

Robert R. McLaughlin Bible Ministries

The TREE OF LIFE weekly teaching summary from the week ending January 18, 1998

Tree of Life 01/18/98

Philippians 1:22-26

We have concluded the doctrine of heaven which came about from our study of Phi 1:21 "For me to live is Christ and to die is profit (promotion)." We have now returned back to our passage of study, Phi 1:22-24, which sounds confusing and contradictory in the English translation. So here is the corrected translation from the original Greek:
vs 22 "But if I am to live on in the flesh, this status of maturity will mean fruitful accomplishment for me; and I'm not going to declare what to prefer."

vs 23 "In fact, I am hard pressed from the two alternatives, because I have the desire to depart and to keep on being together with Christ, for that is better by far."

vs 24 "Yet on the other hand, to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake."

This simply brings out the fact that for Paul the balance of necessity of obligation was higher than the balance of advantage of going to heaven. Though Paul was already at spiritual maturity, God is offering him the privilege of doing more on earth, as God offers us all the privilege of doing more, whether or not we accept the challenge is between ourselves and God. Paul's attitude is the same attitude our Lord and Savior exercised during His incarnation, that of selflessness. That is the mind of Christ... putting others first.

God doesn't need any of us and the very fact that He calls us to be a part of His plan and to take part in His works of divine good should cause us to bow down before Him! We are called or elected to privilege and Paul knew that the fruit did not come from the work itself but from the honor of laboring for God. The "**fruitful accomplishment**" he refers to in verse 22 is the fruit of the Spirit or the production of divine good preordained for Him by God. Though Paul has a preference to go to heaven and be with

the Lord he is not going to bring attention to his own desires but rather, he draws the attention to Christ. Acts 5:29 informs us that in a matter of spiritual decisions we must obey God rather than man, which includes our own desires. Paul is a spiritually mature believer with the very thinking of Christ and though he preferred to be face to face with the One he loved, Christ, he of course wanted to execute and fulfill God's plan for his life right to its completion here on earth.

Although we should look forward to heaven, none of us should prefer death until we complete the course God has laid out for us and run the race to its finish line, fighting the good fight, 2Timothy 4:7. God's plan is different for each of us, we each have a different calling on our lives but whatever that calling may be it always includes others. Through all of Paul's trials and pressures he always remained concerned for others! How many of us actually regard the interests of others as important as our own interests? The concept of selfishness has nothing whatsoever to do with Christ. In living for Christ we will live for others even if it happens to infringe on our own personal desires.

So, for Paul to remain upon the earth at this present time was more needful for the sake of the Philippian church as well as many other believers right up to our own congregation, seeing that Paul wrote half of the New Testament! At this time in the ancient world there was no one teaching advanced doctrine or mystery doctrine like Paul was. At this time there is no other pastor- teacher who could lead the Philippians to spiritual maturity and ultra supergrace. Therefore, God leaves Paul behind to lead the way. In fact, the next five years of Paul's life will be his very best. Paul will travel to Spain, Southern France, cross the Mediterranean Sea to Ephesus where he will turn Timothy around from his reversionism, then he will move on to Colosse, Troy, Corinth, to Athens and then on to the Balkin Islands where the Romans will finally take him to prison and Nero will order his death by decapitation. During these five years Paul will see a tremendous response to the word of God, and he will enjoy a magnificent triumphal procession in the ancient world. God will reveal to the angels that Paul is "**the man**"! God will vindicate him before all his enemies and he will experience the ultra super-grace life before he finally moves on to heaven.

God leaves us alive for our own sake in that we are afforded the time to attain spiritual maturity. Paul did this and so did the apostles John and Peter. There is no where in Scripture that indicates any of the other apostles ever reached spiritual maturity except Paul, John, and Peter. To reach the place of spiritual maturity one will find very little company, it's

not a road that is widely traveled. Unfortunately there are very few pastors communicating the pertinent mystery doctrine to carry their congregation to spiritual maturity. There are three categories of pastors who cannot lead their congregation to S.M.

1. The Cosmic Pastor - who is distracted by works, crusades, social action, and being moral. Such a pastor is generally arrogant and involved in self righteousness.

2. The Baby or Immature Pastor - this is the pastor who never learned Bible doctrine hence spends most of his time in the cosmic system. And though he does evangelize his congregation weekly, he can never take them on to spiritual growth. He spends his time lecturing on morality and high profiling his own personality.

3. The Adolescent Pastor - who has some truth but is distracted by various forms of high profile temptations. The truth he has is buried in arrogance and he is ambitious for approbation. This type of pastor can also be emotional which appeals to those who want something to do once a week to appease their own conscience.

He generally appeals to those believers with negative volition toward doctrine (NVTD) and so has a congregation filled with spiritual sophomores, i.e., believers with a little knowledge who think they have all the answers. Remember, knowledge fills a large head but merely inflates a small head.

On the other hand, a mature pastor, such as Paul, through his faithful Bible teaching, personal study, and avoidance of the high profile distractions, advances in the pre-designed plan of God (PPOG) to S.M. and leads his congregation there as well. The mature pastor as well as the mature believer realizes the truth of John 3:30 **"I must decrease while Christ must increase."** The mature pastor also recognizes that he must possess the love mentioned by our Lord in John 21:15-18, an impersonal, unconditional, virtuous love needed in feeding the sheep of God. In this passage the Lord was saying you cannot serve me without this virtue or this impersonal love. This impersonal love stems from personal love toward God. And, our personal love for God is not based upon who and what we are but upon who and what He is! When the Lord asked Peter if he loved Him more than these in John 21, there is a very important principle here. No man can function as a pastor- teacher with his eyes on people. Secondly, the motivational virtue for the gift of pastor-teacher must come from personal love of TLJC. If people are more important than the Lord the pastor (or believer) becomes a people pleaser and therefore a loser pastor/ loser believer. If the believer is controlled by people he will inevitably end up in some form of depression and eventually quit the ministry.

So, a reversionistic pastor is a case of the blind leading the blind, both falling into the ditch. Both the teacher and the congregation end up under

the satanic policy of evil, usually manifesting itself in the "**program church**". The principle which the believer needs to adhere to is that of Philippians 1:21, to live and die for TLJC which only comes when we allow ourselves to be taken anywhere that the Lord desires us to go! We find a unique example of such a one in the apostle Paul. At this time in history there needed to be a demonstration of the power of doctrine historically and Paul is the one that God chose. Paul stayed alive for five more years plus, and as a result there was a whole generation of supergrace believers to show for it. From AD 96 to AD 192 was the finest period in human history to be alive in the devil's world, because doctrine had its maximum impact in the Roman Empire. And Paul was the leader of it all! This changed the whole course of history proving that God never leaves the earth entirely destitute of great men. Such a man we find in the apostle Paul... a unique example of what it means to possess the mind of Christ! The one key word in cultivating the mind of Christ is... others. This does not mean sucking up to others and pleasing everyone's flesh, but instead, keeping the spiritual interest of others as important as your own. [Click here to download](#)

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