Advancement of the Gospel

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Preacher: Shawn Woo

[0:00] For those of you who are new to the church, maybe watching at home or Zoom, my name is Sean. I'm one of the pastors of Trinity Cambridge Church, and it's my joy and privilege to preach God's Word to you this evening.

Let me pray and seek God's help before we start. Heavenly Father, we come together as Christians.
We are not called by the name of any other, but by the name of Christ, our Savior, our Lord. And as such, as Christians, we want to be about Christ's business.
We want to be characterized by Christ's likeness. We want to be driven by Christ's passion, His priority.
And to that end, we need the help of your Holy Spirit. So please help us now this evening as we incline our ears, incline our hearts toward you, toward your Word.
[1:17] Speak to us. We are desperate to hear from you. We need your Word. Guide us.

Affect our hearts, our minds. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.
Philippians chapter 1, verses 12 to 26. I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, so that it has become known throughout the Holy Imperial Guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ.
And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the Word without fear.
Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from goodwill. The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for defense of the gospel.
[2:32] The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice.

Yes, and I will rejoice, for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, this will turn out for my deliverance. As it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always, Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death.
For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me, yet which I shall choose, I cannot tell.
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.
Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith, so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus because of my coming to you again.
[3:58] This is God's holy and authoritative word. The name of the Midwestern state, Nebraska, comes from the Native American Oto language, word that means flat river.

That's because there's a prominent river that runs through the state that's very shallow. The river was named Platte River by French explorers because the French word for plat, flat is plat.
And this is the river that was made famous by the American journalist Edgar Nye, who described this river in 1889 as being a mile wide and an inch deep.
Since then, the expression has been used by, in a pejorative way, by many people to describe those who seem to have only superficial knowledge about many things. And this seems to be an apt description of our world, of the world we live in.
In the world full of, I guess, the internet and Wikipedia, many people's knowledge is a mile wide but an inch deep. In the world of social media, many people's relationships are a mile wide but an inch

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deep.
[5:10] In the world of YouTube and TikTok, many people's interests are a mile wide but an inch deep. As Christians, we too run this risk in our relationship with and service to Jesus Christ.

We can be a Christian for many years and yet have very little depth. We can be a Christian for many years and yet have very little impact. And how can we avoid this?
Philippians 1, 12-26 commends the example of the Apostle Paul to us and teaches us that we should live with single-minded devotion to the advance of the gospel in and through us.
The entire book of Philippians can be outlined in terms of single-minded devotion to Christ.
Theologian Norman Geisler provides a useful outline in his popular survey of the New Testament.
Chapter 1 speaks of the philosophy of Christian living, Christ our life. It says, to live is Christ and to die is gain.
[6:15] Chapter 2 speaks of the pattern of Christian living, Christ our mind. Have this mind among yourselves which is yours in Christ Jesus. Chapter 3 speaks of the prize of Christian living, Christ our goal.

I press on toward the goal to win the prize of the upper call in Christ Jesus. Chapter 4 speaks of the power of Christian living, Christ our strength.
I can do all things through him who strengthens me. And in our passage today, we see how Christ was Paul's life. In verses 12 to 18, we see how Paul lived solely for the advance of the gospel.
And in verses 18 to 26, we see how Paul lived for the Philippians' advance in the gospel. So let's first look at how Paul lived for the advance of the gospel with single-minded devotion. It was customary in ancient letters of friendship to begin with a greeting, as Matt preached on verses 1 to 11 last week, and then to address the recipients.
That happened all in the first 11 verses. But usually what follows in letters of friendship in the ancient world, after the greeting and the address, is the update, the personal update.
[7:34] You tell them about how you're doing, what your condition's like. And that begins usually with this exact phrase that Paul uses at the beginning of verse 12. I want you to know that...

