***The Conflict of Desire and Duty, No. 1 - PH24-01  
  
Advanced Bible Doctrine - Philippians 1:22-26***

Please open your Bibles to Philippians 1:22-26. In Philippians 1:21, the apostle Paul has declared something that he says he knows to be true about himself. He said, "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain." He is confident that the Lord Jesus Christ will be magnified whether he lives or whether he dies. Paul's reference to living here connotes a life of triumph over sin. It is a life of a fully developed spiritual maturity structure--the super grace type of believer. Therefore, he knows what his living constitutes. He is not for one moment in doubt as to what his life amounts to as a believer. That's a very marvelous thing to be able to say.

Most Christians move through life in a certain degree of uncertainty about themselves. They are not really sure that they are cutting it with the Lord. Frequently, the poor pathetic soul will express it in some words like, "I'm hoping that I just do the best I can, looking to the good Lord to lead me through." The apostle Paul was very clear that his living was a super grace expression of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, when many Christians quote this part of the verse, they do so on very hazardous grounds. The apostle Paul could do it. You will have to decide for yourself whether you have progressed and whether you are positive in such a way toward the Word of God that you can say, "My life is reflecting the glory of Jesus Christ."

Furthermore, Paul's reference to dying here refers to his soul and spirit transferring from his body into the Lord's presence in heaven. "And to die," he says, "is gain." The word game you remember means profit on an investment that you have made. The investment here is the erection of the spiritual maturity structure in the soul while you are alive in the body. When you die with such a structure in your soul, then dying is gain. If you die without a spiritual maturity structure in your soul, then dying is only gain in a limited way. You enter into the fullness of your salvation, but you do not take with you that glorious structure of spiritual maturity which enhances your enjoyment of heaven and your relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, dying is gain only in the fullest sense if you are at a super grace level. Many Christians, again, glibly quote this part of the verse. However, when they die, they are really going out as spiritual paupers.

So, the apostle Paul could say about himself in verse 21, "My life I'm living now is the reflected glory of Christ because I am a super grace Christian." He could say also, "Therefore to die will be gain because I take this with me into the Lord's presence. All of this is because I have taken in the Word of God and I have responded to it.

**Philippians 1:22**

The fact of verse 21, however, as wonderful as it is to be able to say, poses a dilemma for Paul. He says, "Now this creates a problem for me. The fact that this is true about me, it creates a problem. He picks this up in verse 22. He says, "But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labor. Yet, what I shall choose, I know not." "But if" here is that first class condition in the Greek which means that this is going to be his lot. He says, "But, if I should live." He is in prison, and he is shortly to stand before Nero to stand trial for the accusations against him. He indicates in this passage that he expects to be declared not guilty. So, he will not be executed, but he will be turned free. That's what did happen. Therefore, when he says "If" here, he uses first class. He means it: "I am going to live. I am not going to die. If I am going to live," he anticipates his release after nearly two years in this Roman house imprisonment that he has experienced.

He says, "If I live," and again it uses the Greek word "zao" that we have been referring to. "Zao" refers to living, and this is a word that is used as an infinitive with the word "the" before it. So it's actually used like a noun, and thus it is used in a way that indicates the status (the factor) of life itself. It's used intensively of life as a unit. It is not used in that extensive sense like the other Greek word that you remember we looked at "bios" which is life in its progress, manner, and so on. He's just looking at life as a whole.

He says, "But if I continue alive in this super grace life that I am now living," which is what God's purpose is for me, reflected here by this infinitive. He says, "If I live in the flesh (meaning in his body), this is the fruit of my labor." The word "this" is the Greek word "hutos," and that means this very thing. That's what he has in mind here. This refers to the fact of Paul remaining on earth alive in his body, functioning as a spiritually mature believer. "If I continue to live on this earth," then the conclusion is introduced with "this." This is going to be the result. So, he says, "If for me, continued life in this physical existence be my lot, then this very thing, my continuing alive on this earth, is going to have certain results and consequences. And here's what it is:

The consequences he describes as "the fruit of my labor." There is no word "is." It's just very crisp in the Greek. He's making a very punchy statement. He says the result is going to be fruit. The word "fruit" is the word "karpos." "Karpos" here refers to Paul's service for the Lord. It is the fruit that comes from that service which is divine good production. Many Christians are under the delusion of serving the Lord, but they are not producing food which we call divine good. They are producing fruit, but it's human good, and it has short-range results.

