And sentenced to death?

What's going to happen to the church while he's in prison? What happens to the church and the spread of the gospel if he is killed for his faith? And so we see in this passage today this struggle that he has between what is certain and what is uncertain.

[3 : 11] But even though there is uncertainty in his life, we see that there is great confidence. That whatever happens in his life, that whatever happens in life and in death, he is certain of this, that he

will receive Christ's joy.

And that Christ will receive the glory. And so that's what we're going to look at today as we turn to our passage in Philippians chapter 1, picking up on verse 18, the second part of verse 18. Follow along as I read.

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 should 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 and faith.

[4 : 27] So that you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus because of my coming to you again. This is the Word of God. Pray with me again.

God, we ask as we turn to the study of your Word that you may grant us your wisdom. That you may grant us not only understanding, but the desire to apply these truths to our lives.

We ask, Lord, that this passage may convict us and encourage us, that it also may provide comfort to us. And, Lord, I pray that the words of my mouth and the meditations of all of our hearts will be pleasing in your sight.

O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. Amen. Well, as we've been going through the book of Philippians during the month of June, you may recognize how we've kind of very slowly moving through chapter 1.

We've kind of are coming out of the introduction. And as we do, we start to see Paul's focus start to shift somewhat. The subject of matter of what he's addressing is starting to move because we know that he began by kind of looking at the past.

[5 : 39] He's talked about the help that he's received from the church, the struggle that he has endured. And then he looks at the present, what he is currently enduring in imprisonment and how the gospel is continuing to go forth.

And now it's another pivot. He's looking toward the future. And so as we previously discussed, the church at Philippi, they had great affection for Paul. They were the first church to provide financial support to him in his ministry.

They had every desire to know how he is doing. They're eager to get this letter from him, to know his condition, the progress of the gospel. And so with that, we know that there was great uncertainty as to what was going to happen to Paul.

What was the outcome of his trial going to be? Was he going to live? Was he going to die? What was going to happen to the spread of the gospel either way? And so we see here in this passage that Paul is really trying to address a lot of their concerns.

And he does so not by merely focusing on his current circumstances, but he focuses again on the advancement of the gospel. He focuses on both the certainty that he has in that, but also is vulnerable enough to express the uncertainty that he has with how that is going to come to pass.

[6 : 57] And so that's what I want us to look at today as we look to Paul's future, as Paul thinks into the future, what is going to happen to him, what is going to happen to the future of the church. I want us to look at the certainty that Paul has in the result.

And I also want to look at the uncertainty in the root to that result. And so let's first consider Paul's certainty in the result. Look again at verse 19. Yes, 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.

Now, if you remember from a couple of weeks ago, Paul has just finished talking about the fact that he can rejoice in the spread of the gospel, even when it's coming through envy and rivalry of other preachers.

And then he immediately follows up in the second part of verse 18 and on with a second reason for having joy, the reason being his deliverance. This word in the Greek can also be translated as his salvation.

And so we see this joy that comes through Christ's word being proclaimed and through the fact that he recognized that he is being saved. And so it's not him actually being saved from his current

circumstances.

[8 : 09] We know there's great hardship that he's endured, not only imprisonment, but before that, beatings and floggings and stonings that he's been shipwrecked and now is waiting trial at Rome.

So he's not necessarily addressing being saved from his current situation. He has a much greater picture. As he looks to the future, he's looking at the final judgment of Christ and the salvation that comes to him there.

And so that's why he looks to the book of Job. That's why we read those verses from Job 13. If you're not familiar with the story of Job, Job was a man who was a man of God in the Old Testament.

He had great material wealth, great blessing of family and wealth and livestock. And we see that Satan comes to God and says, ask for permission to tempt Job.

Because he thinks that if you take all his things away, Job is going to curse you and die. And so God allows it. And we see as a result, everything is taken away from him. His children, his livestock, his servants, his wealth, his health.

[9 : 13] And so even we see as he sits in misery, his friends come to him. And they want to give him comfort, but instead they give him some bad counsel instead.

And they say, Job, look, if all this bad stuff has happened to you, you've obviously done something wrong. You've obviously done something to anger God. So you need to figure out what that is. You need to apologize for your sin so all this bad stuff will stop happening to you.

And Job responds with that passage that we read earlier. He responds in a way that shows the wisdom that he has of God to recognize that suffering can come, and it's not always because of a form of punishment.

