

Philippians 1:12-26

For these notes it is important to read the chapter from Wiersbe for chapter 1:12-26

Verses 12-18

Paul was focused on the Gospel. We know that Gospel means “Good News” and that Christ proclaimed the Gospel and spoke of it often. The Gospel was central to Paul’s life and relationships. To fully understand what Paul is talking about in this passage we need to understand the Gospel.

- **What is the Gospel?**
- **How should the Gospel become a central part of our relationship?**
- **How can you as a couple develop a singular focus of the Gospel which would impact every area of your lives (family, careers, friends, hobbies, etc)**

We all know that the journey of life never seems to fully follow the course that we may have intended. Some plan very carefully their journey. Others get up in the morning and take it as it occurs. Regardless of the type of person that you are when difficult times occur the questions tend to be similar, and they all begin with “Why.” We want to have a purpose for hard times.

Paul faced a lot of those turns in life. And his singular focus of the Gospel impacted his view of the journey. He saw each challenge as a unique way for the Gospel to be shared. He looked at the circumstances for how each experience, no matter how minute or insignificant would add to the Gospel. This was not simply having a “positive outlook” on life. This was a central anchor for all experiences.

Wiersbe wrote this about *furtherance* (*greater progress*);

“The word furtherance (greater progress) means “pioneer advance.” It is a Greek military term referring to the army engineers who go before the troops to open the way into new territory. Instead of finding himself confined as a prisoner, Paul discovered that his circumstances really opened up new areas of ministry.”

- **What are the ways that Paul’s circumstances helped the “pioneer advance” of the Gospel?**
- **How did his singular focus on the Gospel help him in the very difficult time of imprisonment?**
- **Paul says that his “*imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard.*” What kind of impact do you think he has had on the royal soldiers?**
- **What are the difficult circumstances that you as a family are facing in your journey of life? How have they taken you off course?**

Wiersbe also wrote about how believers were emboldened to also “*speak the word of God without fear.*” Some were speaking out of love and some for selfish reasons. But what thrilled

Paul was that the basics of the Gospel was growing beyond him. And as Wiersbe points out speaking the Gospel is not preaching the Gospel. It is speaking about the Good News in the daily activities of life.

“That word speak does not mean “preach.” Rather, it means “everyday conversation.”

- **Is it possible for one spouse to have the Gospel be central to their life while the other spouse is focused on material gain?**
- **How would having the Gospel as your anchor help you to begin to understand your challenges in life?**
- **How is the Gospel part of your daily speak with each other and those around you?**
- **How does your difficult circumstances further the Gospel?**

Verses 19-20

Paul viewed the Gospel as the central anchor for his life. He also believed that no matter what happened to him that the Gospel would grow not from his efforts but by God’s use of His efforts. This is where the word “Rejoice” gains meaning. For Paul the ability to rejoice was a sure thing because no matter what happened the central focus of his life would always be accomplished. There are so many things that we want to achieve but they do not last in this world. The Gospel never fades.

- **Do you think that Paul clearly understood the full impact of his life? Did he need to understand the full impact of his life to be joyful?**
- **What have been some of your greatest “failures”? What have been some of your greatest accomplishments? How have they changed the world around You? How could having a “Gospel Perspective” impact your view of those failures and accomplishments?**
- **Are you raising your children with the “Gospel Perspective”?**
- **How would the “Gospel Perspective” impact your expectations of your spouse, children, friends, God?**

Verses 21-23

“For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.” is a verse that is familiar and often quoted. It is an amazing quote to ponder. It is clear that Paul clearly thrived on life and relationships. It also makes perfect sense for a guy who is focused on the Gospel. The ultimate fulfillment of the Good News is to leave the earth and fully experience Christ. The temporal fulfillment of the Good News is being able to live and share with others. Wiersebe uses the example of a telescope.

For verse 21 we need to have the assurance that Paul expresses in verse 22. Verse 22 is a verse that encourages every pastor in the ministry. As long as God has us living on this earth there **will** be fruitful ministry. In the context of church we have to determine the measure of “fruitful ministry.” If our measure is incorrect then the purpose of living life loses meaning. It is the

same for our families. We need to understand the measure of “fruitful ministry” which goes beyond attending church together. Without this measure we will never fully understand “For me to live is Christ.”

- **What is fruitful ministry in your life, the life of your spouse, the life of your children?**
- **How does this verse help us to prioritize the daily decisions of life? How does it make those decisions more difficult?**
- **How does having the assurance of fruitful ministry encourage us to keep speaking the Gospel?**

Wiersbe pointed out that the meaning of “depart.”

“This word was used by soldiers; it meant “to take down your tent and move on.”

The passing from life to death is simply a step in our spiritual journey. The question is, when is the right time for the tent to be taken down? The challenge for many of us is that we expend huge amounts of energy keeping the tent up. We work ourselves to poor health so that we will have enough money to pay for our health care when we are old. We want to sustain this existence but not for the purpose of the Gospel. Simply because we do not want to die.

- **What is your motivation for maintaining your life, the life of your spouse, the lives of your children?**
- **What gives you greater joy, when your spouse gets a promotion or when your spouse is fully satisfied with the fullness of the Gospel in their life?**
- **Are you fully confident that if you were to die that God would take care of your family?**
- **What is your dream for your kids, that they have a successful career with a house, grandkids etc. or that they will be ardent followers of Christ spreading the Gospel?**
- **Do we see “progress and joy” in our families?**

Wiersbe closed the chapter with this paragraph,

No matter how you look at it, nothing can steal a man’s joy if he possesses the single mind. “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Phil. 1:21). Maltbie Babcock, who wrote “This Is My Father’s World,” said, “Life is what we are alive to.” When my wife and I go shopping, I dread going to the fabric department, but I often have to go because my wife enjoys looking at fabrics. If on the way to the fabric section I spot the book department, I suddenly come alive. The thing that excites us and motivates us is the thing that really is “life” to us. In Paul’s case, Christ was his life. Christ excited him and made his life worth living.

- **What excites each of you in your lives?**
- **What steps can you take to both be excited by the Gospel?**
- **How can the Gospel become a daily part of your family?**
- **How can you encourage your spouse to realize verse 21?**
- **Prepare a Gospel plan for your family.**