

# Philippians 1:19-26

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[ 0 : 00 ] Amen to the Word. Amen to the rap. There was a time in my day when I was called the Rappin' Rev.

Y'all didn't know that, did you? No longer. Lord, we love you. We thank you for your goodness to us. We bless you for your truth and various ways to express it. Be glorified now through your preached Word in Christ's name.

Amen. Before the 19th century, if a doctor wanted to listen to the heartbeat of a patient, he would do so by placing his ear on the patient's chest.

It has been said that the necessity is the mother of all invention, and such was, in fact, the case with the medical instrument known as the stethoscope.

[ 1 : 10 ] In 1816, a French physician named René Lanninac had the task of examining a woman whose bulk prevented him from the usual ear-to-chest method.

So he improvised. He rolled up a sheath of paper in a tight cylinder, and he used it as one might use the tube of aluminum foil.

He placed his ear on one end of the rolled tube, and the other on the patient's chest, and bingo! He could hear the heartbeat with clarity. He then made a wooden, durable model, and for two years, he studied the sounds of the heart.

Some years later, a flexible wide-tape stethoscope that doctors use today was perfected in 1852 by George Kamen of New York.

[ 2 : 30 ] Though the stethoscope is used to test or to listen to other sounds of the body, more often than not, it's used to check the heart.

The lub-dub rhythm of the human heart. I mention this because I want us this morning to listen to the spiritual heartbeat, the person whose writing we are looking at today, Paul.

We hear the two parts of the one beat in the text that is before us. The lub of the heartbeat, verses 18b through 23.

Single-hearted commitment to Christ. It comes through very, very clearly. Single-hearted commitment to Christ.

The dub of the heartbeat, verses 24 through 26. Tender-hearted concern for God's people.

[ 3 : 51 ] Single-hearted commitment to Christ, on the one hand, but tender-hearted concern for Christ's people, in verses 24 through 26.

So vibrant, so vital, so obvious, no external instrument is needed to listen to what we hear in the text.

First of all, the single-hearted commitment to Christ. We see that again in verses 18b through 23. And this is reflected in Paul's resolve to rejoice even in the midst of uncertain circumstances.

That's his commitment. Notice. Yes, and I will rejoice. The connection with our text today, with where we ended last week, is quite clear.

Very apparent, isn't it? The word about Christ, the gospel, was being spread abroad. And in 18a, that was the reason for joy.

[ 5 : 10 ] You see it there? Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice. The word of Christ, huh? The word of Christ. The word of Christ. Some with somewhat underhanded motives, insincerely proclaiming Christ.

Some out of sincerity. But Paul was saying Christ is being proclaimed. And in that I rejoice. Paul here, well, later, Paul is going to prescribe a rejoice pill for the Philippians in chapter 4, verses 4 through 6.

You know it, don't you? Rejoice in the Lord when? And again, I say, yeah, let your reasonableness be made known to everyone the Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer

and supplication, what?

With thanksgiving. Let your requests be made known unto God. But here he's rejoicing. He's taking his own medicine. Did you see it? Yes, and I will rejoice.

And then he goes on to speak about why it is that he is going to rejoice and the circumstances under which he rejoices, huh?

[ 6 : 27 ] Well, he's faced with prison, isn't he? And with the possibility, and perhaps even likelihood, of not getting out at all.

But though faced with such realities, expressions of confidence echoed from the jail, huh? Listen to them. Look at verses 19 and 20.

For I know, 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.

Interesting word. Want to talk about that in the matter up front. As it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not at all be ashamed, but that with full courage, now as always, Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death.

That word, deliverance, is normally or regularly translated salvation.

[ 7 : 44 ] Salvation. And Paul is really making a connection with what he's calling here, or what has been translated, his deliverance.

And as you see in verse 20, with Christ being honored in my body, whether by life or by death. Normally, he's talking about the word salvation connotes spiritual rescue by God.

Whether we're talking about in a spiritual sense now that all of us who have accepted Christ have received salvation, deliverance, if you will, saving from the wrath of God.

But also there's a future sense of being fully delivered when we are glorified in an eschatological sense.

We still have to be delivered. The normal connotation of the word even in Pauline kind of writings. But it seems like what Paul is doing, he picks up on an Old Testament scripture from Job.

[ 8 : 57 ] And Job chapter 13, verse 16. Turn over there with me. I really want you to see this. It's because we have to understand one thing about Paul.

