

Philippians 1:12-26 "To Die is Gain"

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Date: 04 May 2025

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[0 : 00] Hi, my name is George Sinclair. I'm the lead pastor of Church of the Messiah.

! It is wonderful that you would like to check out some of the sermons done by Church of the Messiah, either by myself or some of the others. Listen, just a couple of things. First of all, would you pray for us that we will open God's Word well to His glory and for the good of people like yourself?

The second thing is, if you aren't connected to a church and if you are a Christian, we really, I would really like to encourage you to find a good local church where they believe the Bible, they preach the gospel, and if you have some trouble finding that, send us an email. We will do what we can to help connect you with a good local church wherever you are. And if you're a non-Christian, checking us out, we're really, really, really glad you're doing that. Don't hesitate to send us questions. It helps me actually to know, as I'm preaching, how to deal with the types of things that you're really struggling with. So God bless.

Just bow our heads in prayer, please, at this time. Father, we give you thanks and praise that you love us, that you are our Father in Heaven who cares for us, that this is your world, and that when we put our faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, we become your children by adoption and grace. We ask, Father, that your Holy Spirit will lead, bring your word and the gospel home deep into our hearts, so that your word and your gospel may form us, so that we may live lives in this world that are confident and joyful, with our confidence and joy in Christ. And we ask these things in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated.

Thank you. So, actually, just before, just as part of my beginning, once again, we've been going through the book of Philippians. Last week was the first sermon. We have bought these ESV scripture journals for people in the congregation. It gives a nice print, nice paper, a nice print on one side of the page is the text. On the other side of the page, it's blank for you to make your own notes, comments, questions, prayers. They are there in a box. You can sort of ignore me and go get one, or you can wait till after the service. But I will be using this and preaching. It's the Bible, and it's on page eight. But before we turn there, a more proper introduction to the sermon.

[2 : 51] I think I shared last week that, oh, I didn't start my timer. That's not a good idea. I might preach for five hours. No, just joking. I mentioned last week that the book of Philippians has, from very early on in my Christian life, been one of my favorite books in the Bible. And some of you know that the book of Philippians is a source of many quotes. In fact, you might once, as you go through it, if you weren't familiar with this before, by the end of Philippians, you'll say, oh, that's why I saw that on that Christian mug, or on that Christian t-shirt, or something like that.

And they're often very good quotes for people, for Christians, who have terrible attitudes. Now, before you raise your eyes and roll your eyes and go, oh yeah, yeah, yeah, terrible, you know, bad attitudes and all of that. By the way, rolling your eyes at the idea of good attitudes is a bad attitude. Because the fact of the matter is, is that some Christians have absolutely crappy attitudes. And part of the problem for Christians with crappy attitudes is we mistake our crappy attitudes for a sign of wisdom, or realism, or insight. We aren't like those other blind, easily led, gullible Christians. We see the world as it really is, and we tell ourselves this story. But the fact of the matter is, we have crappy attitudes. Now, I'm saying that because you are looking at, for many years, exhibit A of a Christian with an absolutely crappy attitude. And in fact, it was only when I was in my mid-30s. I'd been ordained at that time about seven years. And there was things in my life that the wheels started to come off my life. And the reason the wheels were coming off, I mean, on the outward sign, my life was quite success as a Christian, the church was growing, all of that type of stuff. But I had a whole pile of junk in my life. And as I was forced to deal with it, in God's grace, I was forced to deal with it. And one of the things that started to really hit me was the fact that I had a terrible