So this is a very formal part of the way ancient people wrote letters. So this is the section that deals with Paul's personal update, which is why it's not surprising that he is telling them about his imprisonment.
But interestingly, even though that's the section he's in, Paul mentions very little about his living conditions, how he is doing, his needs, how the guards are treating him.
He says nothing about his health. But he has one overriding concern in this section, something he wants to make sure that all the Philippian believers know, and that is this, I want you to know, brothers, and that's brothers and sisters, because it's plural, including, inclusive.
I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. That's what Paul wants the Philippian believers to know.
[8:48] Above all else, I want you to know that this has served the advance of the gospel. What has happened to Paul, of course, is his imprisonment. Most likely in Rome, where Paul was under house arrest from 60 to 62 A.D., as recorded in Acts 28.

This is probably corroborated by verse 13, which mentions the imperial guard, and also chapter 4, verse 22, where Paul relays the greetings of the Caesar's household to the Philippian church.
So then, if he's in prison in Rome, this was a fulfillment. Being in Rome was a fulfillment of a long-held desire of Paul's to visit the church in Rome and minister to them.
He talked about this openly in his letter to Romans, chapter 1, 9 to 12. But of course, he had envisioned ministering to the Roman believers in much different circumstances, being able to visit the churches, to speak in the synagogues, to visit houses.
But instead, he is in Rome as a prisoner, without the freedom to do any such thing. Nevertheless, Paul reassures the Philippian brothers and sisters that despite expectations to the contrary, what has happened to him has meant, has served the advance of the gospel.
[10:05] This advance has happened in two ways. First, Paul says in verse 13, so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. The imperial guard in charge of Paul would have been on a rotation, which means Paul would have had access to many different guards.

And eventually, through word of mouth, he came to be known to the entire imperial guard and to all the rest, others who work in that area, that Paul's imprisonment is for Christ.

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At the very least, this means that everyone around Paul came to learn that Paul was arrested he was in serving time in prison because of his faith in Jesus and because of his ministry on behalf of Jesus for the sake of Christ.
But likely, Paul means something more than that also because the literal translation of the phrase is, my imprisonment is in Christ.
It doesn't say for Christ in the Greek. It's literally in Christ. And that's one of Paul's favorite expressions that occurs numerous times in almost all of his letters and ten times in the book of Philippians alone.
[11:15] It captures the idea that a Christian is united with Christ through faith in him, that the church is the body of Christ, the one body that's governed by and follows the pattern of its head, Jesus Christ.

So later in chapter 3, verses 10 to 11, Paul speaks of sharing Christ's sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible he may attain the resurrection from the dead.
In other words, Paul sees his suffering as following the pattern of Christ, as a necessary part of following in the footsteps of his master.
As 1 Peter 2, 21 puts it, For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.
The word example refers to the alphabet stencil that children use to learn how to write the alphabet that the kids use. So Christ is the stencil, the pattern that we're supposed to, that our lives are supposed to be written over.
[12:24] And Paul sees his imprisonment, his imprisonment as depicting the gospel of the suffering Messiah. And he loses no time telling the guards about it.

And Paul's not just saying this to save face in light of an embarrassing imprisonment. The gospel really did advance during Paul's imprisonment. Because as I mentioned earlier, he relays a greeting from Caesar's household in chapter 4, verse 22.
I want us to think about that for a moment. Because pride is endemic to humanity. Because of that, we tend to assume that the greatest triumphs of our lives are when God is most active in our lives. We tend to assume that because of our pride. But often, the lowest moments of your life, when you're most broken, when you're most desperate, when you're at the end of your rope, when you're most humiliated, they are precisely the moments when God is doing His greatest work.
In the weakest parts of your life, your illness, your infirmity, your incapability, God's power is made perfect. So let's not assume that just because we can't discern what God is doing, that God's doing nothing.
[13:48] God is at work. He was moving in a powerful way during Paul's imprisonment. The human eye, I hear, sees only about 0.0035% of the electromagnetic spectrum.