Paul is a Bible man. He has scripture in his heart, and as preachers do, if a stethoscope is the doctor's instrument, and they sort of wear them, I don't know if it's a badge of honor or what, they sort of drape them around their necks.

The Bible is our stethoscope, if you will. Okay? Paul is a Bible man, so he grabs a hold of a scripture in Job chapter 13, verse 16, and listen to the echo that we hear.

Even in his writing, Job writes this, this will be my salvation. Huh? You hear it there? Paul writes, this will turn out for my deliverance, or my salvation, that the godless shall not come before him. They're not going to come. Keep listening to my words, and let my declaration come, be in your ears. Verse 18, behold, I have prepared my cause.

[ 10 : 13 ] I know that I shall be in the right. Here's the idea. Now, Job's comfort was that he, not the wicked, had an audience with the supreme judge of all.

And that would eventually lead to his salvation, his deliverance, or his vindication, if you will. Huh? Paul had a similar confidence in God, that Christ would be honored in one way or another through his life or his death.

And thus, his deliverance, his vindication, is wedded to Christ being honored or magnified in his body by life or death. Christ's honor was the main thing.

A win for Christ, one way or another, was a win for Paul, even if it meant his death. Huh?

Paul's confidence in the midst of uncertainty, it will be well. My experience, in a sense, parallels that of Job's experience.

[ 11 : 22 ] Huh? And while the Lord was ultimately in control, Christ was going to be glorified. In a sense, Paul was going to be vindicated in life or death.

But there were means by which God would effect that experience, accomplish this, bring these things about. Did you notice those in the text?

Right at the top, in verse 19. It is through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Christ that this will turn out for my deliverance.

Huh? There's no escaping the fact. Paul believed in prayer. Huh? But praying for himself and being prayed for by others.

I mean, here's the apostle. The apostle Paul. Guess what he says to the Thessalonians? Brothers, pray for us. Writes to the believers in Colossae.

[12:23] Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving, and at the same time, pray also for us that God would open a door for the Word.

Well, Paul, this is Paul. The writer of much of the New Testament. But he's praying. Pray that God would open the door for the Word to declare the mystery of Christ.

I mean, here is the one that we come to understand much of Christian doctrine. But he's saying, praying. Huh? To declare the mystery of Christ on the count of which I am in prison.

And notice what he's saying. That I may make it clear. Which is how I have to speak. Paul believed in prayer. Huh? But he also believed in the ministry of God's Spirit.

Here referred to as the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Huh? In the text, there's several ways of looking at that. The Spirit could be the Spirit himself.

[13:32] The provision that God would send would be the Spirit to help out. He would provide his Spirit in this situation. Or it could be what the Spirit of God provides.

Huh? Huh? But either way, the Lord accomplishes his will. Amazingly. I love the way that Luther put it, didn't he? The Spirit and the gifts are ours through him who with us sideth.

Huh? It should humble us to think that the Spirit of God can come and help us as we seek to honor Christ in this world.

Absolutely, friends. Amazing. That God, in his own way, could send his Spirit to attend, to watch over his work in working in and through the people of God.

Oh, to think of yourself as a vessel for God? And that's why it really behooves ourselves to be clean and sanctified and holy vessels that God might work in and through us.

[14:49] Yes, God can work in spite of us. Oh, but we want to be a vessel, of vessels of honor for God that he might use us to accomplish his purposes in this world.

It's interesting how in view of what we read about the Spirit of God in John 14 as a comforter, as a teacher, and as a helper. Oh, and then I think of what Luke writes in Luke chapter 11 about God giving us his Spirit, huh?

His best gift. And certainly there are, as it concerns, the doctrine of salvation, but also the Spirit of God is at work there.

But then we must not forget the entire doctrine of pneumatology, of teaching about the Holy Spirit and its breath and the various dimensions of that. God, the provision of his Spirit in order to accomplish his will even in this incident.

Paul could rejoice in the midst of uncertain circumstances because he was not without God-given resources in the midst of them. God was at work.

[16:01] God was going to be at work even in that situation, huh? How was it that Paul could speak the way that he did in verses 19 and 20, huh? The answer is in verse 21.

And don't you just love this verse? Huh? It could be called, the first part particularly, Paul's mission statement, huh?

Ever created one of those? Are you going to sort of plot out what you're going to do while you're in a certain place? What are you, in order to accomplish something, huh?

Simple terms. The purpose, the goal of our lives, huh? Huh? Paul's statement is clear, isn't it? Look at verse 21. For me to live Christ.

Huh? For me to live, and the verb is somewhat added, Christ is Christ, and to die is gain.

[17:06] Radical declaration of single-minded focus. There's no ambiguity there, folks. Life is Christ, and Christ is life, and for Paul, they were inseparable.

Prior to this, roughly 30 years prior to that, things had changed for Paul. He was a religious professional on the fast track for greatness. I mean, he'll go on and tell us more about that in chapter 3.

But all that changed with one encounter with Christ. Huh? Has your life ever been changed by one particular incident?

Sometimes those are bad kinds of incidents that we enter into, and it can change your life. But then there are good things. There's nothing comparable to an encounter with Christ.

That's Paul. Acts chapter 9. He was doing his thing. He was a man on mission. But all of that was changed when he met Christ.

[ 18 : 12 ] He was on the road to Damascus. Paul headed before Christ, and he was now in his after Christ years. And he was so wedded and so united to Jesus that Jesus' concerns were his concerns.

Huh? That Christ's work was his work. His entire life was wrapped up not in pleasing men or self, but in pleasing God.

Huh? He was prepared to honor God in his life and if necessary through his death. Huh? In Christ, Paul had found a pearl of great price.

Christ was the treasure for which he had forsaken everything. See that in chapter 3. Last week, we sang a song with verses and course that went something like this.

Has thou not seen him? Seen him? Heard him? Seen him? Known him? Is not thine a captured heart?

[ 19 : 16 ] Chief among ten thousand own him. Joyful choose the better part. What can strip the seeming beauty from the idols of the earth? Not a sense of right or duty but the sight of peerless worth.

Nothing comparable to him. Captivated by his beauty. Worthy tribute haste to bring. Let his peerless worth constrain thee.

Crown him now. Unrivaled king. That was the posture. That was Paul. There was no rivaled king in Paul's life. Jesus in fact was king.

Paul was a true citizen of heaven if you will. Paul had someone in his soul filled him for life.

He had come to the fountain that is Christ. He had been crucified with Christ yet he lived. The old had gone the new had come. Nevertheless he lived.

[ 20 : 19 ] How would you fill in the blank for me to live? Hmm? For the heatness it would be pleasure.

Or to put it just to have fun. Huh? For the materialist for me to live is more mullah more money.

Huh? For others for you to live is career or family or fame. Huh? We would put other things in a blank but notice here again Paul's mission statement for me to live is Christ.

Christ that captured him to the point that everything else paled by comparison. Huh? It's a statement of single-minded focus. Huh?

It expresses radical commitment living means serving Christ dying would mean going to be with Christ. I mean it was it's the flip of a coin that has two heads.

[ 21 : 22 ] Huh? It's a no-lose situation. He would win on both accounts. And friends when Christ wins we win.

Huh? Look at the next verse. it explains really what he's just said. If I am to live in the flesh this means fruitful labor for me yet what I shall choose I cannot tell.

Huh? Fruitful labor for Christ dying on the other hand would be gained he would be going with Christ but there's an interesting dilemma that's here that is expressed better in verse 23 he's hard pressed he is between the proverbial rock and hard place the picture is being of one being in unable to turn to the one way or another there's no place to turn huh?

On the one hand he's ready to depart to be with Christ and again this departing it's a figure of speech for death the testimony that we read is one of someone who's ready to break camp or for a ship to leave its port it's a dilemma it's a tug of war it's a healthy conflict a tug of war that's going on in his soul on the one hand there is the tug of heaven on the other hand there's the pull of earth huh?

on the one hand there is the cry of eternity and then there's the echo that pulls him back to earth realities the seven delights are calling him beckoning him but then the duties of earth are there too Christ's glorious presence is drawing him heavenward Christ's laborers are pulling him earthward huh?

