

# Why Are We Alive | Philippians 1

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[ 0 : 00 ] take your bibles if you would turn with me to philippians chapter 1 and verse 19 uh this is not what i normally do and i won't do it a whole lot with you i've already got psalms 45 ready for sunday morning working on psalm 46 but i do think i've lived an unusual uh 50 days and in that time i asked myself i didn't know why i was in the hospital i don't remember getting in the ambulance i don't remember getting to the hospital i don't remember any of that even now but i'm in my room uh better known as a torture chamber and uh they're poking and prodding and looking and i spent quite a bit of time totally by myself except the guy watching me who didn't talk and i asked myself why am i alive i think it's a valid question why am i alive and uh you get lonely and scared and uh fact is i had two weird nights at home that's all i had they told me that i just got discharged today by the home health i'm a free man except from joy and betty which is not free yet but anyway but uh the home health people told me it could go weeks and months that i'd have weird thoughts and weird dreams i did have a weird dream last night i took a bunch of people to a foreign country it turned out to be my granddaddy's place and i had to kill you to kill up and abby with me and i left them at the bus i said i'll be back in a few hours i spent the night trying to get back to him so i still got some weird dreams i guess i was laying in the bed and i when i finally woke up and i said my god why am i awake why am i alive i'm almost 66 years old i don't know why you saved me every uh doctor our friends that are doctors and people they would tell my family well that sounds good god can do anything so that that was code for things ain't good buddy uh and uh so the lady that came said if you want to beat these bad dreams you need a mantra and you got to say your mantra like she said you know i use one it was a very catholic one i was kind of like i don't think i'll use that one but while i was in the hospital i thought this for me to live is christ for me to live is christ i've gone over this passage of scripture i just want to go over with you i'm gonna ask you some blunt questions i really want you to consider this i don't think you ever even think about it to be honest with you not like i have not like laying in a bed and uh you can't see your family and you don't have anybody that you know and uh literally i only knew when i went to hospital because they told me and so i just want you to go through the passage with me i just want you to meditate i can't preach preach maybe but i think i can help you think some of this through verse 19 i know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer and the supply of the spirit of jesus christ according to my earnest expectation i really expect this to happen i totally believe in my hope another expectation word that in nothing i shall be ashamed and that ought to be underlined in your bible that in my life i will not be ashamed of jesus christ in my life i will not let

sin embarrass jesus in my life i will not let cowardice embarrass jesus christ why my life paul said in nothing i shall be ashamed but that with all boldness as always so now also christ shall be magnified in my body christ shall be magnified in my body whether i die or whether i live christ ought to be magnified that's what the verse says christ shall be i believe it it's my earnest expectation i'm not going to embarrass him i'm not going to belittle him i'm not going to walk away from him i'm not going to put him on the back burner he's not something i pull out on sunday or on the weekend i am going to magnify jesus whether it's by my life or by my death for to me to live is christ and to die is gain no we don't really believe that we believe it maybe in theory but when it comes dying time we don't tend to believe it i've sat beside the bed of dying people and it wasn't all that pretty i mean they die my daddy used to love cowboy movies and when they shot one and he was dying he'd grab his chest and flop around and my daddy'd say he sure dies pretty where that came from and i've seen him on tv you know it's all such a but it wasn't that pretty it wasn't that pretty uh we know theoretically that to die is gain but we are so stuck on this world that in all honesty the worst thing that could happen to us is to die and we won't say that because we know the politically correct answer dying's great you've heard the story about the soul winner goes in the bar and he said you know if you die today you go to heaven the guy said no but he said don't you want to go to heaven he said don't binge you're loading up now or you're coming later you're loading up now nobody wants to get on the bus christ shall be magnified for me to live is christ and dies gain but if i live in the flesh this is the fruit of my labor yet what shall i choose i would not for i'm in a straight i'm in a difficult place i'm in a tight spot it is hard for me to figure out between these two because i really want to leave and be with christ i don't know if that's true of me and i doubt it's true of you either i doubt most of us wake up every morning saying god if you'd let me i'd like to die today that's what i really want but if you don't want me to die i'll try to do ministry i don't think we really think like that the one night i was i probably told you this betty laid her head on my chest i was back in our bed for the first time in 30 40 days and she laid her head on my chest and i got scared so i couldn't breathe so we real quickly checked my oxygen and it was great so it was all me muscles are dead up here everything's about 50 percent less than it used to be and uh then after that i laid on the bed and i kept thinking well is he taking me tonight i was nervous so why don't you take me last week why'd you bring me home if you're gonna take me i laid there how ridiculous is that because i'm supposed to be ready to go desire to be with christ which is far better and if you think that any other translation of the bible diminishes this then it's either not a bible at all or it's gonna say this there's no way out of this there's no way out of this the way god said it in spanish it says it is muchísimo mejor which

