

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

In 2005, Steve Jobs made a speech to the graduating class of Stanford University.

Many have considered it one of the most motivational speeches ever delivered.

Millions have watched it on YouTube over and over again.

Among the three stories he shared in the speech, there is one story that stood out explaining his success.

Since he was seventeen years old - until the very day of the speech as a 50 years old man, for the past 33 years, without missing a single day, he looked at the mirror every day in the morning and asked himself one simple question:

“If today were the last day of my life, would I want to do what I am about to do today?”

“Remembering that I’ll be dead soon is the most important tool I’ve ever encountered to help me make the big choices in life.”

Because almost everything — all external expectations, all pride, all fear of embarrassment or failure — these things just fall away in the face of death, leaving only what is truly important.”

Simply put it, “Live like you're dying so you may live doing what matters most”

In scripture, we are told in Psalm 90:12,

[Psa 90:12 NKJV] 12 So teach [us] to number our days, That we may gain a heart of wisdom.

Now, none of us know how many days we have left on earth. There is an uncertainty on how long we will live – how many days we have until we die.

And unless one is part of the rapture – guess what, we are all going to die.

Notice how the psalm states “teach us”, that is very important.

Because only until we mature in our Christian walk, will we truly realize how short our time is here on earth, then we will focus on the important things, like our eternity.

I don't know much about Steve Jobs, I listened to his speech again yesterday and at the time that he spoke, one could sense a fear of death as he spoke.

The world struggles with dealing with the uncertainties of life, especially death.

As believers, we have a solution to dealing with the uncertainties in life and that is Jesus Christ.

In today's text, we are going to continue our study through the book of Philippians. And once again our focus will be on Apostle Paul and his reaction to the uncertainties of life. Even death.

Let's pray...

[Phi 1:19-20 NKJV] 19 For I know that this will turn out for **my deliverance through **your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ**, 20 according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death.**

Over the past three Sundays, we have been looking at this wonderful letter that Paul wrote to the church in Philippi while he was under house arrest in Rome awaiting his day in front of Caesar.

Two weeks ago we saw as Paul was encouraging the church in Philippi that despite the fact that he was under house arrest, the gospel was still being preached to the masses and God's will was still getting done.

How was God's will still getting done?

The scriptures reveal to us that Paul was allowed to have visitors while he was under house arrest.

Paul was also sharing the gospel to the guards that were chained to him and some of them were accepting Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

These guards weren't you run of the mill guards, these were the Royal Guards that would guard Caesar himself.

Well these guards were telling their families and they were getting saved and they were telling some of the other workers and they were getting saved.

In addition, Paul's misery had also embolden others to preach Christ as well.

However, not everyone was doing it the right intentions.

Some of them were doing it out of envy and strife and out of selfish ambitions.

However, Paul's plea to the church was that he didn't care about what they were saying about him. As long as the gospel was being preached.

Paul was ok with that because he was always focused on the eternal – never on his current circumstances.

Up to this point in Paul's letter to the Philippian church, he has been looking at past events.

[Phi 1:3, 5, 12 NKJV] 3 I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, ... 5 for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, ... 12 But I want you to know, brethren, that the things [which happened] to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel,

All of these are past tense experiences.

Paul, in his letter, now pivots and he looks to the future.

He uses words like **I will rejoice** in verse 18 and **I know that this will** in verse 19, and **I shall** in verse 20.

Paul is now predicting the future.

Now, when I say predicting the future, I have to be careful.

What Paul is predicting is not his circumstances. We can't predict our circumstances.

Remember, Paul is in jail awaiting trial, he doesn't know if Caesar is going to kill him or let him go free.

You see, in Rome, they didn't believe in rehabilitation.

If you were found guilty – you were dead, if you were found innocent you were freed.

You see, Paul cannot predict his circumstances – however, he can predict his response to his circumstances.

And Paul's prediction about his response to his circumstances can be summarized in four words: joy, confidence, hope and life.

This was Paul's outlook. No matter what happens to me, I will have joy, confidence, hope and life.

And we will see Paul exhibit these four things in our text today.

Let's look at our text again starting in verse 19 and we will look at joy,

[Phi 1:19-20 NKJV] 19 For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, 20 according to my earnest expectation and hope that in

nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death.

Now, we have to remember that the scriptures were not originally written with chapters and verses.

Paul didn't sit there writing his letters and put a number 19 in front of a thought – this happened much later as man proceeded to do this on order to make it easier for us to read scripture and find passages.

Jesus, when He taught at the temple in Jerusalem, He didn't say "Open up your scrolls to Isaiah 55"

There was one scroll that contained all the words of Isaiah.

With that being said, in verse 19, Paul is continuing a statement that he made back in verse 18. Remember, we have to study everything in context.

[Phi 1:18 NKJV] 18 What then? Only [that] in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice.

Now, the word "this" in verse 19 is in reference to Christ being preached.