What is true in the physical realm is also true in the spiritual realm. Though hidden from the view of many, the gospel was advancing among the imperial guard through Paul's imprisonment.
The gospel also advanced in the second way during Paul's imprisonment. It says in verse 14, And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.
Instead of cowering under persecution, it says most of the Christian brothers and sisters, they grew in their confidence in the Lord, in watching their fellow brothers suffer for Christ's sake.
They said to themselves, If our brother Paul, even under Caesar's custody in Rome, is not cowering in fear, but boldly declaring the gospel, we who are free should all the more proclaim the gospel.
[14:57] So most of the believers became much more bold, it says, to speak the word without fear. Quite far from silencing the church, which was probably the intention, Paul's imprisonment spurred on the believers to bolder witness.

As we can see, Paul conceives of the events of the gospel in terms of speaking the word. There's a lot of speaking words used in this passage, speak, preach, proclaim, and that's because the gospel literally means good news.
It is news of the person and work of Jesus, the messianic king. And like all news, it needs to be spoken. It has to be relayed to others.
That's precisely what evangelism is. The word evangelism is a transliteration of the Greek word for gospel. And this is what Paul lived for and died for.

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Unfortunately, in our day and age, as Bible commentator Gordon Fee observes, quote, evangelism has become something of a dirty word. They say, who are you to impose your beliefs on me? [16:16] Keep your religious views to yourself. People say, but these things, but the reality is, even in our relativistic culture, people get downright dogmatic when what they deem to be a universal truth is questioned.

Quoting Bernard Baruch, they say, every man has the right to an opinion, but no man has the right to be wrong in his facts. Haven't you heard that before? This contradicted response stems from the fact that since the Enlightenment, religious truth claims have been relegated to the realm of private opinion rather than public fact.
But that the Son of God took on human flesh and was born, that He died on the cross for our sins, that He was raised on the third day to give us eternal life.
This is not a matter of private opinion or personal preference. this is a matter of reality, what is true. And for that reason, Paul devoted his life telling others about it unapologetically, unabashedly. unabashedly. Notice all the words related to the way we ought to proclaim the gospel. Verse 14, confident in the Lord. Verse 14, much more bold, without fear.
[17:42] Verse 20, with full courage. This is the way we ought to proclaim the gospel, brothers and sisters. Do not be ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God for salvation for those who believe.

It's curious to me that some evangelical Christians who on the one hand vehemently denounce the prosperity gospel, saying that that's a false gospel, arguing that God does not promise to make us healthy and wealthy for following Him and being faithful to Him.
They do that on the one hand, but then on the other hand, they live like promoting other people's health and wealth is the gospel. That is not the gospel.
That is good work, yes, that every true Christian should do, but that's not the good news of Jesus Christ. No matter how much social justice prevails on earth, no matter how much wealth is spread out among the poor throughout the world, no matter how much people's health is improved by advances in medicine, if people do not hear and believe the good news of Jesus Christ, they will perish forever.
And for us, as Christians who are the unique bearers of this message, we have a responsibility to tell people about this. we should live with the single-minded devotion that Paul had for the advance of the gospel.
[19:34] But as the phrase most of the brothers in verse 14 conveys, not all of the brothers were speaking the gospel out of growing confidence in the Lord. Some of them were driven by baser motives.

And that's what Paul addresses in verses 15 to 18. He writes, Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from goodwill.
The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment.
While some of the believers preach Christ out of goodwill, out of love, in truth for Paul, trying to pick up his slack while he is in prison, other believers preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, out of selfish ambition, in pretense.
They deemed Paul's absence to be a great opportunity for themselves, to elevate their own profiles, and to enlarge their own followings, steal Paul's sheep, so to speak.
[20:40] And since both categories of these people belong to the category of brothers, in verse 14, these insincere people Paul has in mind are not the opponents that he speaks later of in verses 28 to 30 and in other parts of this letter.

