

Note: These questions have been prepared to follow the pattern of the series based on the sermon content from Pastor Josh Lilly.

Sermon: To Live Is Christ, to Die Is Gain — Ready to Go, Willing to Stay

Text: Philippians 1:19–26 (with Galatians 2:20)

“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. ... I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account.”

— Philippians 1:21, 23–24

Day 1 — Ready to Go but Willing to Stay

Read: Philippians 1:19–26; 2 Corinthians 5:6–9

1. The sermon opened by saying mature Christians are “ready to go but willing to stay.” Why is this not a natural human instinct? What natural instincts does the sermon contrast with Paul’s mature perspective?
2. Paul is writing from prison near the end of his life after nearly 30 years of walking with Jesus. How does his situation make the statement “to live is Christ, and to die is gain” even more striking?
3. Our culture often lives purposeless, and hardship can cause us to “put our head down and just get through.” How have you seen this tendency in your own life or in those around you?
4. Paul says that to live is Christ and to die is gain. In what ways does this both free us from the fear of death and call us to purposeful living while we remain?
5. What situation in your life right now makes it hardest to say, “I am willing to stay” for the good of others and the glory of Christ?

Prayer: Father, You have given me a Savior worth living for and Someone worth dying for. Forgive me for clinging to comfort, plans, and the fear of loss. By Your Spirit, form in me the maturity of Paul—ready to go, yet willing to stay for the advance of the gospel and the good of Your people.

Day 2 — The Source of Our Maturity

Read: Philippians 1:19; Romans 8:9–11; Ephesians 3:14–19

1. Paul says he knows that through the prayers of the Philippians and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for his deliverance. Why is it important that Paul roots his maturity and confidence in the Spirit and the prayers of God’s people rather than in his own willpower?
2. The sermon warned that if we try to approach Christian maturity as something we gain on our own, we will end up “dry and crumbly and dead in our soul.” When have you felt that dryness from trying to manufacture spiritual growth?
3. How does remembering that “Jesus is the very source of our maturity” and that “the Holy Spirit of God living within his people is the one who brings about life” change the way you pursue growth?
4. Paul thanks the church for their prayers. How has the prayer of others sustained you, and how might you more intentionally pray for the maturity and perseverance of others in our church?
5. What one practical step can you take this week to depend more fully on the Spirit and the prayers of God’s people rather than relying on your own strength?

Prayer: Holy Spirit, You are the source of life and maturity in me. Forgive me for trying to will my way into Christlikeness. Thank You for the prayers of Your people that sustain me. Keep me prayerful and dependent so that Christ is honored in my body whether by life or by death.

Day 3 — Christ Will Be Honored in My Body

Read: Philippians 1:20–21; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Colossians 3:17

1. Paul’s eager expectation and hope is that “Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death.” What does it mean for Christ to be honored (or magnified) in our bodies in both ordinary and difficult circumstances?
2. The sermon said our greatest ambition should be that Jesus would be glorified in every circumstance. How does this differ from the immature thinking of “What do I want? What’s going to make me happy?”
3. Pastor Josh shared a moment of temptation while in Texas—daydreaming about easier circumstances, better food, a different ministry. How does Paul’s example in prison confront the ways we still daydream about our preferred version of life?
4. What does your use of time, money, energy, and thoughts currently reveal about who you most want to magnify?
5. What would it look like this week for you to intentionally set your mind on magnifying Christ in one specific area of your life (marriage, work, parenting, suffering, or aging)?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, my eager expectation and hope is that You would be honored in my body. Whether by life or by death, whether in ease or in hardship, let my ambition be Your glory. Transform my immature desires into a settled longing that You be magnified in everything.

Day 4 – The Love of Christ That Compels Us

Read: Galatians 2:20; Philippians 1:21; 2 Corinthians 5:14–15; Romans 8:35–39

1. Paul connects “to live is Christ” with the truth of Galatians 2:20: “I have been crucified with Christ... who loved me and gave himself for me.” Why is the personal love of Christ the power that transforms our ambitions?
2. The sermon asked, “If you were to write ‘Jesus loves ____’ in your notebook, whose name would you insert?” How easy or difficult is it for you to put your own name there and truly believe it?
3. Why is it so easy for our hearts to grow cold toward the Savior even while we remain busy with Christian activity, study, or service?
4. Pastor Josh shared how an older believer encouraged him in college to simply ask Jesus to help him love Him more. Have you ever prayed that prayer? Why might it feel strange, and why is it actually a prayer aligned with the will of God?
5. What specific memory of Christ’s love for you (His forgiveness, His pursuit, His faithfulness) can you return to this week to warm your affection for Him?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, You loved me and gave Yourself for me. My heart is prone to grow cold. Would You warm it again? Remind me of Your love. Cause me to have a greater passion for You so that my life is lived for Your glory. Help me say with Paul, “To live is Christ.”

