

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. **Enjoy discovering more about Him!**

"THE UNLOSABLE LIFE: TO LIVE IS CHRIST" | PHILIPPIANS 1:19-30 | PASTOR BRIAN BELL

WARM-UP QUESTION:

- **When is a time when you felt you couldn't lose?**

"Confidence in Every Outcome" Philippians 1: 1-19-20

Paul is eager to see how God will use his life for His glory, either in dying or being set free. God can be honored in either outcome.

- **What does it look like to live with eager expectation?**
- **What should Christ-followers be eagerly expecting?**

"The Defining Statement and The Tension" Philippians 1:21-26

Paul says "to live is Christ; to die is gain," and he is claiming his life has purpose in Jesus, and when he dies, he gets more of Jesus.

- **What's the difference between clinging to life and serving in life?**
- **How does verse 21 show that because of Jesus, Paul can't lose?**

"A Worthy Life" Philippians 1: 27-30

Paul encourages others to stand firm and not be afraid as they suffer for following Jesus.

- **How can believers suffer well so they live in a way that honors Jesus?**

"Christ Connection: He Died for Our Gain"

All believers can live without losing. Jesus defeated death and so death is not a defeat for them.

- **How can you let Jesus be your confidence?**

REFLECTION AND APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

Paul can endure jail because no matter the outcome, he wins. Death is not defeat because his life is centered on Jesus. All believers should let that confidence in Jesus lead them to living lives that honor God despite hardships.

- **What are you afraid to lose?**
- **What would change if your confidence was in Jesus instead of outcomes?**
- **Ask God to give you courage to live a life worthy of Him.**

The Unlosable Life: To Live Is Christ

I. Announce:

- A. Welcome to those watching online **10am**.
- B. **AP**: Single Moms. Missions. Summer Events. VBS Volunteers. Baptism.
- C. **Baby Ded (8am)**: McKinley Hoogsteen [*parents: Jordan & Erin*] Emerson 4, Peyton 2.
- D. ***2 Reminders**: *Missions Prayer* next Sun, 1:30pm, Agape Room.
At Risk Mtg TODAY at 3:00pm in the Agape Room.
- E. **Slide1 Prayer**:

II. Slide2a Intro: **The Unlosable Life: To Live Is Christ** impossible to lose

- A. Most people are building a life *they're afraid to lose*. Paul found a life he couldn't lose.
- B. Paul moves from, "God is using my **imprisonment** to advance the gospel" to "*I'm ready for anything.*"
- C. **Slide2b** Main Thought: *When Christ is your life, even death loses its power.*
- D. Have you ever noticed how much of life is driven by what we're afraid to lose?
 - 1. **Health. Reputation. Money. Relationships. Control.** [We protect it. Build around it. Worry about it.]
 - 2. **Slide2c** Because deep down, we think: "*If I lose that... I lose **everything**.*"
- E. **But** Paul is sitting in prison - possibly facing execution - **And** instead of fear, he says: *To **live** is Christ, and to **die** is gain.*
 - 1. Paul had already settled the question of **loss** - because **Christ** was his **life**.

III. Slide3a **1. CONFIDENCE IN EVERY OUTCOME (19-20)**

- A. *Yes, and I will **rejoice**, 19 for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, 20 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**.*

- B. **Slide3b** It is my *eager expectation* - The word (ἀποκαταδοκία / apo-kapa-do-KIA) is composed of: the preposition **away**; the noun **head**; and the verb **to watch**. **And** indicates *watching something with the head turned away from other objects*. (Vincent)
1. It's the *concentrated intense hope, which ignores other interests & strains forward as with outstretched head*. (LKGNT) [1 other x: Rm8:19 *creation waits w/eager longing*]
 2. Paul says, Christ will be magnified in my body - dead or alive. Christ will be honored either way.
 3. **Slide4 Ignatius of Loyola** once said, "*Let us be like the ox between the plough and the altar - ready either to work or to be sacrificed.*" That's exactly where **Paul** is, and exactly where *a Christ-centered life* leads us.
- C. Paul's confidence **wasn't** in the **outcome** - it was **in Christ being glorified**.
- D. What **outcome** are you clinging to right now?

IV. **Slide5a 2. THE DEFINING STATEMENT (21)**

- A. *21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.* - This is the center of the passage.
1. NLT *For to me, living means living for Christ, & dying is even better.*
 2. **Slide5b Not:** Christ is *part of* my life. **Not:** Christ *improves* my life. **But ...** Christ **IS** my life!
- B. To **live** is Christ: purpose, identity, meaning.
- C. To **die** is gain: more of Christ, not less.
1. If Christ **is** your life, then nothing can ultimately **take** your life.
 2. Most people spend their lives trying to **avoid death**. **But** Paul built his life in such a way... that **even death** worked in his favor.
 3. In 3:4-11 Paul counted his *religion and achievements* as **loss**, **Jesus** as **gain**. His/Jesus' righteousness (see 1:11).
- D. To **live** is Christ - you **can't** do it *privately*. You have to be **LIVING** it!
1. It will show itself to the world.
 2. I picture the guards seeing it lived out this way:

- a) *Paul we talked and decided we're going to **kill you**. Ok, to die is gain!*
- b) *Paul we talked and decided we're going to **let you live**. Ok, to live is Christ!
(really gettin on their nerves)*
- c) *Paul we talked and decided we're going to **let you live**, but we're going make you **suffer**. Ok, no problem. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.*

3. You **kill** me I'll be next to Christ. You let me **live** I'll live for Christ.
You make me **suffer** I'll get a reward from Christ. *Bring it, don't just sing it!*

E. Some live life ...

- 1. For to me to live is **money** - and to die is *to leave it all behind*.
- 2. For to me to live is **popularity** - and to die is *to be forgotten*.
- 3. For to me to live is **power** - and to die is *to lose it all*.
- 4. For to me to live is **possessions** - and to die is *to take none of them with me*.

