

The Stories We Tell: Breaking Out (Part 2)

Introduction

The Text

¹ But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest ² and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. ³ Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. ⁴ And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” ⁵ And he said, “Who are you, Lord?” And he said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. ⁶ But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.” ⁷ The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. ⁸ Saul rose from the ground, and although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. So they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. ⁹ And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

¹⁰ Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, “Ananias.” And he said, “Here I am, Lord.” ¹¹ And the Lord said to him, “Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, ¹² and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.” ¹³ But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name.” ¹⁵ But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. ¹⁶ For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.” ¹⁷ So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” ¹⁸ And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized; ¹⁹ and taking food, he was strengthened. For some days he was with the disciples at Damascus. ²⁰ And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is the Son of God.” (Acts 9:1–20)

The Stories We Tell—Breaking In and Breaking Out

A. This is now our third and final week in this text. And, in it, we see how Saul (better known to us by his Roman name Paul) goes from being one of Christianity’s greatest adversaries to one of its greatest advocates. He goes from foe to friend—all because of what happens here on the road to Damascus.

1. Jesus is confronting and breaking into Saul’s life—cutting through the fog of his own self-righteousness and things.
2. But Jesus is not just breaking into Saul’s life at this point, he also starts to break out from it.
 - a. In other words: Saul, from this time forth, he’s a changed man. He goes from telling one story about God and about himself to telling a completely different story—the story of the gospel. He sees the truth.

- B. This conversion experience he has here, as we might expect, it makes a lasting impression on him—so much so that, when we look closely, I think we see that much of Paul’s theology and ministry has been shaped by it in a fundamental way.
 - 1. All his teaching, the theology, the doctrine the stuff he writes about and develops in his letters—it all seems to have been worked out “under the influence” of Damascus, we could say.
 - a. It’s as if here on the road a seed was planted. And that seed would take root and send up stalk and from there give way to all the various branches of Paul’s theology and thinking.
- C. And so what I want to do this week is carry on with what I began last time. I want to continue considering the various branches of Paul’s theology and show you how they connect to and, in many ways, grow out from his conversion experience as we see it here in [Acts 9](#).
 - 1. Last week we looked at three of these branches: (1) his Anthropology (or his understanding of man and human nature); (2) his Christology (or his understanding of Jesus—who he is and what he does); and (3) his Soteriology (or his understanding of how we get saved and put right with God).
 - 2. This morning, I have three more for us: (4) his Ecclesiology (or his understanding of the church); (5) his Missiology (or his understanding of missions); and (6) his Eschatology (or his understanding of the end and how all human history will shake out in its final chapter).

Branch #4: Ecclesiology

- A. By Ecclesiology, again, I’m referring to Paul’s understanding of the church. And I want to show you how his conception of the church seems to have been radically influenced by this experience at Damascus.

“Why Are You Persecuting Me?”

- A. It was really one captivating little detail in the story here that first alerted me to this. And it has massive implications for the church.
 - 1. I wonder if you noticed what Jesus first says when he confronts Saul there on the road? It’s not what we would first expect. Look at [v. 4](#): “[And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?’](#)”
 - a. It’s this direct object here—“[me](#)”—that I found so intriguing. Why?
 - i. Well, because technically speaking, Saul isn’t persecuting Jesus. As we saw back up in [v. 1](#): Saul is “[breathing threats and murder against](#) [Who? Not Jesus himself, right? But against . . .] [the disciples of the Lord . . .](#)” He’s not persecuting Jesus. He’s persecuting his followers.

- ii. Furthermore, how could he even begin to persecute Jesus? Jesus himself has already passed through his shame and suffering and death and he's now risen, ascended, in glory. He's in the heavens. He's far above Paul.
- B. In what sense, then, is Jesus able to ask, "[W]hy are you persecuting me?"—or as he repeats it again for emphasis it would seem in v. 5: "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting"?!
 - 1. Is Jesus like some of those people we know where no matter what the issue is we're discussing, somehow it always ends up being about them. And you want to say: "This isn't about you. Stop making it about you." Is that what this is?
 - a. No, of course not.
- C. Then what is it then?
 - 1. Well, for one thing, this is Jesus identifying with his people—so identifying with them, in fact, that when they suffer, he suffers.
 - a. This is the sort of thing Paul would later write about concerning his own ministry, 2 Tim. 4:16-17: " ¹⁶ At my first defense no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me. . . . ¹⁷ But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me" "He was there with me in the dark night when no one else was." He identifies with us in our hardship.
 - i. It's one thing to suffer. It's another thing entirely to suffer alone, right?
 - (1) Listen, if you're a Christian, you may feel alone in your suffering, but you're never alone in it. He suffers with you. He stands by you. He identifies with you.
 - 2. But, for a second thing—and this is where we start to really move towards this idea of Ecclesiology—we see in Acts 9, not just that Jesus identifies with us, but that we are identified with him.

