As we continue in Philippians, we come to **Phil. 1:19-30**. We will wrap up chapter one today and then next week look at one of the great passages in Scripture. But today, let’s continue with Paul’s words to the Philippian believers.

As we begin, notice **vss. 19-21**. Like with any of us who are going through a tough time, Paul is looking for the situation to come to a close, and for him, it would be his hope to be released from prison. It was also important to Paul as we see in this book, though he was ultimately serving for an audience of “One”, he also knew that others would be impacted by how he handled things.

Paul says in **vs. 19** that through the prayers of the Philippians and with **“help” (aid, supply)** of the Holy Spirit, he was looking to be removed from the chains that had him bound. He was using the situation to bring glory to God, but he also was looking towards freedom from being imprisoned.

Note the word **“deliverance”** in **vs. 19**. This word can have different meanings, such as **“preservation, safety, salvation.”** Paul may have been looking to the future when he experienced either the fullness of his salvation in heaven or being vindicated in a Roman court of law. What a great reminder that we need to pray for each other regularly.

It does seem, in **vss. 20-21**, that death was a possibility that he knew could happen. He wanted Christ to be honored regardless of whether he lived or died. And he asked for courage in facing whatever was in the future for him.

Note in **vs. 20** the phrase **“eager expectation.”** **The Greek word describes watching something with our neck outstretched, so that we see something**. It has the idea of paying attention to anything, waiting in suspense. There is a persistent expectation. This word is used in **Rom. 8:19**.

Paul was waiting to see, with expectations, that whatever he faced, he would do so with hope and courage, so that God would be glorified. Hope is directed towards the future. Paul wanted Christ **“honored” (declared great, highly esteemed)**, to get the glory and praise by how he lived and responded to what was happening to him.

The word **“courage”** is important. It means **“free and fearless confidence, boldness, assurance, positive assurance of how a situation will turn out.”** No matter what, Paul was confident, he was bold, and assured that Christ would be honored by how he acted.

Read this verse again and think of ourselves. Do we look to God with an eye to see, to have boldness, and assurance, and do we make it our goal that Christ will be honored in how we handle things that come our way. We can only do as **vs. 19** says through the power of the Spirit and the prayers and encouragement of others.

The **Bible Knowledge Commentary** notes the following about **vs. 20**,

**“Paul’s concern was not what would happen to him but what testimony would be left for his Lord. Release would allow him to continue preaching Christ. But martyrdom would also advance the cause of Christ.”**

**Note:** As we move on we going to ask ourselves a question that may seem a little odd but we will understand what Paul was talking about when we ask it.

**Here is the question - What is our vision statement as individuals? What is our purpose statement? Paul’s is found in Phil. 1:21**. He does not know what the future holds though he is praying to be set free from prison, he also, regardless of the outcome in his life, wanted to honor Christ.

In **vs. 21** Paul says, **“For me to live is Christ.”** Let’s stop there. Paul’s life centered on fulfilling what God wanted him to do. His life was focused on that. It was his purpose, his mission, his vision, to live as an example for Christ before others. Is that true of us? If not, we are missing the point on why we are here. **“To live is Christ.”** Christ is the aim, the goal of our life, being devoted to Him. Our behavior points to Christ and shows others that we have something different in our lives.

**Col. 3:1-4** says the same thing. We are to be focused on things above so that we can tackle what comes our way and live a life that reflects who we are. **Gal. 2:20** says that the life we live we live by faith in the Son of God. Without Christ, as **John 15** tells us, we can do nothing.

As long as Paul was allowed to, He would live for Christ and reflect Him to others. But if God chose to take him home, or even when we leave this world, there is gain for us. We are in the presence of God. To die is an advantage. We are with Christ **(vs. 21)**, if we are a Christian.

**Stuart Briscoe** notes that Paul tells us Christ is both the reason and the resource for living. Life does not have to be meaningless or empty. Paul chose to live for Christ because he knew and had experienced what God does in people’s lives.