Day 5 – Fruitful Labor and Investing in God’s People

Read: Philippians 1:22–26; Ephesians 4:15–16; 1 Thessalonians 2:8

1. Paul says that if he is to live in the flesh, it means “fruitful labor” for him, and that remaining is “more necessary on your account” for their progress and joy in the faith. How does Paul define fruitful labor differently from the way the world defines success?
2. The sermon compared spiritual growth in the local church to the power of compounding interest. Why is this a helpful picture, and what does it require of us over time?
3. Who has invested in your spiritual growth, and how has that “compounding” shaped you? Who are you currently pouring into?
4. Paul writes to a specific local church with names and faces. Why is connection to a local body (not just generic “ministry”) essential for the kind of fruitful labor Paul describes?
5. In our church right now, where do you sense the Lord inviting you to invest—whether in children, senior adults, discipleship groups, or one or two specific relationships? What is one practical next step?

Prayer: Father, You have given me a people to serve. Keep me from measuring fruitfulness the way the world does. Show me where to invest my life so that others progress in the faith and increase in joy in Christ. Make Crossroads a place of compounding spiritual interest by Your Spirit.

Day 6 – To Die Is Gain

Read: Philippians 1:23; 2 Corinthians 5:6–9; Philippians 3:20–21

1. Paul is “hard pressed between the two”: remaining for fruitful labor or departing to be with Christ, which is “far better.” Why is the desire to be with Christ not selfish but the mark of maturity?
2. The world sees death as pure loss. Why can the Christian say that death is gain? What is gained?
3. The sermon was careful to say that death is not gain for everyone. How does this truth both sober us and fuel our urgency in sharing the gospel?
4. Jesus spoke about hell more than anyone else because He does not want anyone to go there. How does the reality of eternal destinies shape the way we view our remaining days?
5. If you are in Christ, how does the certainty that to die is gain free you to stay and serve without clinging to this life? If you are not yet in Christ, what is holding you back from receiving the gift of life in Him by faith?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, You are far better than anything this world offers. Increase my longing to be with You face to face. At the same time, keep me faithful in the “little longer” You give me here. For those who do not yet know You, open their hearts to the invitation that all who come to You will never be cast out.

Day 7 – Serving Until the End & a Heart Set on Christ

Read: Philippians 1:21–26; Psalm 71:17–18; 2 Timothy 4:6–8

1. Pastor Josh shared the story of his 89-year-old grandmother (“Mammy”) who, even while struggling physically, said, “As long as he leaves me here, I’m going to serve him.” How does her example illustrate both being ready to go and willing to stay?

2. There may come a time when fruitful labor no longer looks like activity but like “suffering well for the glory of God” and being an encouragement in weakness. How does this expand our understanding of what it means that “to live is Christ”?
3. Looking back over the week, which of the following do you most need the Spirit to form in you right now: (1) a deeper sense that you are loved by Christ, (2) a clearer ambition that Christ be magnified in your body, (3) a stronger commitment to invest in specific people in the church, or (4) a warmer longing to be with Jesus?
4. As we continue in the letter to the Philippians, how does remembering Paul’s prison perspective help us read the rest of the book with greater weight and application for our own church?
5. What one prayer or practice will you carry forward from this week so that, by God’s grace, you grow toward being able to say with sincerity, “To live is Christ, and to die is gain”?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, You are the One who loved us and gave Yourself for us. Make us a people ready to go and willing to stay. Warm our hearts toward You. Help us invest in one another so that we progress in the faith and increase in joy. Whether by life or by death, let Christ be honored in our bodies—at Crossroads and in each of us. Amen.

Family or Group Discussion

1. Which part of the sermon or this week’s readings most challenged or encouraged you, and why?
2. How can we as a family or group help one another grow in the dual posture of longing for Christ and investing in one another while we remain?
3. Who has invested in your life spiritually, and how might you intentionally invest in someone else this month?
4. Take time to pray for one another: for warmer affection for Christ, for specific people you long to see saved or growing, and for faithfulness in the “little longer” the Lord gives each of us.

Weekly Practice

Walk in the maturity of Philippians 1:21.

- Remember daily that Jesus loves you and gave Himself for you.
- Ask Him to warm your heart and increase your love for Him.
- Look for one concrete way this week to invest in the progress and joy of someone in the body of Christ.
- Hold loosely to this life and tightly to the hope that to die is gain.

A church that lives this way becomes a people ready to go and willing to stay—together—for the glory of Christ.

These questions are prepared to serve personal, family, and small-group study of the Word as we continue the Philippians series. May the Spirit who sustained Paul in prison, who opened hearts in Philippi, and who still indwells His people continue to form in us the same maturity—for the glory of Christ and the strengthening of His church at Crossroads.