

"To Live is Christ" Philippians 1:12-30

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Date: 11 May 2025

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[0 : 00] Before we continue, let's pray. Father in heaven, we thank you for your word.! Lord, we thank you for the testimony of your servant, Paul.! We thank you for his example, but not just example of how he lives, but really the blueprint of what it means to live a life in Christ.

And that, Lord, it's a testimony too that this life in Christ is not a drab, dark, boring one. But rather, it is a joy-filled, exciting life.

And as we continue on, Philippians, Lord, we ask that you would press it upon our hearts and our minds of the goodness of Christ, the joyfulness of Christ, and that we will grow closer to him through your word, by your spirit.

We pray this in Christ's name. Amen. I have a friend that I've had for a long time. He is a wonderful guy. He is, like, the most pessimistic person I've ever met in my life.

Like, he just is. And I try to kind of buoy his spirits up, not every time. And often he will accuse me of toxic positivity.

[1 : 14] That's what he says. Not all the time, and it's in jest. And I'm far from that positive. I mean, you can talk to my family. I'm not, like, terrible.

Like, I'm kind of even-keeled, whatever. Anyways, not about me. The story is about my friend, okay? Toxic positivity. You know, he just wants more commiseration.

And I, at times, just don't want to commiserate with him. I want him to be happy. I want him to be joyful, to see the cup half full. I bring up this story because this section, the second section of chapter one, Paul is in prison.

And Paul could be accused of toxic positivity here. I mean, he's in chains. He is not exactly in the best situation, which is a bit of an understatement.

And yet, we're going to see that he doesn't complain at all. I mean, it'll come up in one of my points. He doesn't even talk about necessarily the facts of his imprisonment.

[2 : 18] Instead, he just talks about the positive effects of it. If I'm in prison, okay, number one, I am, like, visit me. A lot. Send me stuff.

Stick money in my account. I can buy chips and whatever. But, like, the point is, like, buoy me up. Because I'm as snake belly low as I would be.

Paul here, again, his positivity is like an 11. It is, it seems, it seems almost like he's lost a plot.

Or he has a couple screws loose. That there's something kind of off. I mean, the people that usually are this kind of positive, I mean, they might be a bit, maybe narcissistic, in the sense that, you know, they've done nothing wrong, or their situation isn't necessarily as bad.

I'm not exactly sure how to describe Paul, apart from being a bit uncomfortable with him. I'm a bit uncomfortable with his positivity, of his cup half fullness.

[3 : 25] It's a bit bizarre. And yet, we see Paul, his focus isn't just a mind over matter, or his reality isn't just a mind over matter situation.

He is not just in this zen state where he is ignorant of his situation. Rather, he is seeing it through a completely different lens.

He is focused, not on himself, but on the advancement of the gospel. The gospel, which is the very good news of Christ, that Jesus lived, that he died. He died for our sins in our place.

He was actually killed, actually was buried. Three days later, actually rose from the grave, appeared to many, and eventually ascended, and he is coming again to judge the living and the dead.

That gospel. That's what Paul is about. He is about the advancement of that gospel. So, Paul, being in prison, he is understanding his life in light of being an instrument of God to advance the gospel.

[4 : 33] This is God's will for Paul's life. That he would be an instrument for the advancement of the gospel. And we're going to see that, again, not necessarily exactly like Paul, but that's also God's

will for our lives.

For Paul, this seems like a bit of an unfair situation. Normally, if I'm doing somebody a favor, this is maybe not the best example, if I'm doing somebody a favor, I don't want to get paid back with a kick in the face.

Paul, it seems like it's a bit of an unfair situation. He is working and laboring. He is giving up so much for the gospel and for Christ. You'd think that he would get a bit of kickback. He'd get a bit of a cushy situation.

And yet, he is going to live out his days in a Roman prison. He's going to be released for just a couple years, find his way back in a Roman prison, and eventually get executed. And I would think that Paul might, at least the human part of him, I mean, he's fully human.

He's not like Christ, fully human and fully God. But Paul, the humanity of him would be frustrated.

And yet, and yet, we're going to see here that Paul is unbelievably joyful.

[5 : 53] So much so that theologians will call this letter the epistle of joy, written in a Roman prison. It's really something else. I mentioned this last week, but Philippians is a very short letter.

