

JESUS STRONG IN TUNNEL VISION

Part 3 of Jesus Strong. Philippians 1:20-26.
Peter Foxwell. Cornerstone Church. September 29, 2024.

CANAL BOATING IN A TUNNEL

PHILIPPIANS 1:20-26

20 My eager expectation and hope is that I will not be ashamed about anything, but that now as always, with all courage, Christ will be highly honored in my body, whether by life or by death.

21 For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

22 Now if I live on in the flesh, this means fruitful work for me; and I don't know which one I should choose. 23 I am torn between the two. I long to depart and be with Christ — which is far better — 24 but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for your sake.

25 Since I am persuaded of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, 26 so that, because of my coming to you again, your boasting in Christ Jesus may abound.

SHOULD I STAY OR SHOULD I GO?

On the one hand ...

- Staying meant fruitful ministry and the progress of the Philippians joy and faith. That is good.

On the other hand ...

- Death or departure meant being with Christ immediately. That is better.
- “Departure” is used in Luke 12:36 to refer to leaving a wedding to go home.

- In Paul's mind, death meant going home to God and a full-on encounter with Jesus (Note: This is not a good reason to seek martyrdom or take your own life. Life and death are God's business.)
- Thomas Brooks, the Puritan pastor (1608 - 1680) wrote:

“A Christian knows that death shall be the funeral of all his sins, his sorrows, his afflictions, his temptations, his vexations, his oppressions, his persecutions. He knows that death shall be the resurrection of all his hopes, his joys, his delights, his comforts, his contentment.”

From: The Transcendent Excellency of a Believer's Portion above All Earthly Portions. Quoted by: <https://gracequotes.org/topic/death-christian-comfort/>

- How did Paul reach this state of mind?

PAUL'S TUNNEL VISION

Paul had an intense focus on Jesus that led to him believing that living is good and dying is better

- Verse 13: Paul was delighted that his imprisonment made Jesus known.
- Verse 14: Paul noted that the Christians in Rome were preaching Christ fearlessly.
- Verse 18: Paul rejoiced that Christ was proclaimed.
- Verse 20: Paul stated that Christ would be highly honored in his body, whether by life or death. He wanted to “magnify” Jesus - make him close and clear to those watching.
- Verses 21 and 22: We already talked about these verses.
- Verse 26: Paul anticipated his release would cause the Philippians to boast in Christ.

THE NORMAL CHRISTIAN LIFE

The normal Christian life is a single-minded, tunnel-vision focus on Jesus.

- This focus on Jesus isn't just for Apostles or fanatics.
- It is for all us in life's mundane, practical dimensions.
- Theologian Michael Horton's book: "Ordinary: Sustainable Faith in a Radical, Restless World."

Everything can be lived with a focus on Jesus and a desire to magnify him in life or death.

- Relationships, changing diapers, washing dishes, homework, budgets, jobs, hobbies, time, prayer,
 - A tunnel-vision focus on Jesus—making it our goal to honor him by life or death—is what makes us Jesus Strong.
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SMALL GROUP GUIDE

Review

- Review the September 29 study guide (<https://www.famousgod.com/teaching-notes>)
- What were the highlights of the passage or Peter's teaching?
- What questions do you have about the passage or Peter's teaching?
- Use the S.P.E.C.K. method to reflect on and apply the teaching:
 - S: Sins to confess
 - P: Promises to claim
 - E: Examples to follow
 - C: Commands to obey or Christ to rest in
 - K: Knowledge or insights to consider

Discuss

- What practical ways have you used to increase your focus on Jesus in the ordinary, mundane, everyday things of life?
- How do you walk the line between boredom and complacency in "ordinary faith" and unsustainable zeal in "radical faith"?
- How does the teaching in Philippians 1:20-26 help you face death and dying? How can you increase your assurance in the face of death?

Prayers

- Pray for revival in the American Church and national spiritual awakening.
- Pray for the Cornerstone Church - people, volunteers, staff, leaders.
- Pray for your group.
- Pray for whatever the Lord puts on your mind.