One of the things that happens when you become a spiritually mature believer is you begin to have a sense of the importance of not squandering your life. One of the things characteristic of an unbeliever is that he wastes his life. One of the things that is characteristic of a carnal Christian is that he squanders the days of his life. He fritters away the capacities that he has. Suddenly he discovers that he is looking in the mirror; his hair is changing color; wrinkles are developing; his capacities are less; he's sleeping more; he's doing other things less; and, he's recognizing that life is moving on for him. About that time, he might begin to think, "What's it all about." At that time, a lot of people commit suicide, especially when they have everything in the world and there's nothing more to pursue. When you become a mature believer, you begin to be concerned with what you're doing with your life.

Paul says, "If I live, I know that I can equate my further living with one thing for certain. Whatever else I can say about my life, I'm going to tell you Philippians that there is one thing that will be for sure about me, and that is that it will be a life producing fruit in my service for the Lord Jesus Christ. As long as I'm alive and producing divine good, I am storing treasures in heaven." So, on the one hand, Paul says, "It's nice to keep living." This is one of the tragedies of being cut out of life prematurely by God. This is one of the tragedies of doing something and suffering the sin unto death, or doing something rash and cutting your life short. When you do check out without having completed the years that have been allotted to you, you also check out with considerably less reward for all eternity that could have been yours.

So, Paul says, "For me, when I'm living, there will be fruit of my labor" ("ergon"). His "ergon" is going to be his service for the Lord, functioning from a spiritual maturity structure, and thus he has capacity for divine good service. If you are not a spiritually mature Christian, you will not produce maximum good. If you are not a person who is filled with the Spirit, you will produce a lot of human good that will con you and those around you, but will not be received by the Lord. So Paul says that this very condition of his continuing alive is that in which the profit of my production is involved. If he lives, divine good will come from that, and it will be rewarded at the Judgment Seat of Christ. For him to produce this good, he does have to continue living. If he lives, souls are going to be evangelized. If he lives, there are going to be converts which are going to be produced and brought into the church. If he lives, Christians are going to be edified by instruction and doctrine. If he lives, churches are going to be planted. If he lives, his life will count for divine good.

Therefore, that's what he means when he says, "But if I continue alive here in the flesh, this very condition will produce fruit from my labors. Yet, what I shall choose, I know not." Now he has a doubt. "Yea, I'm faced with a dilemma. What I shall choose?" The word is "hireo." "Hireo" is a word here in the future, so that sometime in the future he says, "I don't know what I'm going to choose in the future." It is a middle voice which means for his personal benefit. I don't know what would be best for me. It's indicative. It's a statement of fact. What he's referring to is that he's not sure what his preference would be relative to living or dying at some time in the future.

So he says, "Yet, what I shall choose, I know not. The word is "gnorizo." It's present. He has a certain continual uncertainty as to which he would prefer, whether to live or to do something else. Here's what the dilemma is. He tells us in verse 23. He says, "For," and he introduces it with the little word "de." That's what "for" is. That indicates that an explanation is coming. That's a clue word to say, "Here comes an explanation." He says that he is in a strait, and "strait" is "sunecho." "Sunecho" has the image of being on a narrow road, hemmed in on both sides, with pressures from both directions, so that you're caught in the middle. It is the word that you could use to describe a pendulum that is swinging back and forth and is cast in equilibrium so that it couldn't move either way. It was absolutely stationary, in neutral, in the middle. Paul says, "I'm in neutral. I'm hung in the middle. I'm closed in by a wall on both sides. I can't move this way, and I can't move that way." This "sunecho" is present.

He says, "I always feel this tug both ways." It's passive. He says this is imposed upon me. In other words, it's not something he creates. It's just there. Why is it? It's there because he knows something about doctrine. He knows something about his possibility of execution and his possibility of living, and what each would mean. Therefore, he's torn both ways. The two desires that he is a neutral on, he calls "between the two." "For I am in a pressure between the two." There are two things that draw him. That's what he means here. He has something imposed upon him. The two things he refers to are the alternatives of verse 21. "I am torn," in other words, "on the one side of continuing alive on this earth, producing dividing good; earning rewards; and, storing treasures in heaven with all that that's going to mean to me for all eternity."