attitude about a whole pile of things. I mean, there's other things as well. I didn't recognize anxiety. I didn't recognize stress. I dealt with that. Those are other sermon illustrations. But all of this came home to me in a very powerful way. I'm not naturally a mystical guy, but I do have occasionally mystical types experiences. And I was in my parish in Eganville, and I looked after four little churches. And I was driving from where I lived in Eganville to Killaloo to do an event. And by this point in time, I'm spending a... I was a year or more into trying to deal with the junk in my life. And one of the things that was junky in my life was having a terrible attitude. And I'm driving along, and I'm praying, and I'm asking God to, you know, to work in my life. And it's almost like I got... I mean, I was driving a car. So it's not that God just froze my hand to the wheel, because then I would have gone off the curves and into the trees. But it was as if God almost had me in his grip. And he, for a moment, helped me to see myself as I was. And as he brought me to see myself as I was, as I'm driving, it brought me to tears. Because I realized that the way I thought about myself and my ministry and the churches that I was serving is that I thought to myself that in 10, 20 years, the churches that I was serving would be smaller, weaker, just all bad... just smaller and weaker. I myself personally would be faithful, but the churches that I served was right then, and the churches I would come to serve, they would be smaller and weaker. And it was as if God shone a flashlight in my heart. And I realized that's how I thought. That was my attitude. And as he did that, I realized that could not possibly be his attitude for the churches that I served in. That could not possibly be God's hope for that church or this church.

His hope for you isn't that this church will get smaller and smaller and smaller and weaker and weaker and weaker while I stay faithful. That's not... that is not how God wants to form my heart or your heart.

[7:20] Now, I mention this because this is a bad attitude that's directly attacked or dealt with or confronted in the book that we're about the passage that we're going to look at today. So I invite you to turn in your Bibles to Philippians chapter 1. We're going to be looking at verses 12 to 26. If you're using these little booklets, it's page 8. And I encourage you to bring your own Bibles. It's good to make notes.

It's good to check to see that I'm not, you know, playing fast and loose with the text or anything like that. I want to handle the word well. And last week we looked at it. We're going to go through all the way through the book of Philippians. Just 108 verses. Short, but very powerful. And excuse me, this was written while Paul was under house arrest. And house arrest isn't as easy as it is here in Canada. Paul was shackled in chains. He always had several Roman guards with him. And those guards were changed every four hours to keep them fresh. And Paul was in chains and he wasn't guilty of anything that deserved this. He's been in imprisonment either in house arrest or actually in jails or military barracks for two and a half years or three years or something like that. He has people who want to kill him and he's innocent. And that's his situation. And it's while he is in Rome waiting to be tried by

Nero that he writes this letter somewhere in the years 60 to 62. And here's what he says next. It begins at verse 12. I want you to know brothers and sisters. And by the way, here throughout the book of Philippians, whenever you see the word brothers, you should add the word sisters. The original word in the original language is referring to both brothers and sisters. It's older English where the masculine can apply for both, but you should read it brothers and sisters. I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me, remember I just told you what's all happened to him?

And he says this, what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. Okay? Like I can just tell you, I haven't read church growth books in a few years, but I can tell you this, nobody says in a church growth book, if you want to grow the church, get arrested. Okay? Like that has never been, I've never seen that in an article. Maybe I should be the first one to write it. I don't know. It never says, if you want to have the gospel grow, get arrested.

But anyway, he says, what is really, has served to advance the gospel, verse 13, so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. In other words, he viewed the jail as a mission field, almost as if Nero is going to stick me with a couple of soldiers, changing them every four hours for two years, they're going to hear about Jesus.

[10:22] I mean, that's sort of the attitude that he took to it. Like, how kind of Nero to send people to me every day that I can tell about Jesus. I mean, that's sort of his attitude, right? By the way, you can see how this isn't a good attitude, by the way, to have, isn't it? You can see that, but we'll keep going, because we're getting to the nub in a moment. And most of the brothers and sisters, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word, that is to tell people about Jesus, without fear. Some, and this all just sounds very almost hallmarks, like the sort of thing that a John Maxwell would say, or a Tony Robbins would say, but now it takes a very, very, a bit of a darker turn. Listen to what he does in verse 15.

Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry. Now just pause. That word envy is, in the original language, you could almost translate it more literally in English as hateful envy, an envy which is closely connected to hatred. And that's why they're doing it. And rivalry isn't just sort of something like, you know, Leafs and Sens fans joshing each other. It's, it's factionalism, it's tribalism, it's pursuing your own tribal or family good at the same time that you're trying to keep the other, other people down. It's a, it's a very, very bad thing. So he says, some indeed preach Christ with these terrible reasons from envy, hatred, hate, hateful envy and rivalry, but others from goodwill. The latter, that's the ones who do it for goodwill, do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. And by the way, that word goodwill is a very, it's a good, good word, but I want to bring out a nuance with it about what it means. It means that you do it out of a spirit of love and benevolence. So why do I tell, bear witness to Jesus at the coffee shops that I go to and when I meet other people? It's because I love those people. And I really believe that if they gave their life to Christ, it would not only be better for their eternal destiny, but it would be better for their day-to-day life as Christ becomes the Savior and Lord of their life. I like, I really, that should be the attitude that you tell other people about Jesus. Not so you win arguments, not so people will think you're clever, not, you know, not because it's like, yeah, not for any of those, or not so you can, I don't know, say to people, you talk to more people than others, like, no, no, no, no, no. The spirit that you do that in is a spirit of benevolence and love. That's the proper thing. You love these people. You want the best for them. And you have come to know Christ, and to know Christ, you know that Christ is the best for them.

Verse 17, the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition. In other words, a self-centered ambition. Not sincerely, but thinking to afflict me, cause him grief in my chains. The words imprisonment there throughout this text literally are, while I'm in my chains. What then, verse 8, 13. Now, here's the shocking thing. Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice. Now, this is, this is a sort of an odd conclusion, isn't it? If we think about it at first, when you're just reading it, like, you think to yourself, is, has Paul been taking some type of drug? Like, is he on Valium? Or I don't know what the latest drugs are to improve your mood. You know, has he been smoking one of those substances, or chewing them that you can buy here in Canada to mellow you out? Is that what's going on? Is he just like a guy with his head in the sand? Or is he, you know, some of you know what I mean. I hear this as a term of derision, painted smile Christians. They have a painted smile, big beaming smile, but underneath that, they don't actually love you. They don't actually care about you. They're not actually very good people. They've just painted a smile on their face. Is that what's going on here with Paul? So he has all these people causing him affliction, doing, telling people about Christ for terrible reasons, and he ends by saying this odd thing, Christ is proclaimed and that I rejoice. So what's going on? It's not that he's on drugs. It's not that he's a painted smile Christian. I mean, far from it. Good grief. He's writing this with chains on his hands, and a Roman soldier close by, maybe two or three or four. That's how he's doing it. The opposite of a painted smile Christian. What's going on? Well, last week, some of you might remember that I talked about how significant verse six is. I'll just read it to you again. It's not going to be on the screen, maybe, but in verse six, Paul says, and I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion, or bring it to perfection at the day of Jesus Christ. And I talked about how one of the things which is just so beautiful about that is that it's saying that when you give your life to Christ, and you enter into him, and he enters into you, he begins to work in your life. And the work that he does will bring you to glory. It's not because I'm very competent. It's not because I'm always a wonderful Christian. It's not because I never sin. It's not because I never struggle with shame or terrible attitudes. It's not because of anything like that. It's because Christ himself, through the Holy Spirit, actually begins a work in you, and he will keep that work going in you until you see Jesus face to face and are like

him. My confidence is in Christ's work in me, not in my work for Christ.

[16 : 35] And that's what your confidence should be as well. And so one of the things which is so beautiful about the Christian faith is it's really the Christian faith, which of course is the Old and the New Testaments for us, so our Jewish friends share in this to a considerable extent, that it's really granted to the world the importance of every human being. Every human being is important and precious.

That's a Christian discovery. It's a Christian message that every human being has worth and value and integrity. And from that, the importance of the individual has come, the doctrine of individualism.

And individualism isn't necessarily, in fact, there's many things which are bad about individualism, because it's not just that we human beings are particular people, but we also need other people. And Christianity keeps this balance between the importance of the individual, the person, and the group, whether that group is the family, whether it's the local church, whether it's the nation, that other larger group is also very, very important. And so this same promise that God has made to you and me as particular people, that the work that he has begun in you and me, he will bring it to perfection, that same promise applies not just to us as individuals, but in a slightly different form to the work of the local church.