means it's like a lot a lot a lot better that's ridiculous huh muchísimos having this confidence i know that i shall abide and continue with you all in your furtherance of joy of faith that your rejoicing may be more abundant in jesus christ for me by my coming to you again father i so desperately want to live this passage out in my life i love my wife i love my children i love all these church people but i want to love you more i want to live for you i want to die for you i don't know how to do that but i ask you to work in my life and ask you to work in our life i pray you would help jesus come front and center in every part of our lives i pray you'd help us tonight to make a decision that puts you front and center in jesus name amen i'll go back to philippians 119 and i'll talk to but let me tell you what i if i had had my way and you were young people i would have brought a sheet of paper tonight for everybody i kind of wanted you to have a sheet of paper divide it in half and put what you want on each side the god side and the me side and i wanted you to compare your me side you know we tend to think we tend to think if i give god 10 percent 90 is mine we tend to think like that we tend to think i'm not you know if a shoe fits put it on if it don't fit just look at it and pass it around but but you think you think well i tithe and what i do with the other 90 is okay because i gave god his cut that's totally wicked thinking you think if i go to church sunday morning and sunday night and thursday night or wednesday night that you've given god is due that's ridiculous for me to live is christ i think i want to be nice but i think most of us are selfish husbands and selfish wives and selfish children i think life is basically about me i need to be with my wife i need to be with my kids i need to enjoy my stuff it's about me i don't mind giving god a little bit i learned in mexico beggars came around all the time in south america beggars are part of life and you see them all the time and uh the guy that told me spanish always gave them something but it was worthless basically a penny or two but they came every day got their penny or two and then went the next door got your penny or two and if they got enough pennies or two they could get something to eat i think we do god that way i'll be honest i think laying in that bed i had to think to myself how much have i lived for austin even ministry sometimes is about me because well i'm a good preacher i'm a good husband i'm a i'm a i'm a i'm a i'm a and god's up in heaven saying you got this all backwards buddy it's about me not you now read with me if you would philippians 119 and i need you to get this verse because i have had asked trent to tell you several things but i want to help you understand it tonight philippians 119 for i know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer and the supply of the spirit of christ jesus christ would you underline through your prayer paul said god's going to rescue me god's going to put me out of jail and back in the ministry and i'm going to be going at it it's going to be because y'all prayed for me um i truly believe that god heard and answered thousands of people who prayed for us