As we look at **vss. 21-26**, reminds us of **two things**. **One** is the influence we can have while we are here, and a **second** thing is the eternal security of the future we have with God. But as long as we are here, we need to make our life count for Him.

We see how torn Paul was when it came to being here on earth and being with Christ. He notes, and we need to remember this, that our being here means God is not done with us yet. Look at **vs. 22** and we see that. Paul writes that if he lives in the flesh but as a Christ follower, it will be to bear fruit for God. Whether it be in his sharing of the Gospel or his encouraging of other believers, Paul would not waste his time that he had on earth.

The word for **“fruitful”** **(vs. 22)** as used here, according to **Thayer**, means **“advantage, profit.”** The results of his being here was to make use of his time to further the kingdom of God. This being fruitful is the natural product of our **“to live is Christ.”** That is why we are here. To show the fruit of the Spirit to others **(Gal. 5:22-23)**, to share the Good News about Jesus, and to touch the lives of others.

But, like us, Paul had a struggle in his mind. Look at the end of **vs. 22** and then **vs. 23**. We have probably all felt like this at times. We love our families, we love being servants of God, but the pull to be with Christ is real and normal.

At the end of **vs. 22** Paul says that he struggles with deciding what is better. To be here and bring glory and honor to God or to go and be with the Lord. The choice is not up to him, but he is explaining his heart and his struggles.

In **vs. 23** he admits to this fact some more as he says that he is **“hard pressed”** between the two choices, **“to live is Christ, to die is gain.”** The phrase **“hard pressed”** means **“to urge, compel”** and here has the idea of Paul being disturbed from his two choices, feeling pressed by both choices, the desire to live for Christ and the desire to go and be with the Lord.

**Mounce** points out that here in **vs. 23** the word means **“to be in a state of mental constriction, to be hard pressed by urgency of circumstances.”** Paul was feeling the pull of both thoughts, and the pressure of deciding. What tough choices, right? He loved Christ and he loved people. So do we. He is torn between the two thoughts.

I appreciate his honesty. Paul is open and truthful with the church here. He says his desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. Who can argue with what he says in **vs. 23**. Being with Christ is going to be amazing. The Philippian Christians should not take this as a slight against them. For two years Paul has been imprisoned. He has had a great ministry even in tough circumstances.

If God frees him, he will continue living and serving. But if not, and he faces death, he will be with the Lord. He says in **vs. 23** that his **“desire” (used here in a positive sense, his longing)** is to **“depart”** and be with Christ but Paul, like we are to be, was not callous towards the ministry God had given him.

**Vs. 24** continues with Paul’s “mission statement.” Paul knew there was work to be done while he was here. He says that remaining was more necessary for the Philippian believers. He was not bragging on his abilities or skills, he was simply noting a fact. To continue, to abide here on earth meant the opportunity to help others in their spiritual growth.

Let me note something about the word “**necessary.”** Again, this is not about Paul’s ego or having to prove himself. **“Necessary” has the idea of something being done as a duty, what is required because of the condition of things**. It was needful for him to still be here doing his ministry. And it was not because he felt the Philippians could not exist without him. He saw, though, the realization that he could help them to grow stronger in their faith as they had been doing.

He put others above his own wants and desires. He is excited for their progress and their joy that they show in their faith and wants, once again, to be an example to others and he wants to make sure that whatever he does brings glory to Christ. This should be our thinking.

Now, let’s wrap up by looking at **vss. 27-30**. Paul encourages this church to be in unity with each other in **vs. 27** and that will continue into **Phil. 2**. We don’t have all see eye-to-eye on everything but we need to be headed in the same direction. We may different ideas on how to get something done, but we cannot allow preferences or opinions to deter us.

We do things a certain way at Oakridge. We have an elder board, team leaders, people overseeing various ministries and many are serving in different capacities. We try to make it easy but have accountability. But we cannot allow non-essential things to divide us as a church. We may differ on what translation of the Bible we like, or when the rapture will happen, or whether we baptize a certain way, three times dunking or once. I mean, some churches are at war over things that are not crucial.

