

## Dead or Alive

### I. Slide1 Announce:

- A. Slide2-5 Larry: New Bel. Father Son Outdoor Adventure. Children's Ministry. Stir.
- B. Slide6 Men's Breakfast - Next Sat morn 7:30am 4/21st. Daniel Jeremiah, former NFL Scout, currently an analyst for NFL Network & writer with NFL.com. (His story & Draft questions, such an interesting job)
- C. Slide7 Holocaust Memorial - Today at Murr Town Square. 2-5pm.

### II. Slide8 Intro: Dead or Alive

- A. Illust: *Flower Mix-up*. A **bank** in Binghamton, NY had some flowers sent to a competitor who had recently moved into a new building. There was a mixup at the flower shop, and the card sent with the arrangement read, Slide9 *With our deepest sympathy*. The florist, who was greatly embarrassed, apologized. **But** he was even more embarrassed when he realized that the card intended for the **bank** was attached to a floral arrangement sent to a **funeral home** in honor of a deceased person. That card read, Slide10a *Congratulations on your new location. :)*
- B. Slide10b What's your attitude to **life**? What's your attitude regarding **dying**? Why is it that you want to **stay** here? Why do you want to **depart**?
  1. Often our answer is skewed:
    - a) I'm not ready to **die**, I don't want to miss out on \_\_\_\_\_ (marriage/kids/see how u'd turn out)
    - b) I don't want to **continue to live**, I want to get away from \_\_\_\_\_ (bills, debt, relationship)

(1) Paul is in prison & is facing possible death. **So**, he's not just *saying* these words, it is what he is really facing.
- C. Slide11 Outline: Making God Look Magnificent. Living Your Life Worthy of the Gospel.
- D. *Prayer*:

### III. Slide12 MAKING GOD LOOK MAGNIFICENT (19-26)

- A. Slide13 (20) *My earnest expectation* - The word is composed of the **preposition** *away*, the **noun** *head*, & the **verb** *to watch*. And indicates *watching something with the head turned away from other objects*. (Vincent)

- a) So much so that...Christ will be magnified in my body...*dead or alive*.
- B. Slide14 (21) What does *For me to live is Christ, to die is gain* even mean? Other Translations
1. NLT, For to me, **living** means living for Christ, and **dying** is even better.
  2. Message, *Alive, I'm Christ's messenger; dead, I'm his bounty. Life versus even more life! I can't lose.*
    - a) Let us be like the **oxen** which stands between *the plough & the altar*, to work or to be sacrificed.
- C. In Psalm 23:4, **David** said *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.* **Paul** said in vs.23 *For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.* David was willing to **go**, but wanting to **stay**. Paul was willing to **stay**, but wanting to **go**.
- D. Slide15 The **key** in all of this section is at the bottom of vs.20. *Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or death.* [so let's ask the 2 questions: How will Christ be magnified by my **death** and then, by my **life**]
- E. Slide16a HOW WILL CHRIST BE MAGNIFIED BY MY **DEATH**?
- F. For Paul, death was **gain**. How? It is a **release** from earthly troubles for sure. It means a **re-union** with other Christians loved ones. It means **reward** for present service rendered to our Master. It means **realization** of all our highest, truest, & dearest longings.
- G. Some live life...
1. For to me, to live is **money**, & to die is to leave it all behind.
  2. For to me, to live is **popularity**, & to die is to be forgotten.
  3. For to me, to live is **power**, & to die is to lose it all.
  4. For to me, to live is **possessions**, & to die is to take none of them with me.
- H. To depart - To **depart** this life would mean being with Christ.
- I. Slide16b *Be with Christ, which is far better* - That is the **central fact** which makes **death gain** to the believer. [We always quote **Rev.21:4** & miss what's *most important* in vs.3]

1. But Paul you **lose** not gain. You'll miss sunrises and sunsets. Puppies and kittens. Starbucks & Sushi. All the physical pleasures of this world. Friendships, joy of ministry.
  2. Far better Paul??? yes like, *more joy, more satisfaction, more pleasure, more everything good.* Christ is most satisfying.
- J. Slide16c If I die, it's for **my** joy. If I stay it's for **your** joy. [I hear the Clash, *should I stay or should I go now*]
- K. Ps: Paul was the apostle which once enjoyed the unique experience of being caught up to *the 3rd heaven.* (got a taste of glory) 2 Cor.12:2
1. 3rd heaven = (1) where birds fly (2) the starry heavens/space (3) the heaven of heavens, God's throne.
- L. The 18th-century Bible commentator **Matthew Henry** expressed this confidence in words he hoped would be read after his death by anyone who might unduly mourn his passing. **He wrote:** *Would you like to know where I am? I am at home in my Father's house, in the mansions prepared for me here. I am where I want to be - no longer on the stormy sea, but in God's safe, quiet harbor. My sowing time is done and I am reaping; my joy is as the joy of harvest. Would you like to know what I am doing? I see God, not as through a glass darkly, but face to face. I am engaged in the sweet enjoyment of my precious Redeemer. I am singing hallelujahs to Him who sits upon the throne, and I am constantly praising Him. Would you know what blessed company I keep? It is better than the best on earth. Here are the holy angels and the spirits of just men made perfect. I am with many of my old acquaintances with whom I worked and prayed, and who have come here before me. Lastly, would you know how long this will continue? It is a dawn that never fades! After millions and millions of ages, it will be as fresh as it is now. Therefore, weep not for me!*<sup>1</sup>
- M. Slide17 HOW WILL CHRIST BE MAGNIFIED BY MY **LIFE**? 4 ways:
1. Slide18 **Its Christ.** To live is **Christ** (21) When **Christ** is your **life** death is not your **enemy**.
    - a) For Paul, life **was** Christ (*or Christ Himself*) [Centrality of Christ, *Solus Christus*]

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<sup>1</sup> Our Daily Bread, Sunday, May 27

- b) Before his conversion he was the center of his own world. A world in which God was a part. A world in which, to climb to its top, each rung was based upon *his own righteousness*, or how well he performed. His God hung on a great *carrot stick* in the sky. Does that describe how you see God...out there...just out of reach? [note: *performed*? when the Father said, *This is my son...well pleased*...He said it b4 He *did* anything :)]
- c) Paul was no longer the center of his universe. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but **Christ** lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me & gave Himself for me. Gal2:20
2. Slide19 **Its Fruit**. To live on in my flesh, this will mean **fruit** for my labor (22,23)
- a) To **remain** would result in **additional fruit**. 1:11 reminded us **this fruit** is only *by Jesus*, it's something Christ produces in you. (*He's magnificent*)
- b) **So, to live** (& minister) is **Christ** because the fruit of my ministry is through Christ.
3. Slide20 **Its Joy**. for your...**joy** (25) - the Philippian churches joy.
4. Slide21 **Its Glorifying**. that your **rejoicing** (26)
- a) **Rejoicing** = *a reason for boasting or glorying*.
- b) Slide22 ESV *so that in me you may have ample cause to **glory** in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.*
- N. I shall **remain** - don't *desert your duties* which God had given you. *Choose Life*.

#### IV. Slide23 **LIVING YOUR LIFE WORTHY OF THE GOSPEL (27-30)**

- A. Slide24a **Defining The Gospel** [90 x's in NT. 9 here in Phil] *already in 1:5,7,12,17,27 twice*
1. Slide24b From the Old English **gōdspel**, from gōd/good + spel/news/an announcement.
2. Slide25 Is.52:7 *How beautiful upon the mountains Are the feet of him who brings **good news**, Who proclaims peace, Who brings **glad tidings** of good things, Who proclaims salvation, Who says to Zion, "**Your God reigns!**"*
- a) Slide26-28 2x's *gospel*. 3x's the *proclamation*...of this good news...*Our God Reigns!*

