

## A Joy-filled Confidence in Christ

### Scripture

#### Philippians 1:18–26

***[18] What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice.***

***Yes, and I will rejoice, [19] for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, [20] as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. [21] For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. [22] If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. [23] I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. [24] But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. [25] Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, [26] so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.***

### Pray

#### Introduction

According to the website calm.com here are 6 ways to improve your self-confidence?

- Set personal goals and celebrate when you achieve them, no matter how small.
- Talk to yourself with kindness, just like you would to a good friend.
- Learn something new. It can be as simple as a new recipe or as challenging as a new language.
- Exercise regularly to help improve your mood and energy levels.
- Dress in clothes that make you feel good about yourself. When you look good, you often feel good, too.
- Practice saying no when you need to—it's important to set boundaries for yourself.

Now, all of these practices can be helpful to us, in one way or another. But none of them are really that helpful in hardships and trials, and none of them will be able to help us endure in our life with Christ.

The reason for this is because they are all centered on building a confidence that comes from within us. They require us to muster up our own resilience when hardships come, and they require us to be the one's who can who provide ourselves with a salvation that we can't grant.

But when we look at Paul's example in the book of Philippians, we are given a vision of a different kind of confidence. One that is sure, steady, and unchanging, and can endure any trial that comes in this life.

I'm talking about the rock solid and joy-filled confidence that is only found in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

And this morning we are going to see how this joy-filled confidence manifests itself in Paul's life, and how his example serves as a paradigm for how we should be living as we wait for the eternal glory that is yet to come.

So let's begin by looking at what Paul has to say about his (and our) joy-filled confidence.

### **1. Our Joy-filled Confidence in Christ (V. 18-19)**

#### **Philippians 1:18-19**

***[18] What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice.***

***Yes, and I will (continue to) rejoice, [19] for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance (Salvation),...***

If you were here last week, you know that Paul wanted to encourage the Philippians in their trials by showing them how his circumstances in prison had really served to advance the gospel.

Because he wanted them to be able to see their current struggles, in light of the eternity building work that God was doing through them. **They are purposeful and God is going to use them to proclaim Christ.**

This is why Paul is able to say at in verse 18, ***“Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice.”***

His eternal perspective surrounding his trials gave him a joy that wasn't tied to his current situation, but instead was based on the fact, that Jesus and the gospel were being made known in Rome.

Then in the last part of verse 18 he doubles down on his joy, and he excitedly and emphatically says, ***“Yes, and I will (continue to) rejoice...”***

But this “continued rejoicing” isn't just about what God has done or is doing through his trials. Rather, Paul is now turning his attention to the future, and is rejoicing, because he is confident about the outcome of his trials.

As he says at the end of verse 19, ***“...this will turn out for my deliverance (Salvation).”***

And I put “salvation” at the end of the word “deliverance” because the Greek word is *soteria*, which literally means **salvation**.

Now, sometimes in scripture this can be a physical salvation from a circumstance, but in this instance, Paul is referring to a salvation that goes beyond his circumstances.

This is why he connects this hope of deliverance with life and death at the end of verse 20 when he says:

**...whether by life or by death.**

He knows and is confident, that through the prayers of the Philippians and through the help of the Spirit of God, his situation, no matter how it turns out, will result in his salvation.

**So he will rejoice if he is set free to continue his work, or if he dies by execution. Because he knows that his ultimate deliverance and eternity with God are secure.**

But how does he know that, and how can he have such a solid confidence in that reality?

It's because his confidence isn't in himself or in any earthly power. But instead, it is solely and fully in Christ (the Son of God) and his perfect work of redemption on cross. **It is in the gospel.**

As he said in Romans 1:16:

***[16] For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation (soteria) to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.***

This is why Paul rejoiced that the gospel was advancing in verses 12-14, and this is why he continually rejoices in his trials in verse 19.

Because he is confident that the end result, for all those who put their faith in Christ, including himself, despite any and all circumstances, will be a perfect eternity with the God of the universe. **The salvation of their souls.**

**And for the Philippians and us, the apostle Paul's example is a reminder that Christ is our solid foundation and is the only one who can give us a joy-filled confidence even in the midst of trials and uncertainty.**

### **Application**

Now, I can imagine there might be a few people here this morning that are less than thrilled with the outcome of Tuesday's election, but if I had to take a guess, I would assume that most people in this room are excited with how things turned out.

But where were you before Tuesday?

Were you confident about what was going to happen in our country and world? Or if your honest, were you a little scared?

Were you having conversations like, “I don’t know what’s going to happen if Harris gets elected? They might take our guns, our money, our rights. I don’t know how we will survive this as a country.

If many of us are honest, I think there was a lot of worry and fretting over what was going to happen on Tuesday. And if that was you, I am not here to judge you for it. We are all, at times, prone to worry.

But we also need to realize that when we worry, we are taking our eyes off of Christ and at that moment are putting our hope in something else.

Now, there are lots of things that the Bible has to say about worry, and there are many verses that help us to combat worry, fear, and anxiety.

However, all of it comes back to one simple question: Where will we put our confidence?

