

## RELATED SCRIPTURES

Psalms 121:7–8 | Ephesians 4:1–6 | Philippians 4:6–8

## STUDY FOR SERMON FROM 9.22.24

### SUMMARY

In one respect, we might misunderstand Paul's behavior. He faces a series of grossly disappointing circumstances—false accusation, arrest, imprisonment, and a possible death sentence as he awaits trial before Caesar—yet he appears to be quite the optimist. However, Paul is more than an optimist; he has a profound certainty in the Lord's sovereign purposes for his life. Paul's options appear to be limited—he'll either be released from prison and thus be allowed to continue to preach the gospel, or he'll face death, in which case he'll get to be with the Lord; for Paul, it's a win-win situation. Paul states, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21). How can he say this? Because his "hope" is secure. We'll often use the word "hope" in reference to something that might go either way; Paul's use of the word expresses confidence—he has a secure knowledge of what the Lord is doing—he knows all things will work together for his glory. Paul's understanding of what will be his ultimate place of rest (with Christ) gives him stability in the present, irrespective of his circumstances. Paul expresses his belief to the church so they understand the immense sacrifice they must be willing to pay as followers of Jesus, which Paul instructs, "Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ" (Philippians 1:27). Paul is imploring the church to be consistent with what they believe—to conduct themselves in a way that puts the gospel they confess on display. As believers, we must actively participate in our sanctification (the process of being made more and more like Christ). In so doing, we will be eager for what awaits us in Christ and decreasingly less consumed with anxiety and worry through present difficulty and trial.

### GROUP QUESTIONS

Share something that surprises, encourages, or troubles you from the sermon or your direct reading of Philippians 1:18–30.

As Christians, we believe in the same gospel that Paul believed, and we have the same Holy Spirit as Paul residing in us. If this is the case, why do we still fear death? What prevents us from saying, "To live is Christ, and to die is gain"?

Living in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ is a high calling. What might this look like in your life? How does this command encourage you, and how might it frighten you?

If there's one thing Jesus would want you to walk away believing and receiving as a result of this portion of Scripture, what is that thing?

### CLOSE IN PRAYER

As you pray, be sure to include today's themes in what you bring before God.