

MAGNIFYING CHRIST

“I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.”

—PHILIPPIANS 1:20

The life of a Christian is one about really living our lives, not just existing in them. No one wants to go through life in an endlessly dull routine. In the above verse, Paul is telling us there is an underlying reason to his life; something that gives him profound meaning, and makes life satisfying and purposeful every day. His reason to live is Christ!

That is some reason for living! This is my ambition, says Paul, “that Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by my life or by my death.” Most of our conscious reasons for living are dependent on our staying alive. Paul’s reason, however, transcends both living and dying.

The King James Version translates the above verse as, “that Christ might be magnified in my body.” The purpose of a magnifying glass is to make something bigger or to bring something into focus. Christian living involves magnifying Christ on a day to day basis. We do not make Him bigger than He already is, of course, but we bring Him into focus in all that we do in our lives. Paul wrote this letter to the Philippians from prison, and he is saying my reason for living is that I exhibit a bigger Jesus so that the guards who chain

me up every day see Jesus in me. As my soul magnifies Christ, Jesus is revealed to my cell mates, my visitors, anyone I connect with. And if I die, my ambition is this: that my death brings Jesus into focus again.

Many centuries ago, when Francis of Assisi used to train his men in southern Italy and send them out to evangelize, he would say to them, “Wherever you go, whatever you do, make sure you preach Christ; if necessary use words.”

We preach Christ with our mouths closed by the way we live, the way we behave, and the way we treat our families, friends and anyone we connect with. It is with our lives we bring Christ into focus, and if necessary, use words. But our words will simply be an explanation of what is visible in our lives. Our lives become an exhibition of Christ; a revelation of Christ in us and this gives deep meaning, purpose and fulfillment. Of course, we need routine, but we need reason more than routine. The Christian life is practical, because, says Paul, my life is about living! It is to live in such a way that the life of Christ is magnified in us and through us.

PRAYER: Dear God, thank You so much for creating me. I pray I am able to show your love and godliness by the way I live. Amen.

TO REFLECT UPON: Do I find myself so caught up in my routines that I lose focus of what is most important in my life? Think of things I can do to help break routine and bring Christ in more.