um uh the doctors did not expect it um everybody planned they told different people you better prepare the church you better prepare his family he's not going home but you have here a god who hears and answers prayer and i hope the fact that i'm standing here before you helps you see that i hope you realize where i was for 21 days you don't live long on a ventilator i was way over time over six days more than what they said the max would be but god worked but god worked and i want you to notice this it was through our prayers you see prayer does accomplish things but i ask them to say to you quit thinking about your prayers i won't tell you why i said that but in james 5 16 the bible says the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much my problem is i'm so fed up with we're sending you we're sending you our good thoughts a good spirit towards you and just so you know my wife was talking to my doctor uh and my doctor knew i was going to die and uh betty said well i'm just real thankful for good medicine and how they were able to handle this and he said no no no it wasn't medicine it was the prayers well i didn't like that i didn't like that a bit because he's hindu so he wasn't praying to god through jesus he's around some demon and let me tell you something prayers work from a righteous man to the god of heaven other prayers are worthless you don't know this but the people that have traveled know this everywhere in the world they pray they pray to hindu gods they pray to to buddha they pray to everything they really do we were up on top of a hill in katmandu nepal and there's prayer wheels literally prayer wheels on a stick and they got they make music and as you walk by you sling your hand across them and they all start ringing and that's prayers going up that's not prayer i mean they call it prayer they light candles and say that's prayer that's not prayer they beat themselves and walk on their knees to an idol somewhere and they're fervently spiritual but that's not prayers so i just want to remind you why i asked trent to say it wasn't your prayers it was your prayers but i just want you if you're talking to some hindu guy and he says yeah it was your prayers you need to help him understand something it wasn't your prayers it was god answering your prayers god loves to listen to his children god loves to answer us jason holt who's i think is listening and he sent me a message and he said you know how the church wanted dork us back well we have prayed you back and i'll be honest with you i do believe that god worked a miracle i can't thank david gates enough they're wheeling david gates out of the icu and i've been icu by now you know david you gotta love david he's the sweetest guy in the world he talks king james and spiritual when he talks to you he says how are you doing this blessed day of our lord and savior jesus christ that's how he talks and david they taking david out and david said can i go by and pray for my friend they parked his wheelchair outside my room well i heard that that blessed me big time god hears and answers prayer and if you don't believe that i wish you just look up here and realize i'm supposed to be dead that's the first thing i want you to get

second thing go with me if you would to verse 20 paul wanted christ to be magnified i want you to notice that what i'm saying to you is just what paul wanted i'm not telling you as a command but i do believe it's an example and it's a perfect example of what we ought to be paul doesn't say y'all ought to feel the way i feel so some of you can just let this go off your back like water off a duck's back you can just ignore it but the apostle paul under his grace of holy spirit of god put something in a book we're supposed to read and a book we're supposed to memorize and a book we're supposed to live and paul said hey philippian church hey philippian church you're praying for me and let me explain to you according to my earnest expectation and hope i'm not going to embarrass Jesus and i'm not going to get embarrassed you know Jesus won't let you get embarrassed when you believe his word and stand on his word he's not going to embarrass you he doesn't embarrass his people paul said i don't want to be embarrassed said i don't and that word embarrassed there's like ashamed paul didn't want to be like i know jesus but i want to talk about him did you hear that i know jesus but i'm a 007 secret agent christian i hide my credentials i hide my faith not paul paul said i don't want to be embarrassed of jesus what i want to do is be bold about jesus so i want to be bold about jesus i want it to be magnified now you want to know what that means good night y'all magnify you don't this year but usually you magnify sports teams i mean you memorize their stats you wear their expensive garb you go to their games you watch them on tv i know different people than i know they stand up the entire time in their house there's a couch right there but they tell me i can't sit down they magnify the sport but we typically are quite ashamed of our savior we typically don't want to say i'm here for jesus and i love jesus and i and he answered my prayer and he took care of me paul said you want to be magnified now here's some things i i just wish i wish we could have laid in that same bed well not you with me but similar bed and i wish we'd face reality do you fully expect to be used of god that's what paul says here are you saying i know it's not about me i know it's about you i know my life is not mine it's yours i know my money's not mine and my time's not mine i know it's yours and i want you to be magnified i laid there thinking lord good night i'll be 66 in a few days if you're going to save somebody why are you saving me like i wanted to die not because i want to die i just want to quit hurting or getting embarrassed uh it wasn't a spiritual one to die i can promise you that um but i would like to ask you if you had these two sheets of paper now or a sheet of paper drawn in half how much your life has lived around me and how much has lived around him i just let you think is your family are your children arrows in the hands of a mighty god is your wife your co-laborer in jesus christ