In vs. 27 Paul states to the believers that the thing that will bring glory to Jesus Christ will be their manner of life, that it be worthy of the Gospel. In other words, live what we claim. The word “manner” comes has the meaning of “behave as a citizen, to conduct one’s self as pledged to some law of life.” Act according to the Gospel which changes us. That is clear from vs. 27.

Be a good citizen of heaven Paul was saying. This would resonate with the Philippians for this was a Roman colony and a leading city and people were proud of their citizenship under Rome. More so, they should act as citizens of a higher city, a higher kingdom, that of course, of heaven.

Bill Mounce has this defined as “to order one’s life and conduct, converse, live, in a certain manner as to habits and principles.” We belong to Christ. See Acts 23:1. Paul is exhorting them, we could even say, commanding them to live out what has transpired in their life because of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We are heavenly citizens living here on earth.

Paul then says if we live this way, and in the case of the Philippians, whether he saw them person or heard about how they were standing in Christ together, he wants them to “stand firm” (stand fast, persevere in godliness,persist, be constant) in one spirit, in one mind, striving side by side for the Gospel. It takes humility for us to stand firm together, to think of others.

We cannot let things divide us. We cannot get caught up in slander and gossip towards others at Oakridge. We have a battle on our hands spiritually, and we need to be on the same side. When we focus on “striving” (cooperate, make an effort in the cause of, in support of, striving at the same time with another) together, we make it hard for our spiritual enemy to get the upper hand.

We are a team. I have a book in my library titled “Church is a Team Sport” and it is. A team cannot be fractured because of egos or selfish wants or preferences. If we are at each other, and causing tension among the body of Christ, our ministry as a church will suffer. A team has a goal, and for us, the goal is as follows.

We are here to work together to further the Gospel. The Great Commission of Mt. 28:19-20 gives us our marching orders. We are to make disciples of the nations. A disciple is more than someone who says they are a Christian. They are learning, growing, and becoming more like Christ. They are learning how to apply the Bible to everyday situations, whether it be parenting, finances, business practices, being a good employer, employee, husband, wife, friend, you name it. Disciples are learners and appliers.

We all have gifts, abilities, talents and a ministry to do for the Lord.

In vs. 28, when we do stand together, it helps us to be bold, and not be fearful of those who oppose us and our beliefs. We will not be afraid or terrified by what others say. We know we face opposition to our faith but we do not have to be afraid in those times. We do not have to be intimidated.

We know that people are going to speak out against us, mock us, try to damage what we are trying to do for Christ but we do not have to allow them to get the upper hand, especially as we stand together. This is a reason we need each other, why the church needs each other.

The word “opponent” describes anyone who “opposes, adverse to, maybe hostile, stands against us”, but they do not have to intimidate us. Why? We have God and each other to stand for truth.

Paul says that our life shows who we belong to and who our opponents belong to (vs. 28). When we are bold, and not afraid and fearful of those who oppose us, they know something is different in our lives. It also is a mark against them because God knows what they are doing.

The **Life Application New Testament Commentary**, noting vss. 27-28, leaves a good reminder regarding how we are to live,

**“Believers ought to reflect humility, gentleness, patience, understanding, peacefulness, strength, endurance, and gratitude to God in every aspect of their lives on earth.”**

We obviously need the Holy Spirit, Who lives within us, to help us live these out but we are to be different than the world around us. Not high-minded, or arrogant, but humble and desiring to allow Christ to lead us in all areas of our life.

Vs. 29 reminds us that we will at times go through difficulties because of our faith and we should not expect anything less. Vs. 30 is a reminder from Paul that because of our faith we will face conflict just as he did and just as the Philippians would. They did not have it easy in Philippi.

May we learn from Paul’s and the Philippian believer’s examples of how we are to live with boldness and expectation and reminding ourselves that to live is Christ.