[ 23 : 25 ] it's a dilemma huh? hard pressed between the two desire to depart and be with Christ for that is far better most of us are probably not there yet are we?

we um now now let the fires of earth begin to turn up a little bit huh? and then when life doesn't begin to taste good ever been there?

life leaves a distasteful taste in your mouth and then maybe we'll start thinking about going to be with Jesus huh?

at that point huh? oh but Paul's in a different situation isn't he? but as we understand what awaits us in Christ and with Christ perhaps our perspective might change but he was in an interesting

dilemma in jail how many of us would talk about death is gained or departing and death to be with the Lord as being something that is better and Paul really he piles up words when it's translated that is far better it's not necessarily good English when he's to say much rather better but that's what actually he's saying here you just can't imagine Paul stating this and then he's looking for somebody to say amen or somebody to give him five when he talks about it it's better by far it's a good thing how so being with

Christ means that the toil and strain and pain of earthly living will be over now some of you perhaps this morning are feeling a little life stress and strains and being with Christ may sound pretty good to you right now it means that our struggle with our sinful flesh that we go through on a daily basis our strained desires gone oh don't you long for that day huh thank you Marcus someone else could save man too you and I are not the only one struggling down here huh huh the pull of the world and our battle with sin been battling sin lately huh it's over with Christ God it means it means that which we know partially now will be fully known in the future we where the veil is gone and face to face fellowship with

[ 26 : 20 ] Jesus huh martyr! will be swallowed up in immortality glory it means that the time of foretaste is over and full taste is there huh blessed assurance Jesus is mine oh what a foretaste huh gone full taste full meal no appetizer like we have now full with Jesus huh we'll see the one our soul loves and we'll share in his eternal glory Paul knew that being with Christ was better by far huh single hearted commitment to Christ huh but there's another part of the heartbeat isn't it huh verses 24 through 26 notice there with me but to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account notice how he's shifting he shifts from first person to primarily second person you huh your account convinced of this

I know I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith so that in me you will have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus because of my coming to you again huh Paul has spoken of himself and his commitment and his desire to be with the one his soul love being with Christ is far better but then while there was a seeming momentary distant call of eternity Paul was also very much in tune with the very stark realities of living on earth and the needs of his gospel partners for growth and faithfulness and stability so there's a shift so let's talk about you now huh the joyful confidence yields to pastoral comfort that consider their reality huh the tension shifts from him to them and he is encouraging them with the words he said again basically he's letting them know he said

I'm okay don't worry about me but also I am concerned about you and I'm convinced that I'm going to come again to you and I'm going to there are needs that you have I know I'm going to remain and continue to be with y'all for your progress of joy in the faith for your walk as citizens of heaven in this world huh that in me you'll have ample time to glory huh ample reason for glory just as Christ would be honored whether through life or death verse 20 so there would be a cause for glory in Christ Jesus and his coming again to be with the saints at Philippi huh captivated by Christ he wanted the Philippians to know that it was well with him he was okay he's unmoved by his precarious position in prison huh his life was surrendered to Christ this dominated his life

Paul's affection colored in a positive sin the entirety of his life the dominant affection was for Jesus huh hey we can't come away from a passage like this without a measure of self reflection and examination even as we listen to the heartbeat of Paul the church and our world need the future and the future of the Christian faith as I was listening to Joel in Sunday school don't see this morning as he began to talk about the divisions in Islam and the different Islamic sects and how you know you've got certain ones embracing certain things what have you our the church in this world and the

Christian faith needs men and women and our future friends needs men and women who share sort of the heartbeat that we see in this particular passage the heartbeat of Jesus in this world and for this world while citizens in this world we are first and foremost citizens in Christ kingdom and our ultimate allegiance is to him we are valiant for Christ and the Christian faith and the question is are you such a person here this morning or is it simple simply a blasé lackluster kind of demonstration it's secondary you're not driven by devotion to him it's just a tack on to your

[ 32 : 01 ] American life rather than being this being the driving force that guides and directs and helps us determine the contours and the direction for our life it's not simply the add-on friends it's got to be the heartbeat as we think about our children and our children's children oh may friends these things not be lost on us may we be captivated by the beauty of Christ love him serve him the

love and of what we see here may there be a sense in which we own it may ours be a single  
hearted commitment to

Christ and may we share as God would allow us tender hearted concern for God's people that's the  
kind of heart I want pray that it would be the same with you father we thank you and we do pray that  
there would be valiant men and women here today who would with Paul share this as a personal  
mission statement for me to live Christ may that be our posture be glorified in us men women youth  
even children light fires fan the flame it's our prayer in Christ's name amen to and to them to them to  
them!

! them! them