It can be a part of God's sovereign plan, that his hope in God is not shaken, regardless of what his circumstances are. And so he says, as we read in verse 15, though he slay me, yet I will hope in him.

I will surely defend my ways to his face. Indeed, this will turn out for my deliverance, for no godless person would dare come before me. And so this is the exact phrase that Paul uses here when he says, this will turn out for my deliverance.

[10 : 20] Paul recognizes that his suffering, just like Job's, was not meaningless. It was not a result of his own sin. It wasn't punishment for that sin. It was a part of God's plan in producing fruit in his life.

And so as a result, Paul is eager, just like Job was, to go before Christ on that final judgment day, when he will give account before God, when he is certain that he will be vindicated, regardless of what happens in his current life, regardless of the trial that he will face in Rome.

And so we see when Paul is talking about salvation, the subject has come up several times already in just these first few verses of chapter 1. And we see when he talks about salvation, it's just not a one-time act of Christ in the past on our behalf.

It's salvation that is ongoing in process. And so when we looked at verse 6 a few weeks ago, it says that he who began a good work in you will be faithful to bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

And so what does that mean, that our salvation is ongoing in nature? Yes, as saints, we presently possess salvation. But the full enjoyment of that salvation lies in the future.

[11 : 35] And so that's why Paul can say in Romans 13, 11, he says salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. It's something that we look forward to, the consummation of that salvation when we experience the full enjoyment of Christ.

And so how does Paul say then in this passage that deliverance, that salvation will occur? He says, through your prayers and the help of the Holy Spirit. Now, we may think this seems weird.

If we're praying for salvation, we may think, well, I have to pray myself for my own salvation, for my own help that comes from the Holy Spirit. But Paul says, no, he's not focusing on his own prayer. He's talking about the prayers that he desires from the church at Philippi. He's already voiced his prayers for the church at Philippi a few verses ago. And now he says, not only am I praying for you, but I need you to pray for me.

And so through this, we see that our faith is not individualistic in nature. We are connected as the body of Christ to one another. John Calvin said this, he who depends for help on the prayers of the saints relies on the promise of God.

[12 : 43] And so God desires to hear our prayers, not only the ones that we submit on our own behalf, but the prayers that we pray for one another because we see the result. The result of these prayers is that we receive the help of the Holy Spirit.

And so we see there's a direct link between our prayers and the work of the Holy Spirit. The presence of the Spirit in Paul's life is supplied through the prayers of the Philippian church. Both are instruments. Both the prayer and the work of the Spirit are instruments, are used in order to bring about God's salvation. And so that doesn't mean that our prayers for others save them. We don't rely on other people praying for us that we can be saved and justified before the Father. But it demonstrates our need for the Holy Spirit in our lives, that we can maintain our faith, that we can grow like Christ.

That's why Paul gives the command later in Philippians to work out your salvation with fear and trembling. So in order to do this, we need to pray for the abundant supply of the Spirit in our lives for that to happen.

[13 : 52] Because it's the Spirit who empowers us to persevere. And so let us not grow complacent in our faith to think there's nothing more we have to do.

Yes, we have been saved by the blood of Jesus. But we are called, after that justification, to a life of sanctification, to grow more and more like Christ.

So that should be our prayer, not only for ourselves, but our prayers for our brothers and sisters as well. Paul's certainty continues in verse 20 when he says, As it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be ashamed, but that with full courage, now as always, Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death.

And so this word, eager anticipation, in the Greek it really creates this word picture for us of our turning our heads, of kind of craning our necks to see something.

And so kids, if you've ever been in a large crowd and you want to see something, there's people taller than you, what do you have to do? You kind of have to look up and around them and between them to figure out what's going on. You think of the story of Zacchaeus.

[14 : 58] What did he have to do in order to see Jesus? He had to climb a tree, strain his neck to kind of see Jesus coming his way. And so that's the idea that Paul is getting at here at looking toward the future with this eager anticipation.

And we see here that it's paired with hope. Now in the English language, we normally kind of just throw around that word hope as just a kind of a means of wishing something good.

You know, I hope you have a good day. I hope it doesn't rain today. Well, that doesn't really, it may not be grounded in reality, it's just kind of a wish that we're expressing to ourselves or to others. But that's not how hope is used in this passage.

We see when Paul says hope, he's looking forward with certainty, having this reasonable confidence that his hope will be fulfilled. And so when we pair together this eager anticipation and this hope, we understand the longing that Paul has, this desperate, unshakable expectation that Paul has in the future.

And what's that expectation in? What's that longing for? It says that Christ will be honored in his body, whether by life or by death. And so that word honored, it means to be magnified.

[16 : 09] It means to be enlarged. That's what we sang about in Psalm 34, to magnify the Lord with me. Let us exalt his name together. And so when Paul, when Paul is recognizing others are looking to him for leadership, others are looking for him for direction, he doesn't want them to just see him.

He wants them to see Christ. Just like John the Baptist, when Christ was beginning his ministry, some of John the Baptist's disciples come to him and say, hey, what's going on here? I thought you were going to be a leader.

And what does John the Baptist say in response? He must increase, and I must decrease. This is Paul's ultimate goal, that Christ will be honored, that Christ will be magnified in his body.

In any way possible, in good times and in bad, in suffering and in sickness, in life and in death, in all ways, Paul wants Christ magnified in his body.

And this is the result that he is certain of. This is the result that he strives for. And so then that leads us to the second consideration.

[17 : 16] If he is certain in the result that is to come, he still experiences uncertainty in the root, in the means for how that result is going to come about.

And so look in verse 21. For me to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me.

Which yet I should choose, I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. So Paul here is certain about Christ's work. And so the issues of life and death in his life, they don't really threaten his faith whatsoever.

They don't tear down his confidence. The uncertainty of this earthly faith, it doesn't hinder him in any way. Because he has been set free from the tyranny of fear, of wondering what is going to happen to him, how this is going to affect his physical body.

And so even though he doesn't experience fear, we still see he has to wrestle with this uncertainty. And he does so in a very open manner in this letter that he presents to the church at Philippi.

[18:16] And so as we examine this uncertainty, we need to consider this phrase that he uses. We've certainly heard this phrase if you've been anywhere around the church for any amount of time. To live is Christ and to die is gain.

What in the world is Paul trying to say? And so let's take that in two bits to consider what does it mean to live as Christ. And it may be worth thinking about first, what does society, what does the world around us think about life and living?

To the world, life is what people value most. It's what we desire to protect, desire to preserve above all else. And so no one wants to die young.

Our desire for most people is to live till you are a ripe old age and at some point be able to die in your sleep. And it's all that comes in between our birth and our death that we are so concerned about, seeking our own enjoyment, seeking our own satisfaction and comfort.

We want a good job. We want to make lots of money. We want to be able to afford a nice house and drive a nice car. We want to have lots of friends. We want an attractive spouse and to make a family.

[19:27] We want to be able to go on good holidays. We want to avoid suffering and pain. We want to make the most of every moment, make great memories, gain knowledge, be kind.

The list goes on and on, right? Right? That's what the world thinks that life is meant for. That's how we find fulfillment in life, by these things. But we only need to go back to the book of Ecclesiastes in the Old Testament, where we see the author of that book talk about these pursuits.

And what does he say about them all? He says they're all vanity. They're all meaningless. They have no value whatsoever. It's like striving after the wind.

And so that's what Paul gets out here in Philippians as well. He speaks of the worthlessness of all these pursuits when compared to Christ. If we look ahead to Philippians 3.8, he says, And so to Paul, living is not about self and personal satisfaction.

Living is about Christ. We see over and over again that Paul emphasizes this connection, this personal connection that we as believers have with Christ.

[20:48] That's why when he uses this phrase over and over again, in Christ, in Christ, we are in Christ. In all his epistles, we see this repeated. We see it in various forms when he talks about we have fellowship with Christ, that we are hidden in Christ, that we are united with Christ, that we are crucified with him, raised with him, made alive with him.

Over and over again, Paul repeats this. And so it's no different when he's talking in general terms about life as a whole. He boils it down for us. He doesn't even use a preposition here.

There's actually no verb in the Greek. If you read it, it just says, To live Christ. Our entire life means Christ. And so therefore, knowing Christ is our highest goal.

Gaining him is worth the loss of all else. And so that's why Paul can say in Acts 24, or 20-24, I do not count my life of any value nor as precious to myself.

If only I may finish my course in ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. And so listen to these words of the Scottish theologian, John Eady, who summarizes Paul's thoughts like this.

[22:03] He says, when thinking about what Paul means by to live is Christ, he says, the preaching of Christ, the business of my life, the presence of Christ, the cheer of my life, the image of Christ, the crown of my life, the spirit of Christ, the life of my life, the love of Christ, the power of my life, the will of Christ, the law of my life, and the glory of Christ, the end of my life.

