

Session 2
19 October 2025

Living in Christ

Philippians 1: 12 - 26

We can't be sure where Paul is under house arrest, but most commentators assume it is in Rome, given he talks of the palace guard – but equally he could still be on his way there, at any of the royal palaces between Jerusalem and Rome.

A key verse in this section is verse 21:

“for me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”



The temple of Castor and Pollux, in Rome. Romans worshipped many gods, including Ceasar. In fact it was a requirement that all romans were expected to honour and worship Ceasar as a god.

To claim that Jesus Christ is not only Lord, but the only Lord, was to go against the Emperor of Rome. In verse 15 Paul implies that people were proclaiming the Gospel to get him into further trouble. One can imagine that claims like “Jesus Christ is the **only** Lord, contains both truth and trouble. Paul clearly doesn't mind the trouble as long as the truth is proclaimed!

Paul is confident that he is with Christ in both life and death. This was so true of so many early Christian martyrs in Rome, whose faith in the face of death had such an impact and witness to the truth about Jesus as Lord and saviour.



Underground rooms where people could be kept in confinement were common in the larger Roman Villas used by those in power..

Highlights from the Passage

In verse 19 Paul uses the word “sotero” which the NIV translates as deliverance, but other translations use vindication or restoration. In the Gospels Jesus uses it to mean salvation.

- Paul sees his personal circumstances as secondary to the question of whether more people are hearing about Jesus. If that is what is happening, Paul is content irrespective of his own situation.
- Paul talks about Jesus to whoever crosses his path, including all those guarding him and bringing him food. His example encourages other Christians in Rome (or wherever) to be equally bold
- The church is still young, but there are clearly rivalries and differences among them. It is a reminder that the church has always been a group of fallen human beings in need of grace and forgiveness.
- The prayers of others are so vital – Paul is confident that God will answer the requests of a praying church.
- Confidence in the face of potential death is based upon the resurrection of Jesus, and his assurance that we too will be with him in eternity. His life is safe in God’s hands and therefore nothing can harm him or separate him from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Paul clearly understands salvation as a gift from God, not something to be earned. So I think the best way to understand it as vindication:

- *in the sense that Paul will be vindicated by God on the final day for his faithfulness,*
 - *also in the sense that the truth of the Gospel will also be made known.*
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Questions for Discussion

What is your greatest ambition in your work? Paul, an evangelist, also had ambitions for his work. For us, what Christian ambitions might we have alongside our work?

Paul was facing many pressures (verses 13, 15, 17, 23). We also face many pressures. What enables us to maintain a Christian perspective when we are faced with pressures from work or family life? What help might we need to stop us going under at times?

Like Paul, talking about Jesus comes with particular pressures (circumstances, reputation, advancement, etc.). How willing are we to face these pressures for the sake of Jesus? Where can we find the confidence to do this?

In your own words, what does it mean to you to follow Jesus as your Lord and Saviour?

Paul trusts that God has a plan for him, and he trusts this plan. Why is trusting in God’s plan a reassurance to us? In what ways is it also challenging to us?

Paul is able to trust Jesus fully (see verse 21) even in the face of death. How strong is your confidence in the resurrection of Jesus and eternal life for all those who love him? What would strengthen this for you?