

GREAT TRUTHS THAT STRENGTHEN  
Phil. 1:19-26

Intro: One of the reasons we have been studying the epistle of Paul to the Philippians is to find out why his heart was so full of joy when his circumstances brought him so much trouble.

You cannot read this epistle very long without noticing that Paul had a very great love for the Savior. You can even see this in the many times he mentions His Name.

But he also loved the people of God in Philippi very much. When Paul prayed for them, he gave thanks. And it was an obvious joy to him to be able to pray for them.

Then he loved the Gospel, and wanted people to be saved--so much so that even if the preaching of the Gospel were used against him, he would rejoice because Christ was being preached!

We see all of this up to v. 19 in the epistle.

At v. 19 Paul continues to open his heart to them by writing in particular about some truths which had been a means of encouraging him while he was a prisoner of Rome. Let us think of these as giving us the divisions for our passage tonight:

- I. His determination (vv. 19-21).
- II. His dilemma (vv. 22-24).
- III. His decision (vv. 25, 26).

In these we are to see:

- 1) The Lord's work in Paul, in vv. 19-24.
- 2) The Lord's work through Paul, in vv. 25, 26.

I. PAUL'S DETERMINATION (Phil. 1:19-21).

There has been a great deal of discussion as to what the Apostle Paul meant by the words, "my salvation."

Some feel that he is talking about his deliverance from Rome.

But the issues involved seemed to go beyond that. And, besides, up to vv. 24, 25 there seems to be an element of uncertainty as to what would happen to him.

No, it would seem that "my salvation" has a much more comprehensive meaning here. We know that it is a term which is used to describe the whole process of salvation. Sometimes it speaks of the past, sometimes of the present, and sometimes of the future. It might even be a combination of more than one of these.

The context would seem to indicate that Paul is thinking about the working out of his own salvation in his daily life. Imprisonment had forced him to face certain issues. Things that he had believed in the past were now being put to the test. AND, AS A RESULT OF THEIR PRAYERS AND WHAT GOD WOULD DO IN ANSWERING THOSE PRAYERS, HE KNEW THAT, JUST AS GOD HAD MADE IT PRODUCTIVE WHERE THE GOSPEL WAS CONCERNED, SO HE WAS MAKING IT PROFITABLE WHERE PAUL WAS CONCERNED!

The above is what v. 19 tells us. He took refuge in the sovereignty of God, in the purposes of God, and believed that God would make all things work out to his profit--spiritually!

So the Lord had been working IN Paul.

And this is where we see his determination.

"My earnest expectation" means that everything else had to be secondary. Bishop Moule says that  
 "the outstretched head of the watcher is almost visible in the word" (p. 23).  
 "Hope" intensifies the word, "expectation."

Paul did not want to dishonor the Lord with his behavior, with his unbelief, through any sin, or any other way!

He wanted to exalt and glorify the Lord regardless of whether it meant "by life, or by death." He wanted to be bold--"fearlessness, esp. in the presence of persons of high rank" (A & G, p. 636).

He had come to see that if he lived, it was Christ, and if he died, it could only be better because it would mean even more of Christ. Several years before Paul had written to the Roman church,

"For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's" (Rom. 14:8).

Now this was being taught to the Apostle Paul in a deeper way!

But note how Paul states it. It was not something that he was going to do. "Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death."

## II. HIS DILEMMA (Phil. 1:22-24).

Heaven had taken on new meaning for the Apostle Paul. In v. 21 he says, "to die is gain." Now, in v. 23 he speaks of going to be with the Lord as "far better." THESE ARE NOT JUST WORDS, BUT THE EXPRESS THE DEEPEST OF CONVICTIONS WITH

## THE APOSTLE PAUL.

What had happened?

The Lord had a child of His who was so anxious to go to heaven that he really had to be talked into staying on earth (or this is the way it seems to be).

What love for Christ this reveals! And what an understanding of the glories of heaven! Perhaps Paul's experience at Lystra, apparently described in 2 Cor. 12, could have been a part of this. Cf. Acts 14:19, 20.

What was his one reason for staying on earth? "To abide in the flesh is more needful for you." It was his ministry to the Philippians which was not finished as yet--and doubtless to many others as well.

## III. HIS DECISION (Phil. 1:25, 26).

Paul realized that he was going to stay, and he was satisfied with that decision.

But notice how he expresses the reason for his remaining: "for your furtherance and joy of faith."

The word, "furtherance," in Phil. 1 shows that the Lord was using Paul two ways:

- 1) V. 12, in the evangelization of the lost.
- 2) V. 25, in the edification of the saints.

"Furtherance" means to clear the way, progress.

But notice: He not only wanted to further the faith of the saints, BUT HE WANTED THEM TO BE JOYFUL IN IT!

AND IN VERSE 26 HE TELLS THEM THE EXTENT OF THAT JOY: "more abundant"--which means to have more than you need!

It has been noted by others that "abundant joy," not just joy, are prominent in Paul's letters to the Romans, the Corinthians, and the Galatians. It fits in with the idea of "supply" in v. 19--an abundant supply.

Concl: What, then, are the great truths in this passage which strengthened the Apostle Paul while he was a prisoner of Rome? Here are some from our passage:

- 1) The sovereign working of God in his circumstances.
- 2) The power of prayer--the prayers of others.
- 3) The ministry of the Holy Spirit--never limited by our circumstances.
- 4) The prospect of being with the Lord.
- 5) The great possibilities of ministering to the Lord's people.