Secondly, on the other hand, I am torn with the fact that I could die. I could go into the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, and with me I would take a spiritual maturity of such a magnificent proportion and development that it would be a marvelous experience to go to heaven at this point in my life. He says, "I don't know whether I want to stay here with you people or whether I want to go to heaven." At this point you might say, "That's kind of weird, isn't it?" Again I must remind you that he is not trying to die. He is not eager to die. As a matter of fact, you may be sure he's hoping that he'll win his case before Nero, and that he will live. However, nevertheless, apart from that, the consequences are great either way. That's what he means. The consequences are great either way.

What Paul said was true of him was not because he was a great apostle, but because he was a receptive learner of the Word of God. Consequently, what is true of him can be true of you whatever your situation is--whether death is imminent for you, or whether death is a distant possibility. The point can be true of you too--that you can find, either way, a sense of welcome--whether you live or whether you go into the Lord's presence. The dilemma for Paul was between these two.

Why was this such a dilemma? Well, the dilemma stemmed from one basic factor in his being. Because he was a spiritually mature Christian, you remember that one of the facets of spiritual maturity that you develop is love. You develop that love, first of all, toward God. That's what caused the dilemma for Paul. He was deeply in love with the Lord Jesus Christ. He was absolutely preoccupied with Christ. Consequently, he was looking for Him, as Hebrews 12:2 indicates to us.

You can convert this into human terms. Surely, all of you, sometime in your life, were sufficiently in love with somebody, either a man or a woman, or a child--your own, or somebody else's. Absence from that person created a great longing in your heart for that person. Those of you who have been in the military service, especially during wartime, the enforced separations can enter into the spirit that Paul refers to here of someone that's left behind that you love; that you are preoccupied with; and, that you long for. It was someone to whom you were constantly writing letters. It was someone whose picture you carried around. It was someone who was on your thoughts. It was someone who kept coming back to your mind.

The people that you do not love never come back to your mind. The people that you dislike, like the devil himself, they come back to your mind. Both extremes come back. The people that you just despise, you keep thinking about them. That's the trouble with hating somebody. You can't get away from the creep you hate. He's already occupying your mind and draining your capacities. Therefore, the best thing to do with a creep is not to hate him. Just recognize that he's a creep; forget him; and, go on with mental attitude love toward him because you have to have that emotional release. On the other hand, a person that you love is a person that constantly is coming back to your mind. You're forever thinking about that gal or that fellow. And absence makes the rate of remembering that person increase constantly.

This is what Paul had in love for Jesus Christ. He would go along, and all of a sudden, he would find himself thinking about the Lord. I know it was perhaps a little easier for him because he had been to heaven. He had been on the scene. That's one thing you know about him in that prison cell. He had lots of time to think. That's one nice thing about being thrown in jail. You get lots of time to think, especially in the Roman jails because they didn't have TV. American jails probably have TV. You don't have so much time to think there as you could in the old days, but there he had lots of time to think. It was the most natural thing in the world for him to sit there; look out the window; and, start remembering that time when he walked into heaven; the things he heard; and, the things he saw. And he breathed a sigh and he said, "Boy, I wish I were there." Then he would say, "No I really can't be here." I've got another problem. I've got a duty and responsibility. He was torn between the two.

So, it's like for God that causes us to be preoccupied with the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is love for the Lord Jesus that then stimulates a desire in us for the Word of God. We have this told us in Colossians 3:1-2 and in 2 Peter 3:18. When we love the Lord, we begin to want to know the Word of God. One of the sure signs that you love a person is the fact that you want to hear from that person. When you love somebody, one of the things you begin to do is watch for the mailman, and you begin to look for letters. Your heart looks forward to hearing from that person. When you fall in love with Jesus Christ, you can test yourself: How much do I love God? One of the things that will be a signal that you love God is that you will welcome and look forward to hearing from Him, and the way you hear from God is through the Word of God.