It's about 100 words in the original language, a bit over 100 words in the Greek. And joy or rejoice are used some 12 times. And again, that's a large usage in a very short letter.

Suffice it to say, Paul is finding himself exactly where the Lord has him, even though it on the outside looks horrible, and yet he is fully joyful.

It's really something. And it begs the question for us to consider, how can we experience genuine and authentic joy as we obey the Lord? Because some, for some, and I put myself in this category, if I'm being honest about what it means to obey the Lord, I'm feeling the weight of it.

I'm feeling the weight of it. I'm not necessarily immediately thinking joy. Like, woohoo, incredible, sign me up for Ottawa Carleton Detention Centre.

[7 : 09] Whatever comes, I'm going to be joyful. It's not like that. I'm feeling the weight of it.

Nevertheless, how can we, I'll ask the question again, how can we experience genuine and authentic joy as we obey the Lord, especially, especially when it leads to our suffering and maybe even our death?

I've broken up this just short section into three parts to help us organize our thoughts and to help us with the flow. And we'll answer this question by looking at three changes that need to happen if we are to have this kind of authentic joy in the midst of obeying the Lord and suffering for it.

The first change is that we need a change of perspective. The second thing is we need a change of priorities. And I'll just say, I labored to try to find another P, so stick with me on this.

And the third change is a change in what we value as the ultimate prize. If that helps you just to organize your thoughts in this, fantastic. So again, a change in perspective, a change in priorities, and then finally, a change in what we view as an ultimate prize.

First point, look with me at verses 12 to 14. I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. So that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard, that is like the emperor's personal group of guards, and to all the rest, the imperial guard, and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ.

[8 : 53] Verse 14, and most of the brothers having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment are much more bold to speak the word without fear. Paul begins the body of his letter.

So last week was the intro. This is the beginning of the body of the letter. Not by detailing the facts of his imprisonment. I mean, the facts, we've talked about it.

If you've been tracking with us through the last portion of Acts over the last few months and then into Philippians, the facts of Paul's imprisonment are that he has been held almost three years without trial.

He is chained at all times 24-7 to a guard. Every four to six hours there's going to be a shift change. He can't go to the bathroom in private.

He can't host visitors or guests in private. He is in a not great condition. He is so much so that, I mean, the Philippian church, one of the reasons why he's writing this letter is to tell them, listen, I'm doing okay.

[9 : 56] I'm still alive. I'm hanging in there. It's not a great situation. Paul, he doesn't begin with the facts of his imprisonment. Rather, he begins with the effects of his imprisonment.

The effects of Paul's imprisonment have advanced the gospel in two ways. Through evangelism, but also inspiring the church to follow suit. So, we'll break it down just really simply, the first,

evangelism.

looking first at verse 13 and 14, or just 13 rather, again, remembering that he has maybe, what, four, six, four to six at any time throughout the day, different guards attached to his hip quite literally.

Over months and months and months, he is just chatting their face off. They are sending guards his way. And what is he doing? What does Paul do? He shares the gospel. He has a steady stream of guards that are coming to see him, so much so that the entire imperial guard, which isn't to say that every last guard has been assigned to him or that he has interacted with them personally.

Some estimates say there's up to maybe close to 10,000 imperial guards. So is it all 10,000? Like, seven to 10,000? Likely not, but the point is is that there is a buzz about Paul in the city.

[11 : 23] People have heard about him. And what do they hear about? That his imprisonment is because of Christ. He hasn't broken any Roman law necessarily. He hasn't been convicted of anything.

But he worships this man from the Galilee in Judea, the province of Judea. And he claims that that man rose from the grave.

and that he didn't just rise from the grave, that he is the Messiah and he is actually the only God.

And Paul, he is proclaiming that even in prison.

Rome is abuzz with the apostle Paul. So, in many respects, Paul here, and this is where this perspective change comes in, Paul doesn't necessarily see himself as a Roman prisoner chained to a guard.

Rather, he sees that a guard is chained to the slave of Christ. And as they come through, there's a new guard and maybe they've heard about it, maybe they're eager to hear, maybe they're not at all.