They're not enemies. They're immature believers, motivated by selfish ambition, but they're believers nonetheless. And for that reason, Paul chooses not to be petty, but large-hearted in his perspective concerning them.
He says in verse 18, what then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice.
In essence, he's saying, so what? So what? That they're in it for personal gain. They're doing it to kick me when I'm down. Sure, but so what?
At least they're proclaiming Christ. At least people are hearing the gospel because of them. Let's be sure Paul's not a masochist.

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[21:52] He's not enjoying the pain. I'm sure this hurts him. It hurts him that people who should love him and support him are seeking to undermine him.

It hurts. But nonetheless, because Paul is not concerned for his own glory, but for the glory of Christ, because Paul's not looking out for his own interest, but for the interest of his Savior, he rejoices in the fact that Christ is proclaimed.
It's easy for us, brothers and sisters, as Christians living for the Lord, to conflate our personal agendas with that of Christ. A good indicator that that's happening is when we're disappointed to see the gospel advance, to see Christ honored without us.
when others are used by God, when others have a more prominent place, role in the service of God, do you still rejoice that God is glorified?
Paul did. Even when people were preaching the gospel and gaining followers at his expense, even when people were doing this intentionally to spite him, Paul rejoiced because he had a joy rooted in Christ that transcended his ego.
[23:20] And that kind of joy belongs only to those who live with single-minded devotion to the advance of the gospel. Paul lived like this because he understood that he was a servant of Christ Jesus, which is the way he identified himself at the beginning of this letter.

the translation servant moderates the word a little bit because the actual word is slave. Paul calls himself a slave of Christ. While it's true that in the New Testament times the slavery differed greatly from modern translating slavery in important ways, one thing that they had in common was that a slave was someone whose person and service belonged wholly to another.
that's the way a slave is defined in the book, a New Testament metaphor, slave of Christ, a New Testament metaphor for total devotion to Christ.
Some might say that that's too demeaning, but for Paul it was an honor that he wore proudly. Bible scholar Murray Harris in his book that I just mentioned analyzes all the texts describing the slave using the metaphor of the slave and he comes up with three characteristics of a slave, in particular slave of Christ.
Humble submission to the person of Christ. This involves, I'm reading from the quote here, this involves an acknowledgement that a supreme Lord, he has absolute and exclusive rights to the will and affections and energy now and forever.
[24:58] It is the case of the devotion of the whole person for the whole life. Second, unquestioning obedience to the master's will. Slavery, we say, involves subjection to another's will, voluntarily or involuntarily.

The faithful slave is basically the obedient slave, just as the first requirement for commendable military service is compliance with commands. Third, an exclusive preoccupation with pleasing Christ.
Believers give satisfaction to their master not only by obeying him, but also by devising innovative ways of pleasing him. We make it our ambition, says Paul, to be constantly pleasing to him.
This was Paul's magnificent obsession, an obsession that had the effect of expelling inferior albeit legitimate pursuits. Brothers and sisters, that is what we are, slaves of Christ.
What honor. Yes, we're more than slaves. Jesus called us his friends. Yes, we are adopted children of God.
[26:08] They are all true. But those truths do not negate this truth that we are slaves of Christ. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 7, 22-23 that a Christian is a slave of Christ.

The same word used here. He continues, you are bought with a price. Do not become slaves of men. Brothers and sisters, we have been bought with the precious blood of Jesus.
We belong wholly to him because he paid the price. And so we cannot belong to another. We cannot serve another. We cannot be slaves to another.
We only have one master. What is the ultimate aim of your life? Whom do you seek to please with your life?
Is it yourself? Your spouse? Your boyfriend? Girlfriend? Your boss? We should live with single-minded devotion to the advance of the gospel.
[27:19] Paul gave his life for this and he also sought the Philippian believers' advance in the gospel as well. That's what we see in the rest of the passage. Paul just said in the first half of verse 18 that he rejoices in the fact that Christ is proclaimed.