So everything that we read from verse 19-21 is driven by the fact that Christ is being preached.

Now what Paul is saying here, in these verse, is that “in spite of death, as long as the Lord is glorified I rejoice and I will rejoice.” You see, his joy was not related to his circumstances. It didn't matter if he was in trouble. It didn't matter if he had his reputation attacked. It didn't even matter if he was killed.

All that mattered was the advancement of the gospel, Christ is preached, the Lord is magnified. That's all that mattered. That's what Paul lived for. That was Paul's joy.

Paul's focus was all relative to the kingdom of God.

Turn with me to the gospel of Mark,

[Mar 8:34-38 NKJV] 34 When He had called the people to [Himself], with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 35

"For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. 36 "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? 37 "Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 38 "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him

the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

Apostle Paul is a wonderful example of someone that embodies the words spoken by Jesus here.

Here was a man who was willing to bear the cross.

Here was a man who couldn't care less honestly what happened to him, what people said about him, or whether he lived or died.

And church, that is a tremendous level of spiritual commitment.

We live in a very materialistic world, one that is all about self, self-serving, a self-centered world yet our call is one of self-sacrifice.

Not only was Paul's outlook one of joy, it was also one of **confidence**.

Paul was confident that all of this was going to turn out for his deliverance.

What is Paul speaking about when he says deliverance?

Because the word deliverance can mean different things, it can mean well-being, it can mean vindication – after all he was in prison after being wrongfully accused, it can mean salvation – some of your translations might say salvation instead of deliverance. It can even mean escape.

Some people think that Paul is saying, “I know that I'm going to be sprung out of jail. I'm going to be set free.”

He can't mean that, because in Verse 20 he says, whether by life or by death. So I could live or I could die.

So when he says, I know that this is going to be for my deliverance, that's Paul's way of saying, I'm going to be just fine.

Deliverance could be better translated, perhaps, my well-being. Things are going to turn out for the best.

This is Paul's, Philippians 1 way of restating Romans 8:28. You know Romans 8:28. **For we know that all things work together for good for those who love God and are the called according to his purpose.**

Ultimately, Paul knew that all the trials and tribulations that he was experiencing. The entire prison ordeal – the back stabbing by those preaching the gospel out of envy and strife – he was going to be delivered from all of that, one day. This is what he was so confident in.

There is another righteous individual in scriptures that was under similar circumstances to Apostle Paul. We have Job in the Old Testament.

If you have ever read the book of Job, you know that at the start of the book, he was a wealthy man – God had blessed him tremendously and one by one his kids, his livestock, his servants, everything was taken from him. Even his health was taken from him as he had these painful boils covering his entire body, from the soles of his feet to the top of his head, and he sits there in ashes scraping these boils off with a piece of broken pottery. Yet he never cursed God.

There are four verses that I want you to take note of.

[Job 13:15-16 NKJV] 15 Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him. Even so, I will defend my own ways before Him. 16 He also [shall] be my salvation, For a hypocrite could not come before Him.

Job was confident that despite this trial that he was in the midst of, that he was going to completely trust God's sovereignty. He didn't know why God was allowing it – yet, he knew God had a purpose for it. (just like Paul) and also Job realized that one day he would stand before God and have to give an account. And because of this, it allowed him to persevere.

He wasn't going to be a hypocrite and curse God.

You see, Job was a righteous man and scripture tells that

When the righteous cry for help, the Lord hears and delivers them out of all their troubles.

Now turn with me to Job 19,

[Job 19:25-26 NKJV] 25 For I know [that] my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth; 26 And after my skin is destroyed, this [I know], That in my flesh I shall see God,

This is one of the worship songs we sang this morning,

In these verses, Job expressed confidence that, even if he died, he would still have a Redeemer who one day would exercise judgment on the earth.

Furthermore, Job affirmed that he himself expected to live physically again and see his Redeemer.

It was an affirmation of faith, by Job, in the resurrection of the human body.

So both Job and Paul demonstrate their confidence in their deliverance.

They realized that their pain and struggles are only temporary.

One day, there will be no pain and no struggle.

Paul also makes the point that the confidence, the encouragement will come from the prayers of the church and the work of the help of the Spirit of Christ.

Prayer is a very powerful tool. I think that sometimes we tend to marginalize prayer.

I believe if we really thought prayer had the power to change things circumstances, the power to change us, and the power to change people, we'd be doing a lot more of it.

But unfortunately, sometimes we use prayer as a last resort.

Paul is so sure that as long as they are praying for him, he can be joyful and he can be confident in what the future holds.

You see, Paul was person who believed in the power of prayer and in many of his epistles he asks the different churches to pray for him.

[1Th 5:25 NKJV] 25 Brethren, pray for us.

[2Th 3:1 NKJV] 1 Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run [swiftly] and be glorified, just as [it is] with you,

[Rom 15:30-32 NKJV] 30 Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me, 31 that I may be delivered from those in Judea who do not believe, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, 32 that I may come to you with joy by the will of God, and may be refreshed together with you.