Christ was the absorbing element of Paul's life. If he traveled, it was on Christ's errand. If he suffered, it was in Christ's service. When he spoke, his theme was Christ. When he wrote, Christ

filled his letters.

And so we have to ask, does that describe our lives? Is Christ the very essence of our lives? Do we view worldly possessions and pursuits as meaningless compared to gaining Christ?

We really need to answer these questions. We have to face these questions even though they're difficult because what we think about life has everything to do with how we face death. So what does Paul mean when he says that death is gain?

Charles Spurgeon, who was a well-known minister in England in the 1800s, he spoke a lot about this and he says that we fly like arrows to that common target of mankind, the grave.

[23 : 30] And so if death is inevitable for all of us, why is it such a fear that the world has? Well, Spurgeon answers by saying this, to an ungodly man to die can never be a thing to be desired for what remains to him after death.

His possessions go from him like birds that have rested for a little while upon a field but take to their wings when travelers clap their hands. So all the worldlings' riches must take to themselves wings and fly away.

And so if our lives are preoccupied with the collection of these possessions and pursuits, then it's really understandable to think why death would want to be avoided at all costs, why the world fears death.

Because it's the absence of all security, all that we've been trying to build up in this world for our own comfort, for our own safety, is stripped from us. And so how then can Paul say that death is gain?

As we've discussed, to live in Christ, if that's our goal, if that's our mindset just like Paul says, then we're striving for sanctification to become more and more like Christ.

[24 : 46] Our goal in life brings us to abandon all else in order that we can gain Christ. And so if that is our desire, if that is our result that we want, that we can gain Christ, then by that reasoning death is ultimate gain for us.

Because not only are we striving to be like Christ anymore, we have Christ. That's why Paul says in 2 Corinthians, to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.

This is what Paul wants more than anything else. When he's stating his preferences between whether he lives and he dies, what does he say in verse 23? My desire is to depart and to be with Christ, for that is far better.

If we go back to Spurgeon again, he says this, what a believer loses of comfort here is made up to him a thousandfold by the joys of the hereafter.

He knows that for him there is a crown of triumph and a palm of victory, for him a harp of ecstatic joy, for him the robe of immaculate purity, for him a place at the right hand of God, even the Father, in eternal security and indescribable delight.

[25 : 57] Therefore, the Christian not only regards death as a necessity through which he hopes to be supported as a patient through a painful operation, but he looks for his departure as an heir looks forward to the day of his majority, as a bride anticipates her wedding day.

And so is that our heart? Certainly at some point or another, we've all considered our own mortality. Maybe we've had some sort of close brush with death before.

Maybe an accident or an illness. Maybe even just our emotions or a bad dream that we've had that we recognize that death is imminent in our lives at some point in time.

And so in that moment, is there fear or do we stand ready and eager even to gain the personal presence of the Lord? Does the thought of spending eternity with the one true living God give us that desire, as Paul says, to depart immediately and be with him?

And Paul's not saying this in such a way to be morbid, to think that he's going to take his life because he so wants to be with Christ. But he says this as a means of encouragement. For as believers, we have no fear in death because the result of death is Christ.

[27 : 22] But although Paul longs to be present with the Lord, we still see that he faces this internal struggle. He has to choose between life and death and know that's not his choice to make. He's expressing, what is my preference here?

What would I prefer? If he's only thinking about his own self-interest, like he said, he'd rather depart and be with Christ. But that's not his own consideration here, his only consideration.

He's also considering the welfare of the church. So if we go back to verse 22, 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. And so Paul here, he's being very vulnerable. He's giving this behind-the-scenes look into his own thought process. Much like we talked about at the beginning, making this list of pros and cons.

This is what kind of Paul is doing as he's fleshing out his thoughts in this letter. And we may think, man, if I were to write a letter, I may be a little more certain about my own feelings before I write a letter to the church.

[28 : 18] But we see Paul is, like I said, being vulnerable here. He wants the church to learn from his struggle, from his own thought process because as we've talked about before, there's a theme that runs through Philipians.

We know that theme of joy is there, but there's also this theme of unity. unity that's needed within the church. And so Paul wants the saints of the church to follow his lead, to put their interests aside and consider the interests of others, to be able to love and serve others in such a way as Christ would.

And so Paul is leading by example here. It's his desire, ultimately, to do what is best for the church. And so if his life will result in fruitful labor that will benefit the church, this is what he wants.

And he says specifically what these benefits will be to his labor. It says in verse 25, Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith.