God is bringing the gospel to more people. And that is his work. It's not because Church of the Messiah is spectacular, wonderful, brilliant, rich, talented, beautiful, funny, cute, any of those things, as much as some of those things describe us.

[18 : 23] It's God who's advancing the gospel. If you could put up the first point, here's how the text is trying to get at it, that God draws straight with the crooked lines we humans draw.

Right? Paul has just, God draws straight with the crooked lines that we humans draw. I'm trying to get a bit of a poetic way to express this truth, because Paul's very frank about the fact that there's terrible things going on behind the sharing of the gospel.

And it's part of another way to express this profound truth that first comes in Genesis 50, and you can go back and read it later on, and it's all the way through the Bible, and it helps us to understand the sovereignty of God, that God is our Father in heaven, and we are his children by adoption and grace, and he is in control. And so, I can't go into all of it, but there's a story of Joseph and his brothers, and his brothers hate him, and so they, when he comes to visit them when they're out in the wilderness, they take him and they're going to kill him because they hate him so much.

These ten brothers hate their brother Joseph. And then they decide, well, why kill him when we can sell him as a slave to slave traders and still get rid of him and have extra money in our pocket?

So that's what they do. They sell Joseph into slavery. And then if you go ahead and read the chapters in Genesis just before this, there's all the terrible things that happened to Joseph, and by the end of it, though, God ends up working through events so that Joseph becomes very powerful in the land of Egypt and is going to save Egypt from a famine and ends up saving his family from death.

[20 : 10] And so after he saved them from death by famine and their father dies, they come to Joseph and say, by the way, before our dad died, he said, don't get revenge on us.

And this is the very powerful part in Genesis 50. Joseph calls them on it. He said, no, he didn't. Our dad didn't say that to you, and I'm sure they must have just, because he's like the second most powerful person in Egypt.

He can just do that, and soldiers can come and kill them. And in Egyptian culture at that time, that would be fine. The second powerful people wants to kill irritating people.

You just kill irritating people. No big deal. But he says, you meant it for ill, what you did to me. You meant it for evil, but God used it for good.

You meant it for evil, but God used it for good. God draws straight with the crooked lines that we draw.

[21 : 16] So the text is not saying, this is one of the things which is so wonderful then about this text, is that God is at work in spreading the gospel.

There are more Christians today in the world than there was a year ago. There might not be more Christians in Ottawa, but there are more Christians in the world. And God will use us. There's no guarantee that our church will get bigger.

I mean, it might just very well be that God has these weird plans for us. That we'll stay a relatively small church, and we die and go to heaven because Christ hasn't returned yet.

And we discover that because we support Samir in his work and pray for Samir in his work amongst the Afghan people, that God uses Samir to bring some young Afghan person to Christ who becomes the Wesley of all Persian-speaking people of the world.

I mean, I don't know. Maybe that's going to be it, right? Maybe right now our prayer support and sometimes financial support for Korgala Ministries, that one of those young orphaned boys becomes a Christian and he becomes the Wesley or the Billy Graham of Africa and impacts the rest of the world as missionaries from Africa come to Canada to bring the gospel back to us.

[22 : 40] God is advancing the gospel. That's this profound thing. That's the bracketing of it. You know, this is serving to advance the gospel. I'm just praising God.

That's how the whole thing is framed. If you look at 12 and how it ends at 18, God, that's the message. That's the good news. God draws straight with crooked lines, the crooked lines we humans draw.

And if you put up the second point, Claire, that would be very helpful. And that leads to a very important attitude prayer for us, an attitude prayer for you and me.

Lord, please mold us and use us as you advance the gospel in Ottawa, Gatineau, in Canada, and throughout the world. You see, when you understand this, it's why we say, you know, we haven't been doing much in evangelism.

It's time to repent. And it's worth it. It's worth it to repent. It's worth it to pray for people. It's worth it to pray that God will give you an opportunity to bear witness to Jesus.