F. For Paul death was gain, How? - (1) **It** is a **release** from earthly troubles for sure. (2) **It** means a **re-union** with other Christians loved ones. (3) **It** means **reward** for present service rendered to our Master. (4) **It** means **realization** of all our highest, truest, and dearest longings.

G. **Slide5c** What fills in that blank for you? *To live is _____*. (Whatever goes there... controls you.)

V. **Slide6 3. THE TENSION (22-26)** *this is Paul processing this vs.21*

A. *22 If I am to **live** in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. 23 I am hard pressed between the **two**. My desire is to **depart** and **be with Christ**, for that is **far better**. 24 **But** to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. 25 Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, 26 so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.*

B. I want to depart and **go be with Christ** (that's far better/*lt. much more better*).

- 1. **Death** is like a **car**, *it just gets us where we want to go! :)*

2. **Depart** - (a nautical term) *A boat that lets loose their mooring as it goes off to sea.* If you've been on a **cruise** - they let loose the moorings. you sail away from shore. it gets dark. you go to sleep. you wake up and you're in Alaska or the Caribbean!
- a) You were made for this. **To be *with* Jesus!**
3. **Be with Christ**, which is **far better** - *That is the central fact* which makes death **gain** to the believer.
- a) **But Paul you *lose* not gain.** (you'll miss sunrises & sunsets; puppies & kittens; all the physical pleasures of this world; friendships & joys of ministry).
- b) **Really far better Paul???** *yes like, more joy, more satisfaction, more pleasure, more everything good.* **Christ is most satisfying!**
- (1) **If I die**, it's for **my joy**. **If I stay** it's for **your joy**.
4. **Slide7** The 18th-century Bible commentator, *Presbyterian Minister, and Author* **Matthew Henry**, hoped these words would be read after his death. **He wrote:**
- Would you like to know **Where I am?** I am at home in my Father's house, in the mansions prepared for me here. I am where I want to be - no longer on the stormy sea, but in God's safe, quiet harbor. My sowing time is done and I am reaping; my joy is as the joy of harvest.*
- Would you like to know **What I am doing?** I see God, not as through a glass darkly, but face to face. I am engaged in the sweet enjoyment of my precious Redeemer. I am singing hallelujahs to Him who sits upon the throne, and I am constantly praising Him.*
- Would you know **What blessed company I keep?** It is better than the best on earth. Here are the holy angels and the spirits of just men made perfect. I am with many of my old acquaintances with whom I worked and prayed, and who have come here before me.*
- Lastly, would you know **How long this will continue?** It is a dawn that never fades! After millions and millions of ages, it will be as fresh as it is now. Therefore, weep not for me!¹*

¹ Our Daily Bread, Sunday, May 27

C. Slide8 But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account - I want to **stay and serve you** (that's necessary).

1. He's torn between the 2 - **but** not afraid.
2. Paul didn't **cling** to life - **but** he **used it** to its fullest.

D. Are you **clinging** to your life, **or using** your life?

VI. Slide9 4. A WORTHY LIFE (27-30) A like that death can't touch

A. 27 *Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, 28 and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. 29 For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only **believe in him but also suffer for his sake**, 30 engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.*

B. Now Paul turns it **Outward**: *Stand firm. Don't be afraid. Expect opposition.*

1. Following Christ doesn't **remove** hardship - it gives you **courage in it**.

C. Slide10 Paul closes this section (in 29,30) with **2 remarkable privileges**: **to believe/trust in Christ** and **to suffer for Christ**. God is honored in both!

1. God runs a costly school, and many of His deepest lessons are learned through tears. **But** this school will not last forever - our term is closer to ending every day.
2. **So don't run from the hard lessons. Don't resist His** discipline. Let's stay faithful, because **graduation day** is coming - which leads to **glory**.

D. When Christ is your life, fear no longer gets the final word.

VII. Slide11a CHRIST CONNECTION

A. Jesus didn't just **teach** this - He **lived** it.

B. He **gave His life** willingly. He **faced death** w/o fear. He **turned death** into **victory**.

1. The resurrection changes everything!

C. Because **Jesus** defeated death, death is no longer defeat for us.

D. It's ... **Christ. Period.** Solus Christus/Christ Alone. **Centrality of Christ** (JC is the focal point of God's redemptive plan **and** the ultimate revelation of God's nature).

E. **Slide 11b St. Patrick's Breastplate:** prayer for *Divine Protection*

1. 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**, Christ when I **sit down**, Christ when I **arise**,
Christ in the **heart** of every man who thinks of me,
Christ in the **mouth** of everyone who speaks of me,
Christ in every **eye** that sees me - Christ in every **ear** that hears me.

VIII. WRAP UP

A. The finest porcelain is fired again and again in intense heat - **not** to destroy it, **but** to make it stronger, brighter, and permanent. Metal is shaped in fire. Marble is formed by the chisel. Wood is refined by abrasion. **And we** are no different, **God** forms us *in His loving hands*, through pressure, fire, chipping away, and sanding, **shaping us into something lasting!**

B. *When **Christ is your life**, your life becomes **unlosable**.

C. Keywords: