

The logo features the word "JOY" in large, white, sans-serif capital letters. Below it, the words "in PHILIPPIANS" are written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. The text is set against a dark blue background with a subtle, glowing pattern of light rays emanating from behind the letters.

Between Two Worlds
Philippians 1:21-26
June 30, 2019

Introduction:

Most everyone has heard of or used the old adage, “I am between a rock and a hard place.” Or, sometimes we say, “I am in a real pickle.” Or we might even say, “I am cursed if I do and cursed if I don’t.” These dilemmas refer to a situation offering two possibilities, but neither are acceptable or preferred.

John Stott:

“The more of heaven that we allow to rule us, the less we will have of earth that controls us.”

A provoking thought:

Jesus Christ will never be praised in our death until He is prized in our life. I am convinced that the average Christian today had rather live in the world he sees (earth), than the world he is still yet to see (heaven).

The Christian’s two most important blanks:

- For me to live is _____
- For me to die is _____

John Piper:

“Add up all the losses that death will cost you: your family, your job, your dream retirement, the friends you leave behind, your favorite bodily pleasures; add up all these losses, and then you replace them only with death and Christ. If when you do that you joyfully can say, *gain*, then Christ is magnified in your dying.”

I. Paul struggled between the two worlds of staying and departing

Philippians 1:23 (NKJV) For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.

A. Heaven will be a departure

Philippians 1:23b ...having a desire to depart...

B. Heaven will be an encounter

Philippians 1:23c ...and be with Christ...

Takeaway:

Death for the believer isn’t just sweet because of our departure from earth, but it is sweet because of our arrival into heaven.

C. Heaven will be better

Philippians 1:23d ...which is far better.

II. Paul struggled between the two worlds of service and progress

Philippians 1:22a (NKJV) But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor...

A. Paul was obsessed with bearing fruit

Biblical fruit we can produce as believers:

1. Winning people to Jesus (Romans 1:13)
2. Holy living (Romans 6:22)
3. Giving (Romans 15:26-28)
4. Good works (Colossians 1:10)
5. Praise (Hebrews 13:15)

Takeaway:

Fruitfulness ends when we die. We will never win another person to Jesus in heaven; there will not be a need to share our faith in heaven; there will not be a need to give money in heaven; and there will not be a need to do good work in heaven. Why? Because heaven is a place of perfection. We will get rewarded for our fruitfulness in heaven, but our potential for fruitfulness ends the day we die.

B. Paul was obsessed with making progress

Two closing thoughts:

1. If Paul would have moved to heaven at this point in his life, his hassles would have been done with, but so would his effectiveness.
2. If you are saved and on your way to heaven when you die, that's great. But, until you get there, would you please do something for Jesus Christ? Help someone grow in their faith; get involved inside this church somewhere; do anything except sit around and watch other people serve; become a fruitful disciple of Jesus Christ.

A Native American Proverb:

“When you were born, you cried while the world rejoiced. Live your life so that when you die, the world cries while you rejoice.”