

What's Your Problem?
Philippians 1:19-26

I am Pastor Jim May, I am the Campus pastor for the Southaven Campus and I serve as the Missions Pastor for CHC. Today, I have the privilege to speak to you about a subject that is very dear to my heart.

Impact...making a difference. We make a difference as a church wherever we go and whatever the task.

Last week Pastor Rick taught us about having an attitude of Joy in our Christian life. That comes out of a grateful heart.

We, as Christians, have much to be grateful for, we have been given a Royal Inheritance, Eternal Life, Abundant Life, the Mind of Christ, a Spirit of Discernment, Wisdom, Love, Compassion, when we look at all the things that God has granted to us, we should be overwhelmed with gratitude!!!

Paul continues his letter with the same attitude, grateful to God for a life of Grace and Mercy, knowing he didn't deserve the blessings that God has granted him.

Let's read Paul's words in Philippians 1, beginning in verse 19.

for I know that through your prayers and God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.^[d] ²⁰ 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. ²¹ For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. ²² If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! ²³ I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; ²⁴ but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. ²⁵ Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, ²⁶ so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me.
(NIV)

In Verse 19, Paul makes the statement that through prayers and God's Spirit that everything that has happened will be for his deliverance. When we glance at the word we would think that Paul is saying that deliverance mean his release from the prison or that it will mean freedom but that is not what the original word means. The original word is "rhiza" which means root. We get the word rhizome from that word.

Rhizome is a creeping rootstalk that produces new plants, Bamboo is a good illustration of this. You don't see it growing because it is beneath the surface but a shoot of a plant will erupt out of the ground and a new plant is created. Paul is literally saying that everything that is happening is reaching the core of his being...the root of his existence. Paul is making a strong statement that this imprisonment is resulting in his innermost man being strengthened, the core of his life is being built up, all this adversity is making Paul stronger...how is that possible?

Faith...

Without Faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. Hebrews 11:6 NIV

Paul stands on the fact that he not only believes that God exists but Paul has committed his entire life to spreading the Gospel. Paul understands that everything that is happening to him is because of his stand for his faith!!!

Paul goes on to say that he never expects to turn away from God's path for him, he never expects to be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, he always expects to have the courage, regardless of the situation, to stand for Christ and to always exalt Him. I mean, Paul is in prison as he writes these things. These are not flippant comments but Paul understands the depth of what he is saying.

An enormous question to us is, Can we say the same? In light of recent developments in America, can we as individuals say that we will never be ashamed of Jesus, that we will always stand for what is right, for what the Bible says, regardless of the circumstances? If we are facing death, as we have seen videos of the Middle East persecution, would we remain faithful to God?

In Luke [12:48](#), Jesus said these words... From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded...(NIV) We have been given much, there is a lot that is required of us. Paul understood what he had been given and he was compelled to give back all he could give.

Read Philippians [1: 21](#) & 22

For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. ²² If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know!

Paul says that he is torn with dual desires, one to continue to be here and to see the Hand of God at work and the other to die and experience Heaven. I understand, at this juncture of my life, what Paul means.

A wise man told me when I was much younger that, as we age, we begin to desire to leave this life and be with Christ. He was right...many the morning I wake and think that today would be a great day to be with Him, to leave the pains of this life, to be with many that I love and that I miss because they have gone on before me. I am beginning to have more people that I love in Heaven than I do on earth, family members and friends.

Paul knows that he will remain because God still has work for him to accomplish...this comes from that purposeful mindset that Paul has, knowing that God has a purpose for his life and that by his remaining, many will be blessed. How true for the Christian that makes a difference.

There is a man that I have wanted for you to meet and to hear his story for a long time, well, finally, you will get to hear from him. His name is Fenel Bruna and he is the founder and director of House of Abraham in Jacmel, Haiti. If ever there was a man that is making a difference, it is this man.

We met him in 2010 after the earthquake and he was helping us identify the best areas to help. It was then that he God began to give him the vision for HOA.

Fenel and his wife , Mimi are here with us this morning and this a life story that you need to hear.

Fenel Story:

How can one man make a difference in a country so vast as Haiti or America?

Paul did. Paul affected the entire world. We tend to look at those men and think that we can't do what they did...that is a lie of the Devil.

I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; ²⁴ but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. ²⁵ Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, ²⁶ so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me.

"I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy."

We have a dual role as Christ Followers: we are to share our faith and we are to encourage those Christ Followers around us.

We can make a difference wherever God places us, if He sends us to another country or if He leaves us here to share and encourage our co-workers and classmates. We are not limited in the impact we can make, regardless of where we are.

Here is the scripture's challenge to us...what can I do to make a difference in the lives around me?