



**SERIES: Philippians (May / June)**

**SPEAKER: NAT CRAWFORD**

**Wednesday, May 12, 2021**

**Scripture: Philippians 1:20**

**TITLE: The Life-Death Paradox**

A famous author and tv preacher said, “God wants you to prosper financially, to have plenty of money, to fulfill the destiny he has laid out for you.” When I heard that, I thought, “I wonder where he heard that.” Would you be surprised it wasn’t in the Bible? I hope not. The Bible, the apostles, and Christ Himself didn’t promise health, wealth, or a full head of hair. The Bible promises eternal hope, sufficient grace, and peace, in spite of overwhelming trials and suffering.

That’s the message of the Bible, and that’s the message of Paul. Paul was no stranger to hardship. We are studying the book of Philippians, where we find Paul in chains, awaiting trial in Rome. Paul is being ridiculed by competing preachers. He’s been shipwrecked, flogged, beaten, stoned, and the list goes on. Yet in the previous verses, he said, “I rejoice.” Why? He has confidence in God, in the prayers of the saints, and of the provision of the Spirit. And then he says this in Philippians 1:20 (NLT):

“For I fully expect and hope that I will never be ashamed, but that I will continue to be bold for Christ, as I have been in the past. And I trust that my life will bring honor to Christ, whether I live or die.”

Paul was a confident man - not in himself - he was confident in Christ. That’s why he fully expects and hopes that he will never be ashamed. Paul was so confident in who Christ is, and what He has done, that to compromise wasn’t an option. Caesar could put him to death. The soldiers could beat him. The competitors could try to humiliate him. Nothing could remove the confidence in Christ. So, whether traveling from city to city proclaiming the Good News, or sitting in chains proclaiming the Gospel, he would bring honor to Christ in his actions and in his words.

And then he says those famous words, “And I trust that my life will bring honor to Christ, whether I live or die.” Followed by, “For to me, living means living for Christ, and dying is even better.” Did you know that there is no verb in that phrase? It literally says, “to live Christ, to die gain.” For Paul, living meant serving Christ. “To die” meant to be present with and worshipping Christ forever. I don’t know many Christians who actually feel that way. Most days, I live like “to live in me and to die is gain.” In other words, this world is for me to enjoy, but once I die, Christ will get my full attention. Not Paul. Paul was so confident in Christ, that to live is Christ and to die is gain.

That's my challenge for you today: Live in the confidence of Christ. In all you do today, let it be done in honor and worship of our Savior and King. No matter the opportunity or the hardship, know it is a chance to bring Him glory. Even if obedience means death, that too means gain.

So let's live with real confidence. When we do, we will win the day.