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And then he says again, yes, and I will rejoice anticipating the future. And then he gives the reason for his future rejoicing in verses 19 to 20.
for I know that through your prayers and the help of the spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body whether by life or by death.
The word deliverance is the same word that's often translated salvation which makes the meaning of this verse a little bit ambiguous. Is Paul speaking of deliverance from prison or is he speaking of his eternal salvation?
Is Paul anticipating that he will be declared innocent and released from prison or is he speaking of his ultimate salvation after bearing faithful witness to Jesus whether it ends in his acquittal or execution?
[28:41] I think the answer is both. I think Paul left that ambiguous intentionally because there is a tension that runs through verses 19 to 26 all throughout between Paul's anticipation of his release and his the possibility of execution.

He expects to be released for the good of the Philippians but he knows that his death will mean ultimate gain his ultimate salvation and so basically Paul's saying hey it's a win-win situation for me whether I am vindicated or executed I expect salvation in saying this he's also echoing Job 13 15 to 16 in the Greek translation of the Old Testament which Paul would have been familiar with the phrase this will turn out for my deliverance is found in its exact form in Job 13 16 where Job says this though he slay me I will hope in him yet I will argue my ways to his face this will turn out for my salvation that the godless shall not come before him Job in the midst of his suffering which he knows is happening under God's sovereign jurisdiction nonetheless entrusts himself to God his righteous judgment and he anticipates that when he does he will ultimately be vindicated the language of his hope not being ashamed also echoes
Romans 5 5 which says hope in the glory of God does not put us to shame because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us if Paul had been hoping merely for acquittal and survival then this hope could easily have been disappointed but that's not what Paul was hoping for his hope was that he would bear faithful witness to Jesus till the end with full courage and so that always Christ will be honored in his body whether by life or by death and this hope for Christ honor which will end in Paul's salvation whether in life or death will not be disappointed the word honor means to magnify something here to enlarge something Paul once whatever happens to him whether it's vindication or execution to serve as a magnifying glass that enlarges God in the view of his observers that is once again
Paul's all consuming desire to glorify God to bring attention to God even at the expense of his own life and Paul's confident of this outcome not because he has such a high view of himself not because he trusts so much in his willpower or resolve or in his eloquence but because he trusts in the Lord he says in verse 19 for I know that through your prayers and the help of the spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance Paul understood well the connection between prayer and the power of the Holy Spirit because it was when Ananias prayed for him that he was filled with the Holy Spirit in Acts chapter 9 we see this connection over and over again throughout scripture Acts 4 it was when the believers raised their voices together in prayer to
God it says they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly Paul knew that Jesus had promised in Luke 12 to send the Holy Spirit to teach him what to speak when they are under trial by authorities in summary then Paul anticipates that through the prayers of the Philippian believers God will supply the Spirit of Jesus Christ his helper so that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in his body if you want the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ that Paul was banking on you must pray you need others to pray for you I'm so grateful to God that we have many people in our church who are eager to pray and desires to see our church pray more in Ephesians 6 18 to 20 Paul asks the
[33:21] Ephesian church pray also for me that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel for which I am an ambassador in chains that I may declare it boldly as I ought to speak if you want powerful preaching from the pulpit you must pray if you want to see the power of the Holy Spirit active in our church you must pray all powerless lives are prayerless lives 19th century Anglican pastor J.C.

Ryle writes in his book A Call to Prayer Tell me one of all the goodly fellowship of saints and martyrs who has not had this mark most prominently he was a man of prayer depend upon it prayer