Will it be in our earthly circumstances, such as the outcome of an election, **or will it be in Christ, who purchased us with his blood and has given us the promise that he will complete his work in us when he returns.**

Because Christ is the only one who can give us a joy-filled confidence, like Paul, that allows us to say, regardless of elections or any other struggles, ***“I know this will turn out for my deliverance.”***

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And when we put our confidence in Christ, believing that he will fully accomplish his work of salvation in our lives, it will have an effect on us that will produce endurance.

## **2. A Joy-filled confidence in Christ leads to endurance (V. 20)**

In general, when we think of the word **endurance** or **endure** the definition that probably comes to mind is: **The ability to withstand hardship or adversity.**

And when we define it this way it gives us the sense that enduring is simply about making it through something. “Oh I hope I can make it through work this week. I had to get through that terrible movie. I had to endure 6 months of chemotherapy.”

But when we look at the Bible, and more specifically at the apostle Paul, we get a picture of endurance that is far greater than just making it through something. As he writes in Philippians 1:20:

***[20] ...as it is my eager expectation and hope (anticipate with confidence) that I will not be at all ashamed (disgraced), but that with full courage (complete confidence) now as always Christ will be honored (be made to look great) in my body, whether by life or by death.***

We have already talked about how hard Paul’s circumstances are, so we don’t need to recount those. But one of the things that we may not remember is that fact that Paul came to Rome for a reason, which was to stand trial before Caesar.

In fact, he is the one who requested this in Acts 25:12. But that doesn't mean that has any assurance of how the trial will go. He doesn't know if he will be set free by Caesar or sentenced to death.

And yet, instead of worrying and living in uncertainty, or trying to figure out how he's going to make it through his trial, he says **"...as it is my eager expectation and hope..."** Another way we could write this is **"I anticipate with confidence..."**

Because Paul had a joy-filled confidence in his eternal standing with Christ, he now can eagerly and confidently anticipate what is about to happen to him.

But his confidence and anticipation aren't centered around Caesar's decision in the trial, but rather how he will respond to it.

That he will not **be ashamed or disgraced**, but rather that he will have a **complete or full confidence** that Christ will be honored by his life no matter what happens. **Whether he lives or dies.**

This is similar to what he says to Timothy in 2 Timothy 1:8:

***[8] Therefore do not be **ashamed** of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God,***

Likewise, the apostle John writes in 1 John 2:28:

***[28] And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in **shame** at his coming.***

Paul's Joy-filled confidence in Christ gives him the courage to stand trial knowing that he **ultimately won't reject Christ and be disgraced.**

Instead, he will endure in faith, **which means that he will honor, magnify, and make Christ look great, with his life, until he goes to his eternal home.**

This is what endurance is in the Christian life. It's about making Christ look great, in all circumstances, even if the end result means death.

## **Application**

But endurance is hard, isn't it? How many times have you started something like an exercise routine, a diet, a monthly budget, or a reading routine only to give up a month later.

Or how many times have you gone through trials and have found yourself repeatedly asking the question **"when will this be over?"**

I need to confess to you that as we were going through the pastoral transition over the last year, I asked God that question a lot.

Because I was tired and I had convinced myself that if we could just get past this situation as a church, everything would be better.

And maybe you're dealing with something right now that you're honestly just trying to get through.

But when we look at Paul's example in Philippians 1:20 we are reminded that the goal of our faith isn't centered around getting through hard things.

The ultimate goal of our faith, in all situations, is that God would be made much of by how we live. As Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 10:31:

***[31] So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.***

And we can do this with a steadfast hope, knowing that when the end comes, we will receive, like Paul, the outcome of our faith, the salvation of our souls.

As Peter writes in 1 Peter 1:8-9:

***[8] Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, [9] obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.***

This is the kind of endurance that Paul is talking about in the book of Philippians, and this is the kind of endurance that God wants from us as his people.

**But endurance begins with faith, putting our full confidence in Christ and the salvation he has secured for us.**

And when we do, we can have the assurance that God is going to make us a people who look beyond our circumstances, and honor Christ with our lives, whether we live or die.

Because Paul reminds us in Philippians 2:13:

***[13] for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.***

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But in order for that to happen there's something that needs to change within us. Meaning, that if we are going to truly honor Christ in all situations with an eye toward our eternal home with him, then we need God to give us a new perspective.

### **3. A Joy-filled confidence in Christ changes our perspective on life and death (V. 21-23)**

**Philippians 1:21-23**

***[21] For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. [22] If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. [23] I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.***

Now, at this point, there may have been some questions that were rising up in the minds of the Philippians.

Paul, how can you be so confident that your trial before Caesar is going to work out for your deliverance? Or, Paul, I know you want to honor Jesus, but how can you do that when you aren't even sure if you are going to live or die?

And his answer to these questions really gets at the heart of how Paul views his life, and it really gives us the basis for his endurance. As he says in verse 21:

***“[21] For (the reason I can endure is) to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”***

That verse is so simple and yet so impactful isn't it?