Paul was never too full of his own importance to remember that he needed the prayers of the church.

He never talked to people as if he could do everything and they could do nothing; he always remembered that neither he nor they could do anything without the help of God.

Church, we have to remember that when people are in sorrow, one of the greatest comforts is the awareness that others are praying for them. That others are remembering them before God, that there are people who are bringing your petitions before the throne of grace.

Sometimes there are people who want to serve but they cannot physically serve.

However, we can all still pray for one another.

Prayer is a ministry too and the church is in dire need of prayer warriors.

We cannot call people our friends unless we pray for them.

So, we have gone through joy and confidence, the next one is hope.

In verse 20 Paul says that his earnest expectation and hope is that I will not be ashamed.

Paul was in prison, for many of us – if we were in Paul's shoes, our hope would be to get out of jail as soon as possible.

Not Paul, his hope is that he will never be ashamed into silence either by cowardice or ineffectiveness.

Many times, we are afraid to share the gospel with friends or relatives because we are afraid of their reaction.

Many times we feel that we are not equipped to say the right things.

However, we each still have our personal testimony.

You see, your testimony is a powerful tool in witnessing because you can walk up to someone in the street and produce scripture and they can counter your scripture by taking verses out of context. Or they can question that verse.

But here is the thing, no one can question your testimony. Because you lived it – you saw the change in your life. You know what you were and you can testify how God has worked, and how He is continuing to work in you.

That is the story of the Samaritan women, after her encounter with Christ at the well, she goes into town and tells everyone what Jesus told her.

She didn't know any scripture, she was just someone who was full of guilt and shame and Jesus had given her hope.

You see she had to go get water during the middle of the day because of her background. All the other women would come and get water during the early morning period because it was cooler. This is where they would talk to each other – this was their social media during these days.

The Samaritan woman couldn't go in the morning because they would talk about her. They would shun her - they find out that she's had 5 husbands and that she was currently sleeping around with someone else who wasn't her husband.

Read the story in John 4 tonight,

So she is moved and goes to the town and tells everyone about Jesus after her encounter equipped only with her testimony.

Later on in the same chapter, it tells us that many of the Samaritans from that town believed in Jesus Christ because of what the woman told them.

Because of her testimony.

JB Lightfoot writes: 'The right of free speech is the badge, the privilege, of the servant of Christ.' To speak the truth with boldness is not only the privilege of the servants of Christ; it is also their duty.

The world is bold about what it believes, and they're becoming bolder.

They're not ashamed of what they believe in. They'll use every opportunity they can, every song they write, every news program, every sitcom, every movie to further their agenda. They are not afraid, they are bold to share their values on abortion, on homosexuality, on promiscuity. They want to get that out there and get it in your face.

It's time for Christians be bold, and not be embarrassed and not be ashamed.

The last response we can have to our circumstances is **life**.

Just like Paul, if we seek the kingdom of God first, if we seize the opportunities that God has given to each and every one of us, Christ will be glorified in us.

No matter what our circumstances may be.

For Paul, it is a win – win situation. If he lives, he will continue to preach the gospel of Christ and bring glory to him, if he is killed, he will be in the presence of God.

This was Paul's thinking...

Either way, I'm delivered. Either way, I'm going to rejoice. I'm going to be confident. I'm going to have hope because I'm going to have life either way. A life exalting Jesus or a life in the presence of Him.

Like I said earlier, as I listened to the speech by Steve Jobs, all four of the responses that Paul teaches us here in Philippians are nowhere to be found in his speech.

There was no joy – all he talked about was – guess what you're going to die

There was no confidence – you can't have confidence if you don't know what you're living for

There was no hope – your dead and that's it.

There was no life – one of the things that he says in his speech is the even people who believe in heaven don't want to die in order to get to heaven???

If we live a life for Christ, we can be assured of life now and when we get to heaven. It's a win-win for us.

Conclusion

Now I told you at the beginning of this study that you can predict your future responses, but not your future circumstances.

I was wrong, actually. There is one circumstance you can predict. And that is, will you spend eternity in heaven or in hell? We can predict accurately that because we believe in Jesus Christ, and not by our own good works or by our religious works, but we trust in his finished work, unequivocally, no doubts at all, we are going to heaven. **Amen.**

Let's pray...

Dear Jesus,

Please forgive me of all of my sins.

I know that my sin has separated me from You and I am deserving of death.

I believe that you died for my sins and rose again.

I turn from my sins and I am asking that You come into my life.

Show me how to live my life that is right and pleasing to You.

I accept You as my Lord and Savior.

In Jesus name I pray.

Communion

Examine ourselves,

Remember His sacrifice, what it means to us and also to remind each other that he is coming again.

1 Cor 11

23 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; 24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

Let's partake of the bread

25 In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.