[ 20 : 24 ] do you wake up every day saying jesus i want to serve you do you go to bed at night telling him you love him and you want the next day to count for him if he lets you live why am i alive i don't know except he must want me to do something i'd like to remind you why are you alive you're a saved born again believer he could take you to heaven right now but he has chosen not to because he doesn't want you living a selfish life it's philippians chapter 2 for a later time but jesus gave it all up to serve us go if you would to philippians 121 this part is that death is far better for the believer what happens what happens that second you close your eyes what happens when you like lazarus said at the rich man's feet and he died and he lift up his the rich man lifts up his eyes and torment and lazarus is in the presence of abraham's bosom for to live for me to live is christ so there's what you could write down on that sheet of paper to live is christ let me show you how it works in my life or if you want to put to live is to make me happy you can put that down i'm not trying to be ugly but when you look at death and face it it kind of affects you paul said if i live in the flesh this is the fruit of my labor i mean if i'm going to be here there ought to be some fruit this isn't for missionaries this is for everybody every woman in this room you could be involved in discipleship quit making excuses about well i'm timid that's a me thing that's a me thing be honest i'm timid i'm an introvert so i can't disciple i'm a little ashamed of jesus when i talk that's a me thing huh being faithful to sunday school church and being a voice of mercy like faith was what is the fruit of your labor i had a thought while i was laying there and i preached the bible to myself i couldn't read had nobody to talk to so it's just me and god and i i thought randy stirwall went to heaven 68 years old what a man of god and i thought it's kind of like a ball game i use soccer because of my soccer relationships and uh you know the coach or whatever you call him in soccer you're out there playing and he picked you and he put you on the field and he told you what position to play and he told you what to do and then one sooner or later he's going to say you're off the field your job's done i'm putting somebody in your place that's what god does to us had i've died god wouldn't have been strapped god wouldn't have been hurt he's god he's the creator of the universe he's the owner of everything he's the all-powerful the almighty and i thought to myself if he calls me off the field i can run into his arms and know he loves me every time one of god's people lays down their sword somebody else is picking theirs up god's gonna get the work done but here's the deal to live is christ is it today's gain is it paul said you know i just can't figure out what to choose i don't really think most of us are in that quandary i don't think most of us are going man i really want to go to heaven today but okay i'll preach i don't think most of us are doing that going past the offer

plate in a minute and i really want to go to heaven but i guess i'll give a good offering i don't think we're thinking like that paul said i'm in a straight i'm in a narrow place i'm gonna it's hard for me to decide paul is literally going that's better but y'all probably need me but that's better i don't think we like i don't think we think that's what it says a desire to depart and be with christ which is far better to die is gain how come we have time for work but we can easily not have time for family devotions how can we have time for any number of sports we don't have time for discipleship and sunday school and being faithful by the way that is not so anybody listen i'm not saying if you're not here tonight that that's something wrong with that this is these are the most unusual times in my life but i am saying if you're not reading your bible you can read your bible at home and you can disciple by zoom if you have to or whatever that would zoom wouldn't it go to for 124 five minutes nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you underline that more needful for you and i want you to notice the pronoun you not me churches fight because pastors and deacons at sunday school teachers and church members are more concerned about what they think we don't seek god's will most of the time we're not looking for god i want this and that's what i want i said preachers i'm putting us all in it but you want to do more needful for you if i live i'm here to serve you people all the time say to me well i've given and when's it my turn to get i've served when am i going to be served i've had people literally ask me that it's more needful for paul said if i live it won't be about paul if i live it won't be about me so i have this confidence i'm going to stay here but look why would you look at it for your furtherance for your advancement to make you go further and to help you enjoy your faith let me just speak to the lay people of our church watching online or listening you know you've grown and matured but you i think we could follow paul's example here there's a new christian struggling and uh he doesn't understand his faith he doesn't understand his salvation he's afraid of losing his salvation he doesn't understand baptism but you could change that you could say hey i'm here for you i'm going to help you there's a young missionary a young student and you could be here and say you know i'm here for you i'm here for you when faith would come and speak to me i tell her i love you thank you so much for being so kind to me and faith would say you know we're family i'm just doing what family does that's what you ought to be doing these children's classes and all the things that we used to do and will do again that's a job for him you're serving somebody else and then i'd like you look at the last verse philippians 126 that you're rejoicing may be more abundant in jesus christ paul said i don't want you to rejoice in me i don't want you getting excited about me i don't i'm supposed to keep my vocal cords well lubricated and so are you speech therapist i know