So, if you wake up on Sunday morning and it's a nice day; it's a cold day; it's a bad day; or, whatever kind of a day it is, it's easy for you to stay at home. If it's easy for you to skip hearing what the Lord may have to say to you that day, you may be sure that you don't think too much of Him. But the people who love the Lord Jesus Christ are the people who keep storming through the church doors, morning and evening on every Lord's Day, and every time we are open for a study of the Word of God. That's a sure sign that you love somebody, because you want to hear from Him. This love for the Lord Jesus Christ will reach a peak of maturity from the doctrine that you take into your soul. Philippians 1:20-21, right here, is telling us that. It is spiritual maturity that creates this love condition (Ephesians 3:17-19).

It takes, of course, the filling of the Holy Spirit to make love for Jesus Christ possible (Ephesians 5:1-2, 18). It is the Lord Jesus Himself who initiates love toward us, and then we as believers respond to Him in love. For many of us, we feel the approach of the Lord. We sense through his Word His reaching out to us in love, but we don't respond to it (Ephesians 5:25-27, 1 John 4:19, John 4:8-10). Your capacity to respond is the issue that's determined by how much doctrine you've taken in. The more doctrine you know, the greater capacity to love Him because you know him better (Philippians 3:7-8, 2 Timothy 1:13, Psalm 119:163).

Consequently, believers who are negative to doctrine cannot love the Lord Jesus Christ. As a matter of fact, if you don't love the Lord Jesus Christ, you're under a special divine curse. I think you should understand that. If you find that you have signals that indicate to you that you don't care about hearing from Him, so you don't mind staying home from church; or, if you find signals of the fact that He does not come to your mind with exhilaration and joy over the fact that you know Him and you're going to be with Him someday--all these signs that indicate love, then you are under a certain divine curse. 1 Corinthians 16:22 says, "Anathema Maranatha." It means "accursed until the Lord comes," and this is speaking to believers who do not love the Lord Jesus Christ. The love for the Lord Jesus Christ is what motivates us to witnessing. It is not because somebody has challenged you or because somebody has rebuked you and made you feel terrible about the fact that you're not witnessing (2 Corinthians 5:14). It is our love for Him that leads us to speak about Him. This is another thing that's a sign that you love a person. That's the person you talk about. That's the person you're quite ready to share with other people.

The Old Testament saints were very clearly commanded to love God, and they were to meet conditions, consequently, in their souls which would enable them to love God (Deuteronomy 6:5, Deuteronomy 10:12, Deuteronomy 11:1-3). When you do love God, because you have developed a maturity from doctrine, then you have a capacity into which God can pour His grace, and the result is that you love all the more. The greater the grace of God in your heart, the greater is your love capacity (Daniel 9:4, Psalm 31:23, Psalm 119:132, 1 Corinthians 2:9). When we love God, we also have the essential base for happiness in life in general (Deuteronomy 30:16-20). It is our love for God that gives us the ground of happiness. When you are a military man, and you face combat, it is interesting to note in Joshua 23:10-11 that the Bible says that God has a protective special hand upon the soldier in battle who has developed a deep love for Jesus Christ. It is a protective armor about him, and it gives him victory in combat.

The Lord whom we love, of course, is invisible. Consequently, the only way you can love Him is as you see Him in his Word. That gets us back to the thing that all of this love business is all about. It's knowing God, but it's knowing His word so that you can know Him (1 Peter 1:8). So, Paul had a dilemma. On the one hand, he wanted to be with the one that he loved so much in heaven. Few Christians are able to enter into this. But on the other hand, he had this other concern for something else. It was something that was a responsibility on the other side.

So verse 23 says, "I'm in a strait between two things, having a desire to depart." The word "desire" is the word that is sometimes used in a bad sense. It's "epithumia." "Epithumia" is not bad in itself. It just means a passionate desire. So what he says here is that he constantly has a passionate desire or an insatiable longing. This is because he has developed this relationship of love for Jesus Christ. He is willing to welcome death, not because he is depressed or insane, but because he loves Jesus Christ. This is a normal preference of a mature Christian. The Christian who lacks spiritual maturity is a Christian who is tied up with the things of the world. Therefore, he says, "I'd rather continue on in the rat race that I'm in," if it were up to him to have a choice in the matter.