If Paul lives, it means living with Christ, for Christ, and to proclaim Christ. As he says in verse 22, ***[22] If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me.***

If God chooses to save Paul's life, he understands that there is a purpose behind it. And that purpose is so that he can continue the kingdom building, gospel proclaiming work that God has given him.

As he said in Colossians 1:28-29:

***[28] Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. [29] For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.***

But on the other hand, if he dies, it's gain. Why? Because he gets to be in perfect fellowship with Christ. As he says in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of Philippians 1:23:

***...My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.***

Paul understood in a very real way, what the outcome of his faith would be and what his death meant. This is why he calls it a prize in Philippians 3:14 when he says:

***[14] I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.***

Or as he said in 2 Corinthians 4:17 from last week:

***[17] For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison,***

Death, for Paul, wasn't an ending, but rather it was the reward and the prize. Because what was waiting for him was a weighty glory where he would get to be with the living God forever.

Paul can rejoice and endure even in the face of uncertainty, and even at the prospect of death, because Christ has changed his perspective about life and death.

That no matter what happens to him, living means that God's kingdom will be built, and death means that he gets the greatest reward of all. Forever with Jesus.

## Application

Now I know that there are those in this church who have had to struggle through chronic pain, illness, and even chronic depression. And there are others of you who have had to walk through an unrelenting amount of trials.

And in those circumstances and hardships, it is really easy to say, “I just want to go home. I want to be with Jesus. Or why am I still here?”

But I want to encourage you with the words of Paul this morning that to live is Christ. Which means that God still has kingdom building fruitful labor for each of you to do even in the midst of your struggles. So don't lose heart.

I also realize that for some of us life is pretty good. Sure, we have some hard times and hard seasons, but on a whole, life has been fairly easy.

If that is you, I want to encourage you to live as if Christ, not this life, is the prize, and if death is gain.

Gain is not our retirement savings, our kids being perfect, seeing old age, having grand kids, or taking great vacations.

Gain, is living a life, of fruitful labor for Christ, as we focus on the eternal glory to come knowing that an eternity with Jesus is far better than anything that we have now.

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And when we view our lives in this way, it will shift our focus from our circumstances, either good or bad, to a kingdom focus, that allows us to see all of life through the lens of Christ and his work to redeem a people for himself.

So that we won't be self-focused, but instead will be others focused.

### **4. A Joy-filled confidence in Christ produces humble servanthood (V. 24-26)**

If we look back at Philippians 1:22-23 we can clearly see that there is an internal struggle going on in Paul. As he writes:

***[22] If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. [23] I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.***

Paul is conflicted because what he knows that remaining in the flesh will mean fruitful kingdom work, but what he desires more than anything is to be in eternity with Jesus.

But despite his desire to be with Jesus he came to the place where he became convinced that it was better, at that moment and more necessary for him to continue his gospel work on earth and with the Philippians. As he writes in Philippians 1:24-26:



**[24] But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. [25] Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, [26] so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.**

Paul, could have said, “man really I want to be with Jesus, so I hope Caesar takes me out.” But instead, he understood that he was a servant of the living God and so instead, of remaining focused on his desire to be with Jesus, he turned his attention to the Philippians and what they needed.

Which was for Paul to remain alive **“for their progress and joy in the faith, so they could rejoice, like Paul, in Christ, when he comes to them again.”**

Now, I want to stop for moment, because I know that I told you last week that most scholars believe that Paul died in Rome under the persecution of Nero. Which is true.

However, traditional scholars believe that he was released after two year and then went to Spain, Crete, Colossae, and Philippi, only to end up back in Rome where he died at the hands of Nero.

So if tradition is correct, then Paul did exactly what he said he would. He came to the Philippians again so that they could grow in their faith and in their rejoicing in Christ.

And in his coming to them he became a living example of the humble servanthood he is going to call them to in Philippians 2:3-4:

**[3] Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. [4] Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.**

Paul’s joy-filled confidence in Jesus allowed him to see the kingdom progress of others as more important than his own interests, which was his desire to be with Jesus.

## **Application**

Now, humble servanthood is something we will be talking a lot about in chapter 2, especially as he pairs it with the example of Christ.

But when I look at Paul’s example, in light of everything he has said, there are some questions that God stirs in my heart.

What would it look like if we were a people who had a joy-filled confidence in Christ like Paul?

What would happen if we became a people whose every desire was to honor him, even in death?

What would God do in our community if we became a people who viewed life as fruitful labor and death as Gain?

What would the witness be to the watching world if our greatest desire was to serve and build one another up for our joy and progress in faith?

And if you are here this morning, and this talk of living and dying for Christ feels strange to you, I want to encourage you to talk to me or someone around you about how you can have a joy-filled confidence in Christ that will make sense of this for you.

But if we are believers hear this morning, my hope is that our faith and confidence in Christ has been stirred and strengthened, so that we will grow in our desire to humbly serve Christ and others both through our lives and in death.

And that the result, here at LEFC, will be a growing gospel witness, that will be for our progress and joy, but also will result in new believers coming to faith.

Because no matter what we are going through today, the truth is that God has Christ honoring labor planned for us until the day we go home.

As Paul said in Ephesians 2:10

***[10] For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works (gospel works), which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.***

**Let's Pray**