[12 : 25] Either way, four to six hours on the man's hip hearing about the gospel, hearing about how they don't have to carry their sins any longer, that the evils that they have done as members of the Roman imperial guard, Christ has forgiven it if they would only put their faith and trust in him every single day, day in and day out.

And that is this perspective. So all of a sudden, Paul, whose life is completely Christ, he is a slave to Christ, doesn't see from his perspective, oh, woe is me.

He says, look, I have a captive audience and they can't escape me. Likewise, his imprisonment is affecting most of the Christians. Idea that the Christians in the region or the area that are hearing about him, they are seeing God's hand at work in Paul's life and they are inspired, their confidence is growing and they are proclaiming Christ with boldness and with courage.

It says, without fear. And this is a wonderful thing. They have seen the sovereign hand of God at work taking a bad situation and completely upending it and seeing it as rather a continuation of Christ's victory.

That even Rome, even Rome can't squash out the Christian faith. The gospel can't be conquered. Paul's in chains, not the gospel. And they're all of a sudden seeing that Christ's words aren't empty, but they're real.

[13 : 59] Notice too that their courage and boldness, it comes after they have become confident in the Lord. And I'll just say this as a bit of a side point, which is actually a huge point.

If I was to come up here Sunday after Sunday and just say, share your faith. Don't be afraid. Be bold. Go out there and evangelize.

And I didn't proclaim Christ in his goodness and testify to his fulfilled word so that you did not have confidence in the gospel or in your Savior setting you up for failure.

How on earth can you have boldness and courage without confidence in Jesus? I mean, here's the thing with the gospel.

If the gospel is not a cherished thing in your life and if Christ isn't completely glorious and we grow in that by the way, it's not necessarily a switch, maybe for some, but if you're not growing in that, I mean, to say, listen, go out there and proclaim the gospel, be bold, maybe for a little bit, but all of a sudden we will find out that smaller things seem much more daunting and threatening that they are in Christ who is Lord overall starts to shrink and all of a sudden things that ought not scare you if you have confidence in Christ begin to freak you out a bit because you're putting confidence not in Christ but in other things and proclaiming the gospel is always, always, again, in different respects and to different degrees but it will always run counter to the spirit of the age, okay?

[15 : 51] There is always going to be this tension between the spirit of the age and the spirit of Christ and there will be a battle but here's the thing, if our confidence is in Christ then we know the

battle is won.

We know our Savior is victorious, that we are resting in an already defeated, victorious Savior and a defeated foe.

If we don't have confidence in Christ then maybe he's going to lose or maybe his word is going to come true or maybe, just maybe, all of this is in vain.

I don't want to put my confidence in things that are going to crumble or are in vain. So, when the church in Rome sees what's happening to the Apostle Paul, they are seeing the words and work of Christ being proclaimed and being proven true and this is giving them confidence, then leading them to boldness, then leading them to courage.

They're constantly seeing Christ as glorious and they have their confidence in him. So, I'll just say this and then we'll continue to move on. Read the testimony of the Apostle Paul and get encouraged but share with each other, testify to each other how the Lord is at work, how you've trusted in him, little ways, big ways, medium ways, whatever, but testify, don't hold it in for yourself.

[17:22] Bear witness to one another, encourage one another, read Christian biographies, get really jacked up about how the Lord has been so faithful to his people throughout the ages and build up your confidence in the Lord.

Feed on that and it doesn't mean you're going to turn into a world-class evangelist tomorrow but I will tell you your fear will subside, it will gradually shrink and your boldness will gradually grow. It's a wonderful way to live. Feed on the testimonies of God's people. Again, we see Paul not focus on the facts of his imprisonment but on its effects and because his perspective is reoriented to understand that although he is on earth in a Roman prison, he is united to Christ who has been raised and is seated in the heavenly places so therefore Paul is up there as well.

Paul articulates this in a beautiful way in Colossians in another letter he has written Colossians chapter 3 verses 1 to 4 and this is what he says in this changed perspective.

If then, quote, if then, you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above where Christ is. That is to say, have a different perspective. Put your gaze upwards.

[18:46] words. Christ, who is seated above, seated at the right hand of God, verse 2, set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. I mean, it is a promise that supersedes all promises. Something that you can really build a life upon.