Well, God is indeed able to take Paul out of this life or to let him stay in it. He says he would rather depart. The word he uses for "depart" is the Greek word "analuo." "Analuo" is a word that means to pull up an anchor; to take down a tent; to release a prisoner; or, to unhitch a yoke of oxen at the end of a day. It's in the aorist tense so it means at the point of Paul's death. It's active. It's his choice. It's in the infinitive which means this is the purpose of one side of his dilemma. He says, "On one side, I'd like to take my tent down. I'd like to strike my tent in order that I might be." Again this is infinitive, expressing his purpose.

"In order that I might depart to be with Christ." The word "with Christ" is the Greek word "sun," and the word "sun" means together with. It is not the word which also sometimes means "with," the word "pros." "Pros" is a preposition that means face-to-face. He's not saying, "I want to depart. I want to take down my house and go face-to-face with Jesus Christ." That is what's going to happen. However, what he stresses is this word "sun" which means companionship. What he is looking forward to is the better companionship that is before him with Jesus Christ whom he loves. He's not so concerned and looking forward to being face-to-face with the Lord, as to be in companionship.

So, in verse 23, he says that this companionship "is far better." In the Greek, this is a very strong triple comparative. This means the superior position of being together in companionship with Christ. It literally says, "More by much better than." That's what that is--to be with Christ. Or we would say "better by far." Therefore, verse 23 says, "For I am in a dilemma between the two, life or death, having a passionate desire toward striking my tent (that is dying) and being with Christ which is by far better."

The apostle Paul was very definitive of the fact that going to heaven was a happy experience. Some of you may not be so sure about that. You may be wondering, for example, about whether you would be happy in heaven. This is because some of you can think of some people that you know are going to be in heaven that you now view as finks. And you're wondering how this person that you don't care too much about, or that has been a misery to you in this life, how you're going to feel seeing that person walking around heaven. Or you're concerned about how somebody else may affect your happiness who has perhaps been of some meaning to you, but isn't going to be there. Maybe it's a husband or a wife. You're wondering, "How am I going to feel to be in heaven without this person that I did love here on this earth. Or you're wondering whether you'll be happy with your new situation because you're wondering what you're going to do with all that time on your hands for all eternity. There are no television sets up there.

I don't think you have to worry about that. The details of heaven are not given to us, by God's design. However, the basic principles are given, and they ensure absolute perfect happiness. Therefore, Paul knows what he's talking about. He knows it from doctrine and he knows from experience that to be in the Lord's presence is by far (much more) better than his present status.

Now he tells us the other side of his dilemma. He says in verse 24, "Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful to you." The word "nevertheless" introduces the principle that one's personal preference and advantage is subordinate to personal spiritual obligation. One sign of spiritual maturity is that your personal preference is set aside in order that somebody else's spiritual development may be served.

Paul was important to the Philippian Christians. Paul is important to Christianity for the simple reason that the apostle Paul, at this point in his life, is the source of a vast amount of divine viewpoint in the form of Bible doctrine. He is now in the process of writing the prison epistles. He has not yet written the pastoral epistles, 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus--areas of tremendous information between the prison and the pastoral epistles, without which we would be fantastically poorer spiritually. Now Paul knows all this information. This has all been taught to him by the Lord. For this reason, he says, "Nevertheless (in spite of my personal preference), to abide," and the Greek word is "epineno." It is present, and it means to continue to prolong his life on the earth. It's active. That's his choice. It's infinitive. It is God's purpose for Paul.

Paul says, "Nevertheless, for me to prolong my life on earth in the flesh (which means in his body) is more needful for you." This is a comparative which means "more necessary for you," and the word "for you" in the Greek uses the word "dia." He uses it with the accusative case so that it means "because of you." So verse 14 says, "But still to prolong the stay in the flesh is more necessary because of you all." Paul's personal preference was based on his love of the Lord Jesus. That led him to prefer to be with the Lord. However, this does not lead him to resist or to resent God's plan, which for him he realizes is not to go to heaven at this point, but to remain alive on earth for services which need to be performed. He had time to think over the priorities of his life--the things that were worthwhile and the things that were not, because he was in prison. He knew that one thing that was vitally needed by the Philippian Christians and by us today, he had. Therefore, he knew that if he died, into that grave would go with him fantastic important information that had not yet been recorded to be preserved in Scripture. He had a lot to teach these people about doctrine which is the most important thing that a person possesses in life.