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is power prayer obtains fresh and continued outpourings of the spirit he alone begins the work of grace in a man's heart he alone can carry it forward and make it prosper but the good spirit loves to be entreated and those who ask most will have most of his influence if you struggle in your prayer life join up with others to pray come to our midweek prayer service join via zoom if you want come to pray before our Sunday service pray stay to pray after pray in the morning pray at night pray in your bed pray when you're driving pray without ceasing Jesus promises us how much more will your heavenly father who loves you give the holy spirit to those who ask him and then in verses 21 to 24
Paul explains why he is in a win win situation and why he expects deliverance he says in verse 21 for to me to live is Christ and to die is gain that's a beautiful verse I'm not a I'm not a tattooing man but if I were that's what I would tattoo on my body to live Christ to die gain he unpacks it in verses 22 to 24 if I am to live in the flesh that means fruitful labor for me yet which I shall choose I cannot tell I am hard pressed between the two my desire is to depart and be with Christ and be with Christ for that is far better but to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account this dilemma is hypothetical of course
Paul is a prisoner and he has no choice in the matter of what's going to happen to him he is totally disposed to the will of another but he is still going through this mental exercise whether or not he will be acquitted or executed what he would choose if he had a choice and he has two genuinely good options before him because he is not a man fearing for his life and pleading desperately for his release on the one hand if he is executed he will get to depart and be with Christ which is far better on the other hand if he is released he will get to continue in fruitful labor for Christ which is more necessary this passage is so instructive for us it tells us what happens when we die as Christians we will depart and be with Christ some Christians believe in what they call soul sleep where our souls are believed to be asleep within our bodies when we die waiting to be awakened at the resurrection of the dead but that idea doesn't fit with
Philippians 1 21 to 24 Paul clearly contrasts remaining in the flesh with departing and being with Christ when a Christian dies his soul departs to be with Christ it leaves the body this is why it's called the intermediate state because it's not the ultimate state and then it's when Christ returns and our bodies are resurrected again that we become whole reunited with soul and body fully redeemed and that's when our last enemy death is ultimately defeated for Paul this is far better than remaining alive in the flesh can you say that about your impending death I say impending intentionally because death is impending for all of us unless
[38:33] Christ returns before that we will all die sooner or later maybe tomorrow maybe 70 years from now unless Christ returns before that regardless of how long we live compared to eternity with God our lives are but a breath and one thing that I'm grateful to God for about COVID 19 is that it has awakened us to this reality of the universality and the inevitability of death and this creates an opportunity for us to witness to others about Christ who is the resurrection and the life because people of this world tremble with fear at the prospect of death why because they love this life because they love this world but we have nothing to fear in death because we are a people who have forsaken this life because we are a people who have forsaken the world to follow

Christ Philippians 3 7 8 8 this is the most important cost benefit analysis that any human being can do the world is all glitter it's shiny but worthless Jesus is gold gold of surpassing worth if you fear death a helpful question to ask yourself is this what do you fear to lose in this life and in this world do you fear losing your spouse or children do you think that
God almighty can't take care of them without your help do you fear losing your career the possibility of accomplishing something great and making a name for yourself do you fear missing out on the pleasures that this world has to offer then you need to count the cost and remember that to follow Christ is to suffer the loss of all things you need to recognize that you have to gain what you have to gain in Christ is infinitely more valuable than any of these things think about it brothers and sisters Jesus who loved you and called you his the redeemer who paid your debt of sin and emancipated you freed you from your slavery the savior who rescued you from the fires of hell the warrior who stared death in the face and fought it and defeated it on your behalf the
Lord who vanquished Satan our hateful enemy the king who graciously called you into his service the friend who laid down his life for you and who has never left your side the master who has provided everything you have ever needed Jesus is waiting for you and do you regret death brothers sisters our deepest this should be our deepest longing to be with Christ forever this must