So, Paul is not a mind over matter type of guy. He is not just girding up his loins, digging in deep, finding his true self within, nor is he just pretending like this is not happening, willfully ignorant of what is happening around him.

Rather, he is recognizing that through Christ, even the most difficult earthly situations can be transcended. He isn't transcending them himself, but because he is united to Christ and Christ has transcended all, he too has transcended.

Here's the thing. We have been elevated with Christ, sharing in his victory, a victory that we didn't fight, a victory that we didn't want, but a victory that we get to have in its fullness, its hours.

[20:08] We take hold of it by faith. And this is exactly what we are seeing with the Apostle Paul, this change of perspective, this reality transforming our earthly experience so that everything meant for ill becomes an opportunity for good.

And this will lead us to our next section. As we understand that the gospel of Christ is not bound by Roman shackles or a job loss or a sickness or a diagnosis or God forbid a tragedy, God forbid a tragedy.

Our perspective doesn't just change but so too our priorities begin to change. It's not just that we see the victory of Christ and we have confidence in it, we act upon it, our priorities begin to change.

This leads us to our second point. Look with me at verses 15 to 18. Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry but others from goodwill.

The latter do it out of love knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel but the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment.

[21:18] What then? Only that in every way whether in pretense or in truth Christ is proclaimed and in that I rejoice. There's that joy word in that I rejoice.

Not only is the apostle in this very adverse situation but he has also been made aware that there's some bad characters that are trying to inflict additional sufferings upon him and they are motivated

from selfish ambition.

There's considerable debate about who these people are. I mean not much is not much light has been shed upon them who they could be.

Are they rival Christian leaders that are more or less orthodox but they are selfish they want to supersede Paul in being a leader in the church? Were they some young pastors that just want the old guard to retire so they can take over?

We're not sure. It's difficult to know. It may be an important point for us this morning it's really secondary to their motivation. They are unlike those evangelists who continue proclaiming Christ out of pure and loving motivations.

[22 : 35] Rather they possess selfish ambition and view Paul and his situation as an unjust way to advance however they are looking to advance. Remember and this is the incredible thing here and shows how Paul's priorities are just much different than likely you or I.

He is writing to the Philippian church the first church in Europe the first church that he planted in Europe. They have supported him from day one.

They have sent money to him. They have sent money to Jerusalem. They are concerned about his well-being. Paul with the situation you think maybe if he was so concerned with this he is writing a letter listen I am sure you have a couple lawyers that can plead my case.

Maybe some strong guys that can pay a visit and say listen should you lay up Paul a little bit. But Paul here again his priority isn't self-preservation.

It is not. It is not even to clear his name. Instead Paul who has this heavenly perspective he sees beyond the immediate problem he is recognizing that their attempts to afflict him are actually doing exactly what he wants.

[23 : 52] Exactly what his priorities are. The proclamation of the gospel. They are continuing this spread this buzz of throughout Rome of Christ being the reason of Paul's imprisonment.

And this by the way isn't to say that Paul is just always going to show his belly in situations like this. Paul is I mean he is used to confronting. I mean he is not afraid to confront people.

He is going to push back against people that are trying to take non-Jewish believers and make them Jewish so that they can then follow Jesus the Judaizers.

He is pushing back against them in other parts of the New Testament. He is confronting Peter. Paul confronts people. He is again not going to show his belly but his priority isn't self-preservation to somehow keep his own reputation nice and high.

It's always always always about the advancement of the gospel. His priority is about Christ and his glory and his renown and the furthering of evangelism. In this case he doesn't have to defend himself because what is he seeing?

[25 : 03] The gospel continues to go out. Okay I don't care. I mean they're calling me names. They're trying to thwart me. It's not working. Why am I going to spend the energy to clear my own name when Christ will vindicate me at the end of the day?

You can't really see this in the original language and I certainly didn't see this but in my studying all the commentators that I reference they say there's allusions to a portion of Job where Job he is trusting that God himself will vindicate him in light of slander.

And it seems that that's what's happening with Paul but Paul here is like no what is happening is actually a very good thing. It is a very good thing that we're seeing.

And if my name gets slandered in the midst of it I'll be okay. I'll be okay. Christ has saved me. Remember I am seated with him. I am in prison but I am more free than anyone in the world because I am in Christ Jesus.