The Church As Christ's Body

- A. What I mean is this: I think it's quite possible that as Paul reflected on these words of Jesus here in Acts, as he considered what it means that persecuting the church is persecuting Jesus—somewhere in the mix of these reflections he began to develop that wonderful metaphor for the church which he later gives to us most strikingly in 1 Cor. 12.
 - 1. There he talks about the church as what? Do you remember? The body of Christ.
 - a. Because, through the Spirit, we all are united to Jesus in some deep and fundamental way, we are all considered a part of Christ's body—such that, if you strike us, you strike him. When people see us, they see him (at least they should). He's in heaven, and yet he's right here. We are together identified with him.

- i. As Paul writes in [1 Cor. 12:27](#): “Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.”
- B. And, again, this has massive implications, not just for our relationship with Jesus, but also and especially for our relationships with one another as the church.
 - 1. Because what this means is that, when we are saved, when we come into relationship with Jesus, we also, whether we like it or not, come into relationship with other Christians as well.
 - 2. We don’t just come to Christ, we come into a community.
 - 3. We become a member of a larger body, his body . . . the church.
 - a. And just as your bicep, as impressive as it is, would shrivel and die if it weren’t connected to the rest of the body, so too you, as impressive as you are, if you try to do this Christian life thing alone, if it’s just you-and-Jesus, you also will spiritually shrivel and imperil your soul.
 - i. You are saved into a body. And the only way to be a healthy Christian is to be vitally connected to it—doing life with the other members.
- C. Paul develops this idea throughout his letters (cf. [1 Cor. 12-14](#); [Rom 12:3-8](#); [Eph. 4:1-16](#)). But, even more inspiring, he actually models it in his own life.
 - 1. Have you noticed how he often begins and ends his letters with references to all these various people whom he knows and has worked alongside and is thankful for and all this?
 - a. We might be prone to just skip right over that and miss what’s really happening.
 - b. Don’t you see? Paul’s own life is an illustration of this very point—there’s no such thing as lone-soldier Christian. Following Jesus is a community project.
 - i. Even the great apostle, who himself seems to have turned the world upside down—even he lived as one small part of this interdependent body of needy people we call the church.
 - ii. And if even Paul needed to live this way, how much more do we?

The Rest of the Narrative

- A. For Paul, I think this conviction, this understanding of the church, it started right here with his conversion.
 - 1. And, certainly, as I’ve said, I think a lot of it spun out from this little statement from Jesus here.
 - 2. But I don’t think that was all. In fact, in many ways, the rest of the story here just continues to reiterate the point. Did you notice?

Ananias

A. Conceivably, Jesus could have converted Paul and established him in the gospel all on his own. Jesus could have been the one to appear to him later and give him his sight back and all this.

1. But he doesn't. He sets Paul's conversion in motion with this encounter on the way to Damascus, but then he taps another to continue it, to finish the deal, to close the sale.

a. He calls a guy by the name of Ananias—a man who is otherwise utterly unknown to us save this one scene. And yet Jesus taps him to play this vital part in bringing Paul to the fullness of salvation and into the church.

B. Look back at vv. 10-12: “¹⁰ Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, ‘Ananias.’ And he said, ‘Here I am, Lord.’ ¹¹ And the Lord said to him, ‘Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, ¹² and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.’”

1. Why doesn't Jesus just take care of this himself?

a. Because when we're saved we're not just saved into relationship with Jesus we're saved into relationship with the others. We become one member of a larger body.

i. And he wants Paul to get it.

ii. He wants Paul to feel it . . .

Laying Hands

A. That's why when Ananias shows up at Saul's place, what does he do? He lays his “hands on him” (v. 17).

1. Now the point here isn't that Ananias' hands are magical or something. We're not talking about Benny Hinn lightning bolt slain-in-the-Spirit madness.

2. The point is to express intimacy, acceptance, solidarity. “I'm with you. We're together in this.”

“Brother”

A. This is emphasized even further with the word of welcome Ananias offers him. Did you catch it? How does he address him? “Brother Saul . . .” (v. 17).