[23 : 40] Why? Not because you're good at sales. Not because you're the world's most brilliant apologist. Not because you're the most holy person who's ever lived on the planet. You are none of those things.

I am none of those things. But because God is at work, and that's what makes it worth taking the trial, the pray and to try. Lord, please mold us.

Please mold me. And please use us. Please use me as you advance the gospel in Ottawa, Gatineau, in Canada, and throughout the world. Now, I'm about to do a faux pas in Canada.

In Canada, you are not allowed to ask this question. Have you thought very much about the fact that you're dying? Like, did you wake up this morning and think to yourself, I am one day closer to my death?

Have you thought about that? That's a faux pas in Canada. You can't say that in a party. I mean, maybe you could as a bit of a joke, and they'll think, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

[24 : 51] But they say, no, no, no, I'm actually serious. I'd really like to talk to you. Have you actually thought about the fact that you're going to die? And by the way, if you're at a party, and you want to be by yourself, that's a good thing to say, by the way.

In Canada, it will mean that people will leave you alone if you want some quiet time. If you want to spend less time with your family at the next family gathering, just say, by the way, have each of you thought very much about the fact that you're dying?

You're one day closer to death? So I'm about to do a faux pas, but it's one of those things where the gospel is really, really powerful and really, really helpful. You'll notice that, you know, the text has said that the gospel is going forth.

Well, what is the gospel, first of all? The gospel is true news from God. It's not good advice, not good rituals, not good therapies, not even good attitudes.

It's true good news from God about Jesus, and it comes with power from God to change you. That's what the gospel is. Romans 1, 16 to 17, I'm not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and then to the pagan.

[25 : 56] That's what the gospel is. It's good news about Jesus, that comes to you from God, and because it comes from God, it is a power that transforms you and changes you.

And it's in light of this that we understand that we as Christians can think a little bit about the fact that we will die, and the people around us will die. In fact, it is a challenge to every system of thought.

You have your boutique spirituality, you have your apatheism, you have your atheism, you have your skepticism. Have you thought about the fact that you will die? How does that measure up?

How does your materialism, your consumerism, measure up to the fact that you will die? You will lose everything. Everything. Well, 18 to 26 is, you'll see in a moment why I'm asking this question, not just to have clickbait or anything like that, but look at how it continues.

So 18 begins with, what then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice.

[27 : 09] And it's interesting, because the rejoicing is both going backwards to the fact that God is advancing the gospel, and therefore we can be involved in meaningful labor and meaningful change, and it's also rejoicing forward, because it's a message about union with Christ and about death.

And then verse 19, for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, this will turn out for my deliverance. Now just pause.

This isn't an attitude that you can take just by itself. Paul has a particular promise that he will be delivered from death this time. Read 2 Timothy for the balance when he knows that the second time and final time he's in prison in Rome, he will not leave to go free again.

He will be martyred. So that's not the attitude. But it's a particular thing in this case that he knows, however, from the Spirit, and it ends up being true. Verse 20, 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.

And that word honored can also be translated as magnified. People will honor Christ. They'll have a higher opinion of him. They'll want to know more about him, that Christ will be honored or magnified in my body, whether by life or by death.

[28 : 36] And here is the famous, one of the famous quotes in the book of Philippians. Verse 21, For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

To live is Christ, to die, life is Christ, death is gain. To live is Christ, to die is gain.

That is not how Canadians think about death. We'll come back to it, but let's keep going. For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If you're going to get a tattoo, that's a good one to get.

If you're 25, you won't be embarrassed with it at 90. Not like most tattoos that most people have. I'm not dissing you. It's just, I mean, have you really thought about the fact you might live for 60 years before you get that tattoo?

But that's a whole other topic of conversation. One of the reasons I don't have tattoos is I wouldn't want to have the same hairstyle for the rest of my life. But that's a whole other topic of conversation as well. For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

[29 : 43] If I am to live, verse 22, in the flesh, that is, in the body, that means fruitful labor for me. In other words, work that will bear fruit. Yet which shall I choose, which I shall, but yet which I shall 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, the body, is more necessary on your account.

Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, that is, living, and continue with you all, not for himself, but for your progress and joy in the faith, so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus because of my coming to you again.

the excitement we get from answered prayer. And that's how he views it. So, what's going on here in this text?

To life is Christ, death is gain. And why is it that he seems to almost talk as if he's considering suicide? And some people would say to me, well, George, and have said to me, George, if what you're saying is so true about what it means to be in Christ, like, why wouldn't you kill yourself?

[31 : 03] If that's, if death is just going to mean you're going to have a glorified body and be with God in the new heaven and earth forever, like, why wouldn't you just kill yourself? And people have asked me that and I probably have often not given very, very wise and helpful answers.

But it's not, he's actually not considering it. It's a, you can check the commentaries. It's a rhetorical device that's used back then to get people thinking.

Uh, but, well, it's still a shocking thing. Life is Christ, death is gain. I mean, most people in Canada will say that when you die, you go to a better place, but they don't really believe it.

I don't think anybody believes it when they say it. I think it's just one of those hallmark words that you just say to another person. But it's not what you believe. And you have no ground to believe it.

The fact is that death feels unnatural. It feels like a judgment. It's something which is, we're afraid of. It's something that we will do all sorts of things to try to avoid.

[32 : 09] It seems unnatural. And most of the religions of the world aren't very helpful with it. Even those more popular religions in North America that people will choose over Christianity, like karma.

Karma is not a hopeful thing. I mean, the fact that you die and you might come back, I mean, maybe you'll come back as somebody famous and important, but more likely you'll come back as some animal or even a bug.

And it's millions and millions and millions and millions of years of going through the pain of death and pain of death only to be reborn and only knowing that you're going to go through the pain of death and pain of death.

It is not a hopeful idea, but a depressing idea that you are trapped. You are like a hamster on a little cage just running and running and running, but you never stop and leave the cage.

You're just always caught in a treadmill. So why is it that Paul says, life is Christ, death is gain? One of the commentaries that I read is a very good one by George Guthrie, and he shares the story that he was told by a co-worker.

[33 : 21] And this co-worker's dad was a business guy, but he was a very devout Christian. And when he was in his 80s, he got diagnosed with cancer that was probably inoperable.

And he only lived about six months after the diagnosis came. And one day, this fellow was driving his dad to go get scanned. And as he picked his dad up afterwards and was driving him home, he asked his dad what he was thinking about when he was in that big device scanning him.

And this is what his dad said. What did I say over and over? Every molecule that makes me me belongs to Christ. Every molecule in my body belongs to Christ.

That's what he said over and over and over again while he was in that device scanning him to see how bad the cancer was. Every molecule in my body belongs to Christ.

If you could put up the third point, that would be very helpful. What's going on here is this very, very beautiful doctrine of union with Christ, which I talked about last week and I'll talk about a little bit more today.

[34 : 43] Every molecule, if you are in Jesus, every molecule in your body, every part of your soul, your yesterday, today, and forever is in union with Christ.

Your sexuality, your time, your mind, your creativity, every part of what makes you you is in union with Christ.

There is not a molecule in your body that is not in union with Christ. You know, I don't think we can ever believe this too much.

It's both very, very helpful when we look at other people people. You know, maybe we have a child who's profoundly handicapped.

Maybe we have a man or a woman in our congregation who is quite mentally disabled, but we know they've come to Christ. We pray that they come to Christ and to look at them and to say, you know, every single part of who they are is in union with Christ.

[35 : 59] For you and me as we age and in the hour as we approach our dying, everything in my past and my present and my future, everything that makes me me in my soul and my body is in union with Christ with nothing left over.

In fact, you see, what salvation really is is that when I put my faith and trust in Christ, or I come to realize that I put my faith and trust in Christ, and I talked about this a little bit last week, I won't belabor it, you can go back and listen, he really enters into me and I really enter into him and now I really am in union with him and that's part of what makes the whole death upon the cross and everything so unbelievably precious and beautiful.

It means with that union of Christ, the sin and the shame and the wrong things I've done and the good things I should have did but didn't do and not doing that and whatever punishment is deserved of that, that comes into him, his life and he takes that into himself and all of the things which he did which were good and beautiful and all of his destiny comes into me and just as Jesus was conceived and begins life as a zygote, what he has done for me and my union with him goes right back to that zygote stage for both of us and he is in heaven and that comes right into me as well and that's what happens when I put my faith in Christ when you do too.

From the time you were a zygote till you die, you are in union with him from the time he was a zygote until he dies and he is now in glory and you are in union with him and so the moment of my

death, the moment of your death brother and sister if you are in Christ is the moment that your eyes will open and you will not necessarily feel it but you are bearing an eternal weight of glory that has transformed you an eternal weight of glory is now you.

Why doesn't Paul commit suicide? Just very, very briefly. Here's a bit of a hack about reading the book of Philippians is that I'm going to read this text right now.

[38 : 32] I'm just going to read it from a different translation because the ESV gives very technical stuff but really everything in the book of Philippians is to be understood in the light of Philippians chapter 2 verses 6 to 11 the so-called Christ hymn or Christ creed.

Everything in the book of Philippians is centered or is reflected or is seen in light of this and I'm going to look at this, we're all going to look at this next week but for now I'll just read it in a simpler translation and here's what it said.

It says, you know, that we're to be, because remember I just said we're in union with Christ and it talks about Christ who though he existed in the very nature as God did not consider regard equality with God as something to be grasped but he emptied himself by taking on the form of a slave and by looking like other human beings and by sharing in human nature he humbled himself by becoming obedient to God the Father to the point of death even the shameful death upon the cross and as a result God exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father Amen You are united to Christ You that Philippians 2 6-11 is what you are united with in Christ and that gives me to my fourth point very briefly if you could put it up

Claire you did not make the story of Jesus Christ or the Bible but God is using them to make you I get this from Rich Mullins I know my buddy John O'Hare is a big Rich Mullins fan if you do not know Rich Mullins make a note Google it go on Spotify absolutely brilliant Christian musician who died in 1997 in a car accident way too young and a hymn that he wrote or a song that he wrote in 1993 was called The Creed and the lines go something like this he goes through the whole Apostles Creed sung very beautifully and he says the chorus is I did not make it it is making me and I believe what I believe is what makes me what I am I did not make it no it is making me it is the very truth of God and not the invention of any man and he gets that perfectly he gets that perfectly he nails it you did not make the story of Jesus Christ you did not make the Bible

I did not make it but God uses the Bible God uses the story of Christ to make me and if that is the case and if in fact it truly is that the moment I die is the moment I wake up and I realize that I have a resurrected body that there is an eternal weight of glory upon what had before been frail human flesh and why would I not do that was how can I possibly do that if I am in union with Christ and the whole story of Christ is emptying himself for others that is the story that starts to make you and make us that should be our prayer that is why we have church on Sundays and tell what the Bible is saying it's why we have the Lord's Supper and remember the words of Jesus it's why we have small groups and scripture memorization is that the story of Jesus will become the story by which we live it's the story upon which we stand it is the story by which we look at the world it is the story by which we look at ourselves it is the story by which we look at others it is the story by which we look at our sexuality our identity our money everything invite you to stand let's bow our heads in prayer father thank you so much for your word thank you for this profound truth may you burn it on our hearts that given that when we put our life in christ our lives in christ's hands we enter into union with him and now we can say life is christ death is gain father we are not worthy of such a gift we give you thanks and praise that your love for us is so great so deep so high so wide so pure so good so just so kind so merciful so thorough so unailing that you do this in our lives so father we ask that the story of christ the gospel and the bible that that would form us and make us and make us more and more and more and that you would mold us and and form us so that you will use people unworthy as we are to tell others about jesus as you bring more and more people to a faith in jesus father we know that when we pray this we're praying what you would have us pray these aren't father bold prayers they're humble prayers father make us humble enough to pray these humble prayers that sound like boldness and we ask all these things in the name of jesus your son and our savior and all god's people said amen we'll be pray these ■