Paul knew that this information was not welcomed by all, and was downright rejected by many. However, he was not hung up on people and their old sin natures, and his job was to give out the Word of God. Therefore, the apostle Paul knew that his life was going to count. He knew that when he finally did die, his ministry was going to count. Why? Because he had spent his time giving out doctrine. This is why we try to caution men who are going into the ministry to get very straight in their minds exactly what their job is all about. You would think, "Well, if anybody went to seminary, he would know what his job is all about." That is not entirely the case. Very frequently, they teach you things in seminary that cause you to pick up ideas that your job is something other than what Paul is speaking of here in reference to himself, as to the reason it was important to the Philippians that he stay alive, namely so he could teach them doctrine. Men who go into the ministry are often sidetracked from that primary responsibility; that primary duty; and, and that primary calling.

Well Paul knew it. Consequently, he knew that his life was going to count. Why? It's just like some fellow in the ministry. He can spend his life doing all kinds of things that people think he should do, and when he gets to the end of his life and gets to the end of his capacities and of his ministry, then there is going to be a day of accounting. Do you know what's going to last? The only thing that's going to last is the doctrine he taught people either by: direct explanation; by implication; by example; or, by situations of application where they caught the principles of doctrine. That's what's going to last. Everything else is going to be gone.

Therefore, the apostle Paul knew what he was doing with his life, and I hope you do too. You may think to yourself, "Oh, wonderful. I'm not called to the ministry." You seem to think that there's a difference between me and you. Well there are differences in some respects. However, the difference is not something that man often creates. There is no difference of the ground of our responsibility. You are just as responsible for getting people to know the Word of God as I am. I have to do it within the calling of the gift that has been imposed on me by divine decision. You do it within the context of the gift which has been placed upon you by divine decision. However, the only thing that's going to last in your life is every dollar that you gave that advanced Bible doctrine going out.

I hope you found the same thrill (I'm sure you did) to the letter that you received this week from the man who wrote us and enclosed the $1,000 check to the audio recording ministry. It was interesting that that letter came at a time when it was rather an encouragement that we needed. We get this bucking in very subtle ways of giving out the Word of God, and that is the thing that God has called us to do in one way or another. One of the primary ways we do it, of course, is through those audio recordings.

Therefore, the apostle Paul knew something that you can know. You can know that your life is going to count. It will count to the extent that you do what he did. He said, "The very reason I have to stay alive is because I've got information to give. You people need the information."

In verse 25, Paul said, "And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance in joy and faith." Paul anticipates living. He was oriented to the direction his life was taking. He knew disaster was possible, but he said, "I have this confidence," and this refers to the conclusion that he has reached that his life on earth is not at an end. He had a confidence which means that this assurance came to him from the Lord that he was going to remain alive, and he was going to complete the plan of his life. In 2 Timothy 4:7-8, he declares at the end of his life that this plan has been executed.

Paul lived in terms of absolutes. He could say in Philippians 4:11, "Not that I speak in respect of want, for I've learned in whatever state I am, in this to be content." Paul says, I know how to be prosperous, and I know how to be broke; and, I know how to be content in either place. Those are absolute states.

**Relative Thinking**

Today we have an educational system under which many of you have been trained. It's an educational system which has injected into your thinking a relativistic ground of decision making. Relativism is your way of thinking. You have been taught that it is bad to think in terms of absolutes. You've been taught to shy away from the concept that there are such things as absolutes. People who have been trained in relativistic thinking, consequently, find it very difficult to grasp the kind of spiritual absolutes that Paul is reflecting throughout his writings. However, once you are a believer and you are trained in doctrine, you readily see that life is made up of absolutes. This is right. This is wrong. This works this way, and this works this way. You start here, and you will end up out here. Life moves in very definitive patterns. But relative thinking is Satan's way of helping society to excuse what comes from the old sin nature.

There used to be a time when homosexuality was called a perversion. When you read the medical records now, and you read writings, the word "perversion" is no longer used. Instead the word "deviation" is used. Alcoholism used to be called a sin. The Bible says getting drunk is sinful. It's no longer a sin. It's now called a sickness. Here's a guy who's all boozed up, and we're told that he's sick. Here's a guy who's a sexual pervert, and we're told he's a deviation. He's different. The idea is that there's no norm. He's just different from you. You're different from this person. There's nothing wrong with the difference is the implication.