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not be an afterthought in the Christian's life death if we live as Paul did with single minded devotion to the advance of the gospel we will not dread death instead we'll see it as a fulfillment of our lifelong pursuit of Christ still others in this world fear death not so much because they love the world but because they fear the unknown they don't know what's going to happen to them after they die but we have nothing to fear because people of faith for us the outcome of our death is a certainty pastor
Donald Gray Barnhouse from the mid 20th century was driving his children after his wife passed to his wife's funeral when they were stopped at a traffic light ahead of them was a huge truck and the sun was shining at such an angle that that huge truck in front of them was casting this enormous shadow on a snowy field beside it and seeing an opportunity to instruct his children and comfort them he said this look at the shadow of that truck on the field children if you have to be run over would you rather be run over by the truck or by its shadow the youngest responded first the shadow it couldn't hurt anybody that's right continued barnhouse and remember children Jesus let the truck of death strike him so that he could never destroy us mother lives with Jesus now and only the shadow of death has passed over her that's the great reality that we know and have the death that comes to us has lost its sting because
[44:38] Jesus has been raised from the dead whoever believes in me though he die yet shall he live Jesus said in 1839 London missionaries John Williams and James Harris traveled to New Hebrides modern day Vanuatu located about a thousand miles east of northern Australia South Pacific Ocean the island had been discovered 230 years earlier by a Spanish explorer but they were the first to travel there to preach the gospel unfortunately only minutes after landing ashore they were killed and eaten by the natives who were cannibals in that way the blood of the martyrs the seeds were already laid 19 years later John G.

Patton and his wife Mary Patton set sail for new Hebrides as missionaries but their decision understandably was derided by many as foolish on one occasion a respected gentleman and older gentleman from church Mr.
Dixon tried to dissuade them he said to them the cannibals you will be eaten by cannibals but to this Patton responded Mr.
Dixon it's kind of funny but I think he probably said it in all seriousness I think they used to speak like this Mr.
Dixon you are advanced in years now and your own prospect is soon to be laid in the grave there to be eaten by worms I confess to you that if I can but live and die serving and honoring the Lord Jesus it will make no difference to me whether I am eaten by cannibals or by worms and in the great day my resurrection body will rise as fair as yours in the likeness of our risen redeemer to live is Christ to die is gain although Paul considered death to be the far better alternative he didn't ultimately choose that option because he believed that it was more necessary for him to remain alive and continue to minister to God's people including the Philippian church he knew that it would be selfish of him in light of these considerations
[47:24] Paul says in verses 25 to 26 convinced of this I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus because of my coming to you again are you growing as a Christian are you more joyful now than you were before if you are walking with the Lord Jesus and keeping step with the spirit then our lives should be marked by progress and joy in the faith and Paul lived selflessly to produce this progress and joy in the lives of fellow believers and that brings us once again to the main point of this passage that we should live with single minded devotion to the advance of the gospel in and through us in verse 12 he spoke about his all consuming zeal for the advance of the gospel now he concludes that he will remain and continue in his fruitful labor for your progress and joy in the faith the word progress is the same word that was translated early in verse 12 as advance this caps it opens and closes this entire passage the idea of advance in the gospel advance in the faith that's what

Paul gave his life to he didn't have a death wish he expected to and planned to be released from prison to continue in his ministry and he was right in his anticipation according to tradition handed down to us through church history third century church history in Eusebius writes that after pleading his cause Paul is said to have been sent again upon the ministry of preaching fourth century pastor Jerome writes this as well Paul was dismissed by Nero that the gospel of Christ be preached also in the west so then Paul was released after spending two years in house arrest in Rome he continued

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to preach the gospel for another two years until he was imprisoned again and at that time executed by Nero in 64 AD Paul was a man of singular focus when the light of the sun is focused by a magnifying glass it can concentrate the sun's radiation so that even to start a fire likewise
God can use men and women of singular passion for the advance of the gospel to ignite revival in our time and only men and women who cherish Christ as their singular treasure can live with this singular passion for the advance of the gospel so then in order to pursue the advance of the gospel we ourselves need to advance in the gospel so to that end let's make this prayer a prayer that Patrick the 5th century missionary to Ireland prayed our prayer Christ with me Christ before me Christ behind me Christ in me Christ beneath me Christ above me Christ on my right Christ on my left Christ when
I lie down and Christ when I sit down Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me Christ in the mouth of every man who speaks of me Christ in the eye that sees me Christ in the ear that hears me Amen Oh Lord let that be let Christ be all in all let Christ be everything let our names fade from the memory of loved ones let our names be blotted out from the history books let the name of Christ be exalted in
Jesus name we pray Amen we

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