And so Paul's two desires then are for the church's progress and for their joy. Again, Paul's making the point here that our faith is not some static thing.

[29 : 27] We don't come to salvation simply by praying a prayer and then going back to living just as our lives were before. Faith, true faith, is something that's dynamic. It's something that changes. We are compelled to grow in our faith with Christ.

As we read the word, as we hear the word preached, as we spend time learning from one another, spending time in fellowship and in service with one another, we don't want to be who we were when we first came to Christ.

We want to see evidence of his work in our lives. And so I've helped coach my son's football team for the last couple years, their school team, and when we started, there's just tons of boys that show up.

And over time, that number kind of dwindles down a bit. Boys decide it may not be their sport. They may decide to do something else. And it's really, it's common.

The boys that stop playing are usually the boys that haven't made any progress in the sport, whether because they're really not that athletic or that football is just not their thing. They realize that if I'm making progress, I'm not having fun, there's no joy in it, it's more frustration than anything else.

[30 : 32] And so the same is true of us. We experience joy when we grow in our faith. We don't want to be baby Christians forever. And it's not this joy of self-satisfaction to say, look how much I've grown, look how great I've become.

No, it's a joy in recognizing the evidence of Christ's work in our life. And so as our faith progresses, our joy should deepen. And so in this letter, I just want to make clear, because we've talked a lot in recent weeks about suffering of Paul, the suffering that we should expect.

Now we talk about adversity and death. I don't want this to overshadow Paul's whole theme of this letter. This is known as the epistle of joy. Paul is starting this passage and ending this passage with his own joy.

Joy that regardless of his circumstances, regardless of his suffering, he is confident in the work of Christ. He is confident in the joy that will come to the church through his ministry.

And so his joy isn't held captive by the unknown. It's not hindered by the uncertainty around him. Regardless of life or death, we see here that Paul can find joy.

[31 : 48] And so the same is true for us. Do we rejoice in the Lord? Can we rejoice in the midst of uncertainty? Even though we don't know how long we're going to live, what we might suffer, when we might die, can we hold on to the joy of knowing that Christ is at work in our lives?

That we can experience the full joy of that salvation when we are united with Christ again. that's what Paul wants us to see in this letter.

But it's really not singularly focused on joy because that's not how this passage ends. Joy is not the ultimate end here. It's the means to something more.

And so if we look at verse 25 and 26, it says, Notice again this progression in Paul's reasoning here.

Paul is willing to keep on living because he knows that his life is going to lead to fruit. And he knows that that fruit is going to lead to progress in the church. And he knows that progress is going to lead to joy and that joy ultimately will lead to the glory of God.

[33 : 06] And so we see that the glory of God goes hand in hand with our joy. And so this is a good thing for us because I think this is one of the things that the outside world mistakes about the church.

When they think about Christians, they may think of us as unhappy law keepers that just have to do what we can to please a judgmental, upset God. But that's not what Paul is saying here.

It's basically that God's glory comes through our joy. When we realize that to live is Christ and to die is gain, there is no sacrifice that we have to make. We get to hold on to that joy.

And it's that joy that's part of Paul's commitment to the glory of God. It is the underlying reasoning for the decisions that he makes. He wants to see the glory of God.

And he knows that that will be paired with his own joy. And so if you're here today, maybe you're not a believer. Maybe you can't say to live is Christ and to die is gain.

[34 : 12] I ask you simply, what's holding you back? What is keeping you from Christ? Is it the things of this world, possessions and pursuits that the world says brings purpose?

Christ said, Paul says very clearly here that these are both temporary and worthless compared to knowing Christ. And so there is no greater pursuit, there is no greater possession than having Christ.

In a world full of uncertainty, he is the one who gives joy and he is the one who we hope in, both in life and in death. And so this is a reminder too for you, brother and sister, that although there is uncertainty in the root, the result is certain.

And so we can be confident in the work of Christ. We can delight in the joy of Christ. And we can long for the glory of Christ. Let's pray.

Oh God, how we long for your glory. Surrounded by uncertainty in our lives, it's so easy to take our vision away from you.

[35 : 31] To be concerned about our own welfare could be scared of death. Oh God, but may we know that to live is Christ and to die is gain.

May Christ be our ultimate desire. May your glory be our ultimate passion. may we experience your joy in honoring you with our bodies.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Now will you stand with me for our final hymn, Christ, our hope in life and death. and now of the promise the filling of our man and the love and the il Go in