

HEAVEN – Our Dual Citizenship and Our True Home

Week 2: the Last Frontier (Phil 1:19-30)

THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE FOCUS

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. **Philippians 1:21-24 (ESV)**

OVERVIEW OF WEEK 1

Day 1: To Live is Christ (Phil 1:21)

Day 2: Fruitful Labor (Phil 1:22)

Day 3: What is my Desire (Phil 1:23)

Day 4: What is necessary (Phil 1:24)

Day 5: Living as citizens of heaven (Phil 1:27)

VERSES TO MEMORIZE

() **Level 1: Phil 1:21--24**

() **Level 2: Phil 1:20-26**

We didn't see it coming. The year 2020 entered just like any other year but soon there was a mist on the horizon, a mental fog that made it almost seem surreal. Messages of societal shut down, quarantines, people stock piling food, toilet paper, and cleaning supplies. A full blown world-wide pandemic like we've never seen before (Gulp!) A pandemic, shutting down every continent, no country is spared. Record numbers of deaths from around world. Conflicting voices and news reports creating chaos and uneasiness. Police killings of citizens of color while the world watches in horror. Increasing violence on our streets, fear, chaos, rioting and luting. People becoming numb to the numbers as death is widely publicized daily all of this has made many in our society more and more anxious about death.

What many want to know is, "what happens after we die?" A lot of people will tell you what they *think* will happen or what they *heard* had happened to someone else, but that's not enough for me. When I stand beside a fresh grave or face that final passage myself, I want more than someone's experience or speculation to hold on to. I want truth. The only reliable source of information about death and what comes after is the Bible. That's because only one reliable witness has passed through death and come back to tell us about it. His name is Jesus.

GROUP DISCUSSION. What accounts of near-death or after-death experiences have you heard or read? What has been your response to those accounts?

PERSONAL REFLECTION. Consider how long you think your life will be. Ask God to use this study to prepare you to face life *and* death with confidence.

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The apostle Paul found himself pulled in two directions. On one hand he wanted to live on so he could continue his work of proclaiming the gospel and nurturing new Christians. But another desire tugged at his heart too. There were days when he wanted to untie the rope of this life and set sail for heaven’s shore. *Re-read Philippians 1:19–30.*

1. Paul wrote this letter when he was under arrest in Rome, waiting for a trial before the Roman emperor. How would you describe Paul’s attitude in these verses?

2. What would your attitude be in circumstances similar to Paul’s?

3. Do most people today think that death brings “gain” (v. 21)? Explain your answer.

4. What responsibilities kept Paul linked to this life (vv. 22, 25–26)?

5. What were his expectations about being with Christ (v. 23)?

6. The word *depart* (v. 23) was used in Paul’s day to picture a ship being untied from the dock and setting sail for a new destination. If you view death in that light, does it make death a more positive experience or a more uncertain one? Why?

7. Paul seemed so certain about what would happen at death. What was his sense of security based on?

8. Do you feel the same assurance when you think about your own death? Why or why not?

9. What spiritual legacy did Paul want to leave in the lives of these Christians (vv. 27–30)?

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10. What legacy do you want to leave in the lives of your family members? your friends?

11. What can you do to strengthen the positive impact you are having on those around you?

Thank Jesus for dying in your place and for removing death's painful sting.

Living It Out

The Bible uses several images to picture death. Read these passages and consider whether your view of death accurately (or inaccurately) mirrors the biblical view of death. Death is pictured as:

- Sleep*—because it is temporary and ends in a great awakening (1 Corinthians 15:51)
- An exodus*—as joyful release from bondage (Luke 9:31; 2 Peter 1:14–15)
- Taking down a tent*—our earthly body dies but we receive a new, glorified body (2 Corinthians 5:1, 4)
- Coming home*—we go to a place of rest and security (2 Corinthians 5:6–8)

For people without the assurance of salvation and forgiveness in Christ, the Bible pictures death as a “terror” (Psalm 55:4) and an “enemy” (1 Corinthians 15:25–26).