3. Slide29,30 Mark 1:14,15 *Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.* But how, I'm a rebel?
  4. Slide31,32 Mark 10:45 *Answers How. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.*
  5. Slide33 1 Cor.15:1-4 *Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, 2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you - unless you believed in vain. 3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.*
    - a) Slide34-39 Note: It's an Event (*Christ died*). It's an Accomplishment (*for our sins*). It's a Plan/already predicted (*according to the Scriptures*). [*He was buried*/really dead. *He rose*/vindicating everything He accomplished] It's a Message (*preached* twice). It's to be Believed (*received* i.e. not worked for). It Saves (*saved*).
    - b) 1 Pet.3:18 says *For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.* That's the News.
  6. Let's remember as we share our faith with *our lips & our lives*...share *the Best News*. [it's not an argument]
- B. Slide40 (27) Live your life in manner worthy of the gospel...*How?*...These 4 ways:
1. Stand fast for the gospel (*stand fast*).
  2. Strive for the gospel (*striving*).
  3. Be fearless before your enemies with the Gospel (*not in any way terrified*).
  4. Stay unified with your brothers/sisters as you do this (*1 sp, 1 mind, together*)
    - a) A *unified stand & unified minds* wud b *the best witness* to the world for the gospel
- C. (28) Terrified by your adversaries - The metaphor is from a **timid horse** (*Lightfoot, LKGNT*).
1. Perhaps an allusion to *Cassius* who at **the battle of Philippi** committed suicide *at the fear of defeat*.

2. See in 42bc, **Cassius** (Roman Senator) & **Brutus** (his bro-n-law) commanded the troops *against* the combined forces of Mark Antony & Octavian.
    - a) In *Dante's Inferno*, **Cassius** is one of 3 people deemed *sinful enough* to be **chewed** in 1 of the **3 mouths of Satan**, in the very center of Hell, for all eternity, as a punishment for killing Julius Caesar (*instigated the plot*). The other 2, *Brutus & Judas Iscariot*.
  3. So maybe Paul is saying to the people of *Philippi*, even if you're faced with death, *don't be like a timid horse or a wimp like Cassius*.
    - a) Have *unflinchable* steadfastness, even in the face of *persecution*.
- D. Slide41 (29,30) 2 wonderful privileges: To *believe*/trust in Christ & to *suffer* for Christ. *God is honored by both*.
- E. **Suffer** - the problem, in *Philippi's very Roman city*, that people had with Christians was not so much that they were *following Christ*, but that they were failing to properly worship *the community's gods* - especially the *emperor*.
1. Dishonoring the gods was thought to invite disaster upon the community.
  2. The decision to follow Christ could have brought severe social, economic, and legal consequences. Family and friends might cut ties with believers, employers might fire them, and clients might take their business elsewhere.
- F. God runs a *costly school*, for many of His lessons are learned through **tears!**<sup>2</sup>
1. Soon, school will close for us. The end of our school term is closer everyday.
  2. **Don't run** from **difficult lessons**. **Don't flinch** from **the rod of discipline**.
  3. **Cheerfully endure** to the end, **then we will graduate in glory**.
  4. Paul's life was a model of *suffering*.
    - a) **Suffering**: **confirms** the believers faith. **Brings** him/her in closer contact w/the Lord. **And provides** a vehicle for making commitment *real & tangible*.
- G. Slide42 Illust: The worlds finest china is fired in ovens at least 3 x's & some many more.
1. The famous *Dresden china* is always fired **3 times**.

<sup>2</sup> Streams In The Desert; Sept.2; pg.335

2. Why so many times with such intense heat? This makes *the colors brighter, more beautiful, & permanently attached.*
3. **Metal** bends best when softened w/fire.  
**Marble** take shape only under the splintering blows of a **chisel**.  
**Wood**, with the abrasive scrape of **sandpaper**. (Swindoll)
  - a) **We** are fashioned after the same principle.