things you don't know uh at least they tell me a bunch of stuff uh but you know paul's goal was i want them to love jesus i want to rejoice in jesus i can't wait for psalm 46 sunday night uh you ought to read it of course it's word of god so it's wonderful but you know what it is we trust god and i could lay in that bed and the one joy i had was bringing all this stuff i knew by heart and then i'd lay in the bed and i just plug it in i was like that really helps this and i just built whole sermons in my head i doubt i'll ever preach them i was probably too drugged to remember most of them but you have a job so on one page you got your me page and on one page you got your his page what are you doing are you a faithful giver do you support missions do you spend your money on a weekly even the money that's yours that he let you keep it was his he gave it all to you but you know you can't really spend that on stuff that doesn't please him it's just not the way it works and you can give god service times but you can't spend your time doing things he's not pleased with because we're his all the time why am i alive so i have faced that question i think about it even now every day i say god why don't you let me live why i mean i was already there all they had to do is get the casket and take me out he let me live so i have a thought in my mind i have to think why did he let me live he said go back in the game go back in the game i don't know why he said it but i'll tell you this i don't know why he's letting you in the game either but you're all in the game why are we alive i can tell you the answer the biblical answer jesus and others how much of your life is being lived to get the gospel to the world you don't have to go but you ought to pray how much of your life is being david gates told you there's muslims all around us there's indians all around us we're gonna live here they don't know about jesus we ought to make much of jesus the people at your workplace might mock you and call you preacher man because you mentioned jesus but i'm telling you they ought to know i'm here you say no no you can't mix jesus and life really really well you got to separate sports and jesus and business and jesus not really you don't need to be one of them fake weirdo christians that just try to use jesus but you ought to be willing to tell people about jesus so if you were laying in a bed and you couldn't remember the last 31 days of your life and you came to because there's 21 on the respirator and i don't remember the last 10 i was at home and you come to and somebody comes in the room and says do you know why you're here and my answer was not really sure and they said well you had covid and double pneumonia okay if you say so i don't know and then they try to get me to remember my name they have to teach me how to walk and i'd lay in that bed and i'd say lord i could have just gone home but you kept me alive and here's what rings through my mind all the time



it's all about you so what do you want me to do i would like to challenge you watch that me page and see if you can't get some of that me stuff over on that his page i'd like to challenge you to think like this why did he let me live a little girl got killed at eight years of age in atlanta you could have died car wrecks disease but god's let you live is it just because he wants you to live a selfish life he wants you to live for you you know that's what ends up happening with the nation of israel that's what happens to the kings that's why they have to continue sending prophets to yell at them and say get back to jesus i challenge you let's get back to jesus father in heaven i love you and i thank you and i ask you to move pray you'd work and i'll give you honor and glory with your heads bowed your eyes closed i know it may have been even difficult to understand me but if the holy spirit has spoken to you i'd ask you to respond i think you ought to say god i want to live what do you want me to live i want my life to accomplish your purposes i think you ought to come and lay your keys on the altar and your checkbook and a title to your house and your grandkids and your children and i think you ought to tell him they're all yours it's all about you everything's about you tell him i'm going to live for you tomorrow morning when we wake up and tonight when we step out of here let's think why am i alive why am i alive it's all about jesus maybe you ought to make a commitment to family devotions maybe you ought to make a commitment to personally reading your bible and praying every day maybe you ought to make a commitment to try to share your faith with some people maybe you ought to make a commitment to get involved in discipleship you say i don't know what to do they got an institute here go to it but you need to figure out why am i alive why am i alive this is a gift given to you by god it's not an accident you're special you're his father in heaven i thank you for what you've done tonight i thank you for saving my life but god i want to please you i don't want to ruin my life or my testimony with these extra days or months or years you're giving me i want your will i want jesus magnified and glorified i want you to lift it up god i pray you let vision get out of this covid thing and get over coronavirus and get victory and let us swell the ranks here raise up more missionaries send more to the field do more discipleship do more soul winning god do a work here and i'll give you praise for it all in jesus name amen thank you