1. Those two words, put side-by-side as they are here, would have been unthinkable just days prior.

a. Saul was not a brother, he was an enemy. He didn't want a relationship with Ananias, he wanted to arrest him, to kill him.

b. But such is the power of the gospel. It reconciles us not just to God but to each other. It takes enemies and makes them brothers.

B. I imagine Paul never got over this greeting. I imagine he was just weeping upon hearing such words.

1. He had just spent three days in darkness. He was no doubt struggling with fresh revelation of who he truly is, and who God is, and how far off he'd gotten. You can imagine the guilt and the shame and the anxiety of it all. "I've made a wreck of my life. I'll never recover from this."
2. And then, perhaps, the first words he hears from out of this darkness are these from Ananias: "[Brother Saul](#)"—and at once something like scales fall from his eyes and he realizes not only can he be loved and accepted and forgiven by God, but he can be loved and accepted and forgiven by God's people.

- a. What a magnificent thing! There's nothing like the church, when she's truly shaped by the gospel of Jesus Christ.

C. And even in that word "[brother](#)", all that we've been saying to this point is implied, is it not?

1. It means now you're not just a friend to come and go as you please. You're family. You're connected to us in this at the deepest level.

It Changed Him, But Has It Changed Us?

A. So I know this experience at Damascus changed Paul and it's exerted its influence on his understanding of and participation in the church.

B. But has it changed us?

1. Are we still trying to do the Christian life alone? Keep your distance from other Christians lest they get up in our business or crimp our style or whatever?
 - a. Don't you see here: the gospel is about more than getting us into relationship with God, it's about getting us into his family. We need each other. More than we know!

C. So let's take those risks. Let's move towards each other.

1. You've got to know that it was a risk for Ananias to move towards Saul. That's why he objects at first. "Lord, are you serious? Saul? You do know what he's come to Damascus to do, don't you?" (cf. [vv. 13-14](#)). He was scared. But it's worth it.
2. So invite someone over to dinner. Join a Home Group however inconvenient it may feel and show up. Prioritize the Sunday Service over everything else. Linger afterwards instead of just rushing off. Ask for prayer regarding something you're truly facing. Confess sin, bring it out into the light.
 - a. Do life together as members of Christ's body, the church.

Branch #5: Missiology

- A. By Missiology, again, I'm referring to Paul's understanding of missions and what the mission of the church really is.
- B. This takes everything we've been saying a step even further.
 - 1. Jesus doesn't just save us for more even than relationship with himself and with one another in the church.
 - 2. He also saves us to go bring the gospel to those outside, to those who haven't yet believed or even heard.
- C. This is why at Mercy Hill we talk about our three core values of Faith, Community, and Mission.
 - 1. The upper front, the inner front, and the outer front. It's all here.
 - a. We come to God through Jesus.
 - b. We're brought into the family.
 - c. We go out on mission to reach the world.

Three Key Components

- A. But what does this mission look like? Well, I think it's because of his experience at Damascus that Paul comes to see three key components involved in the church's missionary enterprise.
 - 1. He sees: (1) the heart behind it; (2) the goal for it; and (3) the means of accomplishing it.

Component #1: The Heart behind It

- A. By this, I'm simply referring to the humbled heart of submission. So long as you're on your own mission you can never really be on God's.
 - 1. So Paul, he was on a mission, right? Entering Damascus. And he actually thought, as we've seen, that he was on God's mission, that he was doing God's work, getting rid of these Jewish Christian heretics.
 - 2. But he wasn't on God's mission. He was on his own. And before he could ever be put on God's mission he must first be humbled.
 - a. So long as we think we are of great use to God and his kingdom, truly we are of very little use. Because, in our pride, we'll tend to bark orders at God instead of taking orders from him.
 - b. Utility requires humility. You can't be used by God until you're humbled before him.
- B. So Paul there on the road is humbled to the dirt, literally.
 - 1. And I love this. It's not recorded in our text, but later, when Paul again recounts these events, he makes it plain that there in the dirt, with his heart now humbled before God, he has one more question for Jesus, [Acts 22:10](#): "What shall I do, Lord?"
 - a. That's it! That's the heart of a missionary.

- i. It's not: I tell you.
- ii. It's: You tell me. What should I do? Where should I go? What should say?

(1) If you noticed, Ananias captures this spirit very well when he responds to the Lord's first calling his name there by saying: "[Here I am, Lord](#)" (v. 10).

- C. I wonder: how many of us are honestly saying this to the Lord right now? "Here I am." What shall I do? You're the Lord, I am not. It's your mission I want to be on, not my own. That's where it starts.

Component #2: The Goal for It

- A. In Paul's commission, we also see what's really the end goal for all of missions. And we might put it this way: the end goal for all of missions is to go with the gospel to all the nations.

- B. So Jesus says to Ananias of Paul in v. 15: "[\[H\]e is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.](#)"

- 1. Jew, Gentile—or in other words: everyone, everywhere—they all need to hear of the God who "[so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life](#)" (John 3:16).

- 2. And this mission would become Paul's undying passion.

- a. And no wonder! When you've experienced the welcome of God the way he had, you want to extend it to others. You realize there's no one outside the circle of God's grace. Anyone can be saved.

- C. He talks about this mission in all his letters.

- 1. Indeed, it's really the background and context for all of his letters. After all, he's writing to the churches he's helped plant among the nations.

- 2. And he calls these believers, you and I, into the same sort of missionary lifestyle.

- D. So in [Rom. 10](#) he writes: "¹³[\[E\]veryone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.](#)' ¹⁴[\[But . . .\] How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?](#) ¹⁵[And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!'](#)" (vv. 13–15).

- 1. Note the interlocking chain of his logic here:

- a. Before people can get saved, they must call on the Lord.
- b. But before they can call on the Lord, they must believe in him.
- c. But before they can believe in him, they must hear of him.
- d. But before they can hear of him, someone must preach about him.

- e. But before someone can preach about him, that Christian must be sent to them. And how beautiful are their feet because they come and go with the good news of the gospel!

E. Do you have feet like that? Do you have beautiful feet?

1. My feet are particularly ugly. I got these ridiculously long two middle toes. It's almost like they've got an extra knuckle or something. I used to not even wear flip flop sandals in high school because I was too embarrassed by them. Now I don't care. But they're ugly.
2. But that's not what I'm talking about, right? Are you bringing the good news of God's grace to people? Are you living as a sent one of God? Are you on this mission to go with the gospel to everyone everywhere?

F. You know one of the reasons we might not be doing that? Because it's hard. Because in some ways we know it's going to cost us. And that leads us to this third and final component . . .

Component #3: The Means of Accomplishing It

A. Now, of course we know one of the means of accomplishing this mission is to preach the gospel, to share the good news, to tell people about Jesus.

1. But there is something else that's highlighted in what Jesus says about Paul here in [Acts 9](#). And it's this idea of suffering in love for the people we're sharing with.

B. Jesus says, as we saw, that he is to "[carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel](#)" (v. 15).

1. Even here he is hinting at something more than just preaching. The word "[carry](#)" here, in the Greek it's [bastazō](#), and it means "to sustain a burden; to bear up under something burdensome." It implies that you're weighed down with something. It's hard.
 - a. It's the same word used of Jesus when he's "[bearing](#) [Gk. [bastazō](#)] [his own cross](#)" in [John 19:17](#).
 - b. It's the same word Jesus uses in [Luke 14:27](#) to talk about how, as disciples, we too are to "[bear](#) [Gk. [bastazō](#)]" our own cross and come after him.
 - c. It's the same word Paul uses in [Gal 6:17](#) when referring to the suffering his ministry has inflicted upon him: "[I bear](#) [Gk. [bastazō](#)] [on my body the marks of Jesus](#)."
2. So "carrying" Jesus' name before people implies more than just preaching about Jesus to people.
 - a. It means suffering in love for him and for those you're trying to reach.
 - b. It means you're not just going to talk about Christ crucified, you're going to exemplify it in your own life.
 - c. You're going to lay your life down in love for them even as you talk about how he laid his life down in love for them.

- i. It's going to be awesome. But it's going to hurt.
- C. Jesus makes this connection explicit when he goes on to say to Ananias in v. 16: "For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name." Did you catch it? "Carrying my name" equates to "suffering for the sake of my name."
 1. And I just think this is incredible. There's no hint of the prosperity gospel here—that false teaching that Jesus' big plan for your life is to make you healthy, and wealthy, and prosperous now.
 2. Oh no. You should talk to Paul about that. "For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name."
 - a. Make no mistake, Jesus loves Paul. He saves Paul. But he also knows that Paul will suffer for the cause.
- D. And this is a necessary means to fulfilling the mission of reaching others with the gospel, why?
 1. Well, think of it. If God makes us healthy and wealthy and we come preaching Jesus, plenty will come to Jesus, right? But not because they want him and his offer forgiveness and life eternal—but because they want health and wealth, they want his blessing, his stuff here and now.
 2. But if God has us suffering for the sake of the gospel—if even though it's hard we are willing to hold to and proclaim the beauty of Jesus and his salvation, then guess what? If people come, they come for him. Because why else would they? It's going to be hard. But he is worth it all.
- E. It seems to me, Paul brings all three components together for us later in the book of Acts when he says to the Ephesian elders there: " ²² And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, ²³ except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me. ²⁴ But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:22–24).
 1. Here's a man compelled by the mission of the church, the mission of God.
 - a. He's got the humbled and surrendered heart.
 - b. He's ready to go to anyone anywhere.
 - c. And he's prepared to suffer and even to die if that's what God has.
- F. But what about you?
 1. Because I'll tell you, this question of whether we're willing to go with him, to suffer with him now, in many ways it determines how things will shake out for us in the end.
 - a. And that leads to the last branch of Paul's theology I wanted to quickly consider with you . . .

Branch #6: Eschatology

- A. By Eschatology, again, I'm talking about Paul's understanding of the end of things—and how redemptive history will come to a grand finale in Jesus.
 - 1. To be clear, for this, I'm not really thinking about the ins-and-outs of biblical prophecy, like [Rev. 20](#) and all this.
 - 2. I'm thinking about the overarching sweep of history and its unfolding in plan of God. I'm thinking in a broad sense of how, for God's people, we move, as Jesus did before us, along this trajectory from momentary suffering and struggle to eternal glory and life. That's where history is going for the children of God.
 - a. Just as Jesus had three days in the grave, we too will suffer for a bit this side of heaven.
 - b. But just as Jesus rose up from that grave never to die again, vindicated, glorified, now seated at the right hand of his Father, so too we, on the last day, shall be raised immortal, incorruptible, conformed in some way to his body of glory.
 - i. And all the suffering, the taking up of our own cross in love for God and others, it shall be shown to have been such a small price to pay for such a magnificent salvation and eternal reward.
- B. And I think Paul starts to get this on the road to Damascus when he there is confronted by Jesus in his glory.
 - 1. Jesus was shamed, and spit upon, and killed, and yet here he is untouchable, incorruptible, brighter in glory than the noonday sun.
 - 2. And Paul realizes, upon reflection: this is where those who trust in Christ are headed.
- C. This is what enabled a guy like Stephen to die the way he did. To cry out for the forgiveness of his enemies and commit his spirit into the hands of Christ.
 - 1. Remember, Paul was there putting his stamp of approval on that execution. And he must've thought: How do you suffer like that? How do you die like that?
 - a. Oh, it's because you know glory is coming. It's because you know you'll share in Christ's triumph. His story will be ours.
 - i. We will suffer with him. But we shall be raised with him as well.
- D. And this is what he continues to develop elsewhere in his letters:
 - 1. So, for example, [Rom. 8:16-17](#): “¹⁶The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”

2. And 2 Cor. 4:16-18: “¹⁶ So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.¹⁷ For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison,¹⁸ as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.”
 3. And 2 Tim. 2:8-12: “⁸ Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel,⁹ for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal. But the word of God is not bound!¹⁰ Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.¹¹ The saying is trustworthy, for: If we have died with him, we will also live with him;¹² if we endure, we will also reign with him”
- E. So I think this vision of future glory in and with Jesus, enabled him to lay his life down and even suffer for the sake of the gospel in the present. He knew what was coming, so it stabilized him when life got hard.
- F. Do you have that?
1. If you are living for this present day, if your treasure is on earth, than rust, moth, thief can all get at you. And it’s no wonder you have no stamina for suffering, and you’re always anxious, and you’re always trying to get comfortable and stay comfortable whatever the cost.
 2. But if you’re treasure is in heaven, if you’re treasure is Christ, then nothing can touch you. Because you know who has you and you know where you’re headed. And you know that, even if it gets hard, it’s going to get better—it’s headed somewhere good.
 - a. If you know that, then you can say with Paul, in whatever circumstance: “¹⁸ I will rejoice,¹⁹ for I know that through . . . the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance,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 in my body, whether by life or by death.²¹ For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Phil. 1:18-21).