



### **Joy in Death**

Philippians 1:19-30

April 25, 2021

Centreville Baptist Church – Pastor Arthur Keeley

*We believe that worship should be a participatory time together.*

The Christian word “euangelion” (yoo ahn GEHL ee ahn) in the Greek describes; the universal message of God’s saving grace through faith in Christ, as well as the message of His Kingdom over which Jesus reigns.

*Phil 1:19 - 20 “because I know this will lead to my deliverance through your prayers and help from the Spirit of Jesus Christ. 20 My eager expectation and hope is that I will not be ashamed about anything, but that now as always, with all boldness, Christ will be highly honored in my body, whether by life or by death.”*

#### **Death should not cause fear in believers.**

Even though most Americans believe in life after death and the existence of the soul, not everyone is clear about their own ultimate destination.

*One in every four adults (24%) admitted that they have” no idea” what will happen after they die.*

- Nearly 1 in 5 adults (18%) now contend that people are reincarnated after death.
- One-third of Americans (34%) believe that it is possible to communicate with others after their death.

Because of Christ's victory for us, God assures us in His Word that this separation is not permanent for believers in Christ. For one day there will be a reuniting of believing loved ones in heaven, never to be separated again.

There should be no fear of death for believers!

*Phil 1:21-26 21 For me, living is Christ and dying is gain. 22 Now if I live on in the flesh, this means fruitful work for me; and I don't know which one I should choose. 23 I am pressured by both. I have the desire to depart and be with Christ— which is far better— 24 but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. 25 Since I am persuaded of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, 26 so that, because of me, your confidence may grow in Christ Jesus when I come to you again.*

“Living is Christ” refers to what we read in verse 20 that reminds us that we should not be ashamed as we minister the gospel.

That we should be bold in our witness and find joy in all the things we do for the cause of Christ.! To lose this earthly life would usher us immediately into the presence of Christ Jesus.

That we would pledge our faith, even unto death. *In order to live.*

## **Death is an improvement to our current circumstances.**

Again, we need to tell others the story of Jesus. *We also need to tell our personal stories.*

Don't ever stop telling the story. Your story and the story of others is great, but always lead with Jesus. Remember that when you have a relationship with Christ, when you really know who He is, when you have put your life into his hands, you will spend eternity with Him when your time on this earth ends.

*27 Just one thing: Live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or am absent, I will hear about you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind, working side by side for the faith that comes from the gospel, 28 not being frightened in any way by your opponents. This is a sign of destruction for them, but of your deliverance—and this is from God. 29 For it has been given to you on Christ's behalf not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for Him, 30 having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I have.*

## **Death is the end of suffering and the beginning of new life.**

God was in control of Paul's situation. Paul could be released from prison, or killed by the Romans. As much as he wanted to maintain his own personal testimony, he found joy, even facing death, for the church at Philippi to remain faithful.

*29 For it has been given to you on Christ's behalf not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for Him,*

The word given here means literally, "by grace". It indicates that God "graces" Christians to believe and suffer on Christ's behalf.

I will finish with this picture.

A cemetery in India has a tombstone well over a hundred years old that reads this way.

*Pause, Stranger, when you pass me by. As you are now, so once was I.*

*As I am now, so you will be. So, prepare for death, and follow me.*

Someone at a point in time added to the tombstone the following;

*To follow you, I'm not content. Until I know which way you went.*

Yes, most people view death with fear or anxiety, especially if it seems untimely. A famous comic once said of death. "I'm not afraid to die. I just don't want to be there when it happens."

Sorry, that's not optional. Hebrews 9:27 states this; *27 And just as it is appointed for people to die once—and after this, judgment.*

## Sermon Message D-Group Notes to Discuss “Joy in Death”

- Have prayer to open your group.
- Examine each of the main topics and have conversations about each one.

### 1. **Death should not cause fear in believers.**

Do you believe the above statement? If so elaborate as to why. If not, why do you feel that way?

#### Read the following scripture (Phil 1:19-20).

*19 “because I know this will lead to my deliverance through your prayers and help from the Spirit of Jesus Christ. 20 My eager expectation and hope is that I will not be ashamed about anything, but that now as always, with all boldness, Christ will be highly honored in my body, whether by life or by death.”*

- What do you think is Paul’s main concern facing his situation in prison?
- Do you believe God’s word expresses that Paul was “joyful” in his circumstances?

### 2. **Death is an improvement to our current circumstances.**

#### Read the next scripture (Phil 1:21-24)

*21 For me, living is Christ and dying is gain. 22 Now if I live on in the flesh, this means fruitful work for me; and I don’t know which one I should choose. 23 I am pressured by both. I have the desire to depart and be with Christ—which is far better— 24 but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you.*

- What does it mean to you to “live in Christ”?
- In what way do you feel Paul was pressured between living and dying?

### 3. **Death is the end of suffering and the beginning of new life.**

#### Read the final scripture (Phil 1:27-29).

*27 Just one thing: Live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or am absent, I will hear about you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind, working side by side for the faith that comes from the gospel, 28 not being frightened in any way by your opponents. This is a sign of destruction for them, but of your deliverance—and this is from God. 29 For it has been given to you on Christ’s behalf not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for Him,*

We need to tell others the story of Jesus. *We also need to tell our personal stories.*

God was in control of Paul’s situation. Paul could be released from prison, or killed by the Romans. As much as he wanted to maintain his own personal testimony, he found joy, even facing death, for the church at Philippi to remain faithful. He reminded them to live a life worthy of the gospel.

Can you live a life worthy of the gospel WITHOUT suffering?

*29 For it has been given to you on Christ’s behalf not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for Him,*

The word given here means literally, “by grace”. It indicates that God “graces” Christians to believe and suffer on Christ’s behalf.

How do we understand better that it is God’s grace that appoints us suffering for His glory?