The reason our society thinks like that is because our schools have trained people to think in relative terms. They train them to reject the idea that there are rights and wrongs and absolutes. The apostle Paul says that doctrine will give you a confidence in life. This is a confidence which is based on knowledge, and you will know that there are absolutes. Therefore, consequently, Paul says, "Having this confidence I know." This is the Greek word "oida." This is completed knowledge in his mind. I have some completed definite ideas and concepts from doctrine. I match these up to my experience, and I can reach some absolute decisions. Unbelievers and carnal Christians are always uncertain. This is a sure sign of carnality of a Christian--one who is uncertain in matters of spiritual things generally. There are some things that will be uncertain, but generally, things spiritually should be very clean cut in your mind.

Therefore, he says, "I have this confidence, knowing that (introducing his purpose) I shall abide." The word "abide" here is "meno" in the Greek. "Meno" is future; that is, at his trial. It is active. He will live on. It is indicative--a statement of fact. He says, "I know that I shall abide. I'm not going to die, and continue," and he uses another word which is a variation of this one, "parameno". That is significant. First he says, "I know that I shall abide. I'm going to remain alive." Then he says, "I'm going to continue," and he has the little preposition "para" which means alongside. "I'm going to remain alongside you people." In other words, this is his way of saying, "I'm not only going to stay alive, but I'm going to be right there with you on the earth," making it very clear that he is speaking about his physical presence.

Then he says, "For your furtherance." "Your furtherance" is the Greek word "prokope." "Prokope" means progress. "I'm going to stay with you for your progress, or resulting in your progress, and this in turn will produce something else. This will produce your progress in what? In the joy of faith. This is your inner happiness. It's not an emotional ecstatic kick, but the joy of faith; that is, from faith. Here the word "faith" is used as the body of doctrine.

So, verse 25 says, "Having confidence in this, I know that I shall abide and remain in this life with you all with a view to your progress and inner happiness from faith (from Bible doctrine). Then in verse 26, the apostle Paul ties it up: "That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Christ Jesus for me by my coming to you again." "That" introduces the result--your rejoicing. This word "rejoicing" is the word "glorying." It means bringing glory to Jesus Christ--that you're bringing glory to Jesus Christ. How do you do that? From that spiritual maturity in your soul. The Philippians are going to enjoy bringing glory to Jesus Christ because Paul is going to stay alive.

How does that help them? Well, because Paul happens to be a HICEE communicator. He deals with the Word of God. He gives them the *hermeneutics*. He operates on the principles of interpretation. He gives them *isagogics*--the background. He gives them *categories* of truth. He gives them *etymology*, the origin and meaning of words. And he gives them *exegesis*--how these words are related together so they come out with the certain meaning that God the Holy Spirit intended. All of these things are important, and all of them are involved in interpreting the Word of God, and you can't do it any other way. God has provided pastors to do that for God's flock. He says that he is that kind of a communicator, and there's no substitute for this.

So, for that reason, Paul says that your glorying may be more abundant." "More abundant" is "to abound to a maximum." The idea is continual expanding. This happens to be in the subjunctive voice. It is the Greek word "perisseuo." "Perisseuo" is subjunctive which means it's a possibility. Maybe you will, and maybe you won't. "But you will advance in your glorying of Christ Jesus by my coming to you again." How is that going to help them, for Paul to come to them? "By my coming to you again--through me." Well, because he is going to teach them the Word of God.

So the apostle Paul says, "I have a dilemma. This dilemma on the one side is that I could go to heaven to be with the Lord. On the other side, you need me to be here in order to instruct you in the Word of God. I'm in a bind between the two. I'm held in neutral. I would like to go to be with the Lord. That's by far better, but it's necessary for me to live in the flesh here with you people, alongside of you, because I have information of doctrine. That's the most important thing that a person needs in life. I can give it to you. If I give it to you, and you respond to it, your job will expand. You will mature; you will grow in spiritual maturity; and, you will enter a life that is such a glory to Jesus Christ and such a personal rejoicing to you, all of which will come to you because I remain alive. If Paul had died at this point, these Philippians would have been robbed of fantastic personal development; inner happiness; and, joy. That is what he has provided for you today through His Word.

I hope you're making the investment.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

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