

Stand Firm in the Lord
Christ-centered Optimism
 Philippians 1:18b-26

A Christ-centered optimism about my future enables me to continue rejoicing in my pain, because I am confident the gospel will advance in _____, on account of my "chains."

With this pandemic, now, more than ever, we need a _____.

Like Job and Jesus, Paul was a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief.

1 Corinthians 2:3

2 Corinthians 1:8-9

Paul's confidence and joy extended beyond his present trouble into his _____.

1:18b-21 *Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, for I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. 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. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.*

"turn out for my deliverance" - Paul quotes a line from **Job 13:16**. Job's critics insisted his trouble was due to sin in his life. Job responds by putting his life in God's hands. His hope rests entirely in God's good and just heart. Job longs to stand before God and plead his case, and he's confident he will be *vindicated* before God, because no godless person, in his right mind, would want to argue his or her case before God.

Paul found with his critics and Caesar's judgment a parallel between Job and himself. Paul's only concern was that Christ be exalted, no matter how his trial turns out. Whatever Caesar decides is beside the point. For Paul, *to live is Christ and to die is gain.*" Caesar's decision, one way or the other, can't touch Paul's joy.

For Paul, his vindication depended on **how he** stood before Caesar, **how he** lived or **how he** died. For the courage necessary to do this well, Paul needed two things—the Philippian's _____ and the Spirit's _____. (**1:19**)

The form of the sentence (*Granville Sharp Rule of Greek Grammar* - e.g., **Titus 2:13**) indicates that Paul saw the prayers of God's people and the Spirit's help in God's people as _____. (cp. **1 Thessalonians 5:18**; **Ephesians 6:18-20**; **Luke 18:1**)

1:21-22 *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far...*

2 Corinthians 5:8—*to be away from this body is to be at home with the Lord.*

Death for the believer means to get more of _____.

Philippians 3:20-21 *Our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.*

1:22-26 *I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. 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, so that through my being with you again your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me.*

"progress" (v. 25) = "advance" (v. 12) — a military term designating the work of an engineer in the Roman army who went ahead of the troops to prepare the way for them to enter new territory.

More than having his own personal desires, as a fully devoted engineer under orders from his Commander in Chief preparing the way for the building of Christ's Church, Paul wanted to help other believers advance to greater levels of _____ in Christ.

How did things turn out for Paul's future?

Acts 28:30

2 Timothy 4:16-19 (Paul found a parallel between his trial and Jesus')

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