

WE REJOICE IN GLORIFYING GOD PHLP 1:12-14, 19-30
FIFTEENTH SUN. AFTER PENTECOST SEPT 21, 2014

¹² I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, ¹³ so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. 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.

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. ²¹ For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. 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.

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.

On recent birthday, I reflected on fact I am at stage in life
where I think a lot about the hereafter.

I walk into room and then think: What am I here after?
This is good question to ask at any age. Why am I here?

If you think you got here as an accident of evolution
you could think your life has no particular purpose
so you might as well do whatever you like.
or you are here to perpetuate your own survival
so you should get all the power & resources you can.

But what if you are here because God gave you life
and made you who you are & put you where you are?

I was talking, the other day, with someone who thought
life didn't have much meaning if, instead of just surviving,
you couldn't have some things to enjoy.

Irony is, because they focused on enjoying themselves,
they had hard time having enough money to survive.
I replied that I think life is not about trying to enjoy ourselves
but about doing what God gives us to do.
I remember noticing at young age some are happy if playing,
but very unhappy when doing what they had to do.
I thought: we will spend lot more of life working than playing,
so if only happy when playing, won't be very happy,
we are better off learning to enjoy working.
Paul writes in this letter to Philippians,
"Rejoice in the Lord always, again I say, rejoice."
No matter what we are doing or what happens,
we can rejoice when we rejoice in the Lord.
I think reason we are here, this church, this body, this world,
is all same reason: to do what God has given us to do,
And we can rejoice because what God has given us to do
is to glorify him by constantly receiving his grace.

LIVING OUT OUR FAITH GLORIFIES GOD'S GRACE
ENDURING DIFFICULTY GLORIFIES GOD'S GRACE
DELIVERANCE IN DEATH GLORIFIES GOD'S GRACE

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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.

Those searching for good job & long term unemployed
can relate to those hired last in parable in today's Gospel
probably rejoiced just to have a job.
Parable is usually called: "Workers in the Vineyard."
but focus is not on work they do but generosity of master
who gives pay not based on what they deserve
but on what they all need for the day.

Today we begin worship series on topic called stewardship,
which is using everything in life as God's servants.
We also are given job to do in God's vineyard
but see that joyful generosity starts, not with what we do
but with rejoicing in God's amazing generosity to us.
Paul points to this in v. 26 with phrase, "Glory in Christ Jesus"
He is saying he is convinced he will continue to do his job
which is coming to them to preach and teach,
which is for their progress in faith & also their joy in the faith,
so they have reason to glory in Christ Jesus.
Glorying in Jesus is saying: Wow, look what Jesus can do.
So, Paul is saying, if I survive prison so I can keep preaching
that will be a reason to say, not: look what Paul is doing,
but look what God has done for Paul!
So, in the next verse he points to the job of the Philippians
which is similar: working together for faith of the gospel,
standing firm against those who oppose it.
Their manner of life also is to be worthy of gospel of Christ,
kind of life that glorifies good news of Jesus,
saying by how they live: Look what God does for us!
When they do this without being afraid, it is a clear sign that
opponents are surely losing & they are ultimately saved
and that this is all from God.
So, boldly living out our faith in the gospel,
confident that God is generously providing for us
and has graciously given us a job as his servants
is itself glorifying Christ and proclaiming the gospel,
it is saying, "Look what God has done for me."
Not only this, but...

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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.

Again, Paul talks first about himself, then Philippians,
Look what God can do, he is so great and powerful that
not only can his gracious gifts be shown by what we do
but by suffering we endure.

Paul writes this letter from prison in Rome.

He had been wanting to go to Rome to preach the gospel
and was wondering how he would get money to get there
when he is arrested & ends up going at empire's expense.

So, now when people ask about him what he is in prison for
they are told: for preaching about Jesus. What about Jesus?

He says Jesus died for our sins & rose again from dead.

So the fact that he is in prison causes people
who don't even believe in Jesus to talk about the gospel
and as a result many are coming to faith.

And when people see how Paul can endure prison
without complaining and despair and even be joyful
they see that the faith he has is really worth something.
and other believers are encouraged to talk about Jesus
without being afraid.

In v. 29, Paul says to Philippians, that includes you too.

God has graciously granted to you for the sake of Christ
that you believe in him and so you are saved.

but he has also granted to you to suffer for his sake,
which means he also grants by grace ability to endure it
and so grants by grace that good results from it
as others see in you what God is able to do:
the strength, hope, peace & love he is able to give us.

Some religions market God as one who can give us good lives
by taking away suffering and giving prosperity.

Paul says our God is so great, he can give us good lives
full of rejoicing even if we are suffering and poor
because he can use even those things to help us do our job
of glorifying him by pointing to what he can do.

So, in v. 18 (not included in text) Paul says,

Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice,
...in one more thing in v. 19

DELIVERANCE IN DEATH GLORIFIES GOD'S GRACE

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. ²¹ For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. 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.

Either way, Christ is honored so either way, we win,
because for me to live is Christ.

Reason I am here is to glorify God by receiving his grace.
When I receive God's grace, his gifts and his love
and especially his forgiveness way beyond what I deserve,
it shows what wonderful things God can do.

Paul says, if I live, it shows God's grace and what he can do
by delivering me from prison and giving me the ability
to encourage people with the gospel.
and if I die, it shows God's grace and what he can do
by delivering me through suffering and death itself
to give me eternal life with him which is even better.

This is because of what God has already done through death.
God is honored not only in Paul's body
but in Jesus who came with a body to God's vineyard,
to do in the short hour of his life all the work in God's service
that we have failed to get done
and so to earn for us all that we need for life.
and then to suffer and go through death with his body
to pay for all that we deserve for our sins.

So, his life and his death are our gain.

This is why our work now is to simply boldly speak
his word of Gospel through which we are brought to faith
so that we receive all his wonderful gifts of grace.

That is what we are here after both here & in the hereafter.
I was at meeting a while ago; we were told to introduce selves
with our philosophy of life in 4 words. What would you say?
What came to me was: "Take what God gives."

After thinking about it more, I think that is exactly it.
Take the life God gives, abilities & work he gives,
experiences he gives, both good and bad,
most especially the grace & forgiveness he gives
and the eternal life he gives. Take it and rejoice in it.

We can rejoice in living the life God gives us because
the purpose of life is Glorifying God by receiving his grace.

LIVING OUT OUR FAITH GLORIFIES GOD'S GRACE

as we do the work God moves & enables us to do.

ENDURING DIFFICULTY GLORIFIES GOD'S GRACE

as he gives us strength and brings good out of it.

DELIVERANCE IN DEATH GLORIFIES GOD'S GRACE

as Christ's death & resurrection for us

causes us to be delivered through death to eternal life.