So Paul he is not pushing back in this situation. His priorities are crystal clear and laser focused. It reminds me of Genesis chapter 50.

[26 : 24] If you know the story of Joseph I think it might be just one of the most beautiful stories of how God takes all kinds of crazy sinful evil actions of human beings and works them out for his glory.

If you know the story this will be familiar if not I'll try to nutshell it. Joseph he is one of the youngest children of Jacob and he is one of his favorites and he is kind of doted over and as such his brothers in their jealousy try to kill him and long story made short he finds his way as a slave in Egypt and eventually becomes a prime minister of Egypt the second in command only the pharaoh is above him and he saves countless lives when there's a horrible famine.

And his brothers realize who he is after Joseph tells them that it's me Joseph and they're afraid that Joseph's going to kill him. And then in Genesis 50 verse 20 Joseph says to them what you intended for evil the Lord intended for good.

I have no idea how the sovereignty of the Lord works out but it's clear that God has been at work through all the crazy evil and terrible betrayals that he experienced and there's something of that here in the text.

We have these really ill intentioned people whether they're true believers or not they're trying to thwart Paul and God is taking their evil and making it work out for good.

[28 : 16] And here is where we trust in the sovereignty of God that God has said that he will have the final victory and that the victory is already won and that at the end of the age every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord and we are seeing it that nothing can thwart what is happening with the apostle Paul nothing can thwart the gospel even if he is afflicted and wrongfully portrayed Paul will allow it his priorities are the gospel and he is trusting in God's sovereign hand so in light of that opposition becomes an opportunity and I think it's the case for us when we are opposed it is an opportunity I won't go into the details that a situation happened last Sunday and it seemed like it was a potential like huge problem and yet it seems like it's opening a door up for the gospel every opposition with Christ becomes an opportunity so it's important to restate an observation from the previous post the previous point rather that confidence in God again with all of this it has to precede such boldness and assurance that we have to have confidence that God is at work and his word is true furthermore this change in priority must stem from a change in perspective we can't just will ourselves to have a new set of priorities if our perspective isn't upon

Christ so as we transition to our third and final point we need to consider that the person who grows in cherishing Christ it is not it is not a conviction a sentence for a dull and heavy and difficult life but rather a joyful one so look at verse 18 again in light of all that is happening what does Paul say what then actually we'll go back to 17 the former proclaimed Christ of selfish ambition not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment verse 18 what then only that in every way whether in pretense or in truth Christ is proclaimed and in that I rejoice we are seeing once again Paul he is joyful and it's just oozing out of him he is overflowing with joy so that the purpose of Paul's life is no longer himself his priorities have shifted he is not trying to gain his life instead

Paul has lost his life for the sake of Christ and in doing so he has gained it these are words of Jesus himself so let's look at our third and final point that if we are to live this joyful obedient life in Christ we need to change what we value as the ultimate prize we'll start at the last portion of verse 18 and then read to 26 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 verse 21 might be familiar to some of you 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 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 is more necessary on your account convinced of this I know that I will remain and continue with you with you all 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 Paul expands on his posture of joy from the previous section as he contemplates what his deliverance from prison might look like and by the way he is convinced he will be delivered it's a guarantee for him deliverance might look two different ways either off with his head but then he'll be in glory with Christ no more chains no more headaches he'll be with Christ but he might be actually delivered out of prison so that he continues the ministry of Christ for Paul there's two possibilities and it sounds like he is by the way like this is up to him whether he will be like he's the one who's going to decide whether he goes to

Christ or he will be released it's not the case at all but he is kind of wrestling with this reality in such a way as to draw in the Philippians to his mentality into what he prizes most of all as if to say ultimately it is Christ and to be in his presence but really it's to submit to his will that's what Paul is saying in this section I don't know what to choose I mean I could go to Christ it would be unbelievable or I can continue on for your sake so that your joy will continue to grow as you progress in the gospel what can I choose both are fantastic which is to say Lord not my will be done but yours Paul is sure that he will be delivered but how he is wrestling and man is he ever wrestling I say this it is a good thing to wrestle with the

[34 : 26] Lord but ultimately we are allowed to ache after glory we are allowed to ache after heaven especially if we've gone through some loss or there's been a lot of difficulty in this life it is not a bad thing to say Lord I just want to be with you just take me tonight I don't know I don't think that's a bad thing it would seem that for Paul it's not a bad thing and by the way I don't think that's a suicidal ideation he just wants to be with Jesus it's a good thing to ache after the Lord but he is ultimately saying that my prize my prize isn't my own life but it is Christ and his glory and if it is it sake of others and

Paul even says in verse 20 his heart is his eager expectation his heart 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 my life will not be my own that I will not be ashamed that I will be courageous my perspective it is a daunting and scary thing to live for others but I will say it is more scary to know what you need to do and lack the courage and feel the pain of cowardice and by the way Christ will forgive you if you come to him but if you have ever felt like you knew what to do and you didn't do it and you felt like a coward you know that that thing is a thing I'm reminded of maybe one of the best movies of all time

Saving Private Ryan there's a scene at the end where up them! if you know the story his courage left him and because of that his comrade was killed by a German and he wept the cowardice washed over him and he was undone by how cowardly he was however Gary living for Christ might seem the pain of cowardice friends it will sting so much more than any physical pain that you might experience any loss that you might have to endure and again this isn't gird up your loins this is again in light of having a changed perspective and having changed priorities and cherishing and beholding Christ right that that courage comes from having confidence in Jesus but if you know what to do do it and ask

God for strength and if you fail ask for forgiveness and move on I will tell you it will be a life that is totally worth living and I think one of the things that holds us back from living this life for Christ is that we put much value on this life as if there is not a life to come as if there is not glory to be experienced in heaven so that this life if that doesn't exist then this life has to be heaven it has to be heaven has to be we have to experience some kind of heaven so it has to be this life but that is as I was talking to Christine about this earlier that is a recipe for discontentment and what that will mean is we will treat the things of this earth as if they are eternal things and we will tear them apart a bit of a funny thing that came to mind when I was thinking of this if heaven doesn't exist and we put all of our attention here on earth then the things that are meant to carry just a regular burden of meaning but we put on eternal meaning it's like you guys remember

Looney Toons with the abominable snowman and how he would grab Daffy or Bugs and I'm going to love you and I'm going to kiss you and he's trying to be nice and soft but he's ripping them apart and abusing them and mauling them and crushing them I think that's what we potentially risk if we treat this world like it's heaven eternal this world is not meant to your spouse your children your friends your job your family the things in this world they're not made to be to find your eternal meaning only Christ can bear that kind of weight that kind of responsibility and you will find yourself perpetually discontent with this world but if your prize is Christ if you cherish him then you will have that perspective change you will have that priority change you will have that boldness and that you will see that the real prize in life is Jesus himself we'll end with this what is so incredible here in this last section is that the sacrifice for Paul isn't dying for Christ the sacrifice for Paul is that he continue living that he continue living for the sake of other people

[40 : 08] I mean it's really something else and by the way I'd say if you die for Christ it's sacrificing for him but Paul here his perspective and his priorities everything is so changed that for him you know to die is real that's the real prize and to live out this life that's the sacrifice for Christ I mean just imagine friends growing in that mentality okay growing in that that day in and day out our mentality is man if I could only be with Jesus now yeah okay I'll live this life out and I'll live it out joyfully and it's for the sake of others and for the benefit of my family and doing good wonderful faithful things in the in the station the Lord has for me but the real like the ache the real prize it's coming up and just imagine how that will transform our life about how we will not be so constantly frustrated with people not coming through or that the thing that is new that brings us joy it's starting to tarnish that we will have a joy that is rooted in an unchangeable

God and therefore our joy will be unchanging that is our prayer that is the hope of the gospel that is what Paul is communicating to us this morning in his letter and let us ask the Lord for strength to do

just that let us pray Father thank you for your servant Paul thank you that his perspective and his priorities they were upon you and that his ultimate prize was not continuing to live but it was to die and go to be with you Lord what a remarkable man but more so what a remarkable savior how Jesus can totally transform our lives Lord we ask that he would do that this morning by his spirit and that we would grow in this love of you and love for your son and we pray this in Christ's name Amen Amen