Live Accordingly Pt. 2

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Date: 09 November 2025

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[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang.! Thank you for joining us. Turn with me, if you would, to Philippians chapter 1.

Philippians chapter 1. We continue our study and we're looking here in this paragraph, verses 22 to 26, that we last week started and Lord willing will finish up today.
Let's look at it together again. It says, If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet, which I shall choose, I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two.
My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. But, to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account.
Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith, so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus because of my coming to you again.
[1:15] There are three things that I want you to make note of from this passage. The first one we looked at last Sunday. Number two and three we'll look at this morning.

First, from last week, Christians have a purpose on earth and should live according to it. Christians have a purpose on earth and should live according to it.
That, of course, comes from verse 22. If I am to live on in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. So, our purpose is fruitful labor.
We have a purpose. God has created us by design. You're here for a reason. You're not an accident.
You're not an afterthought. You may feel at times overlooked by the world, but you are known by your maker who created you on purpose and with purpose.
[2:23] If I am to keep living, he says, that's fruitful labor for me. You have a purpose. And need to live according to that purpose.

And I want you, just by way of review, to think in these two categories with me. One, that you have a purpose in this world as a believer, as one made in the image of God, as a Christian who has been given by the Holy Spirit, spiritual gifts for you to glorify Christ and to be able to serve the church.
You have a purpose in this world. Your life matters. And I want you to notice also and to think of this way that you matter in this church.
You're needed in this church. Now, there are many churches around us and many churches across our state. I'm thankful for every Bible-believing church. I'm thankful for every Christ-preaching, Christ-exalting church in our city and around us.
Not everybody has to be a member of this church and go to this church. The Lord's at work in many, many places. I'm thankful for every place the Lord is doing great things. But for the members of our church, the faithful members here at our church, you're needed.
[3:43] You have a place. And I recognize that sometimes it's easy to be a member of a church and think that, you know, would anybody know if you weren't here or if you stopped serving, would anything make a difference?

And I just want you to know that for our members here at this church, you're a part of our family. You have a purpose here. And you don't have to be different than who God made you and the way He's designed you, the way He's gifted you is exactly how He intended for you to be.
You don't need to compare yourself against somebody else's life or compare yourself against somebody else's ministry. You just be who God made you to be, but live according to the purpose that He has given to you.

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And expressed in verse 22 is that our purpose in life is to be all about fruitful labor. Laboring for Christ.
Involved in the kingdom. Not trying to compare yourself against others. Not trying to search for recognition or fame or trying to create your own influence.
[4:59] Just be faithful to what you're doing. Let the Lord make you fruitful in your ministry. And then let the Lord be glorified however He chooses to do that.

So number one, Christians have a purpose on earth and should live according to it. Let's move forward today in verse 23 and following.
Number two, Christians have a promise of heaven and should live according to it. We have a purpose on earth and we have a promise of heaven and we should live according to that purpose. Christians have a purpose on earth and should live according to it.
Hear here in His words how much He longs to be with the Lord. He says, my real desire is to depart. It's an interesting word He chooses here.
[6:18] It's a very picture-esque word for us. It's a compound word made up of two parts. The word here translated depart means up and to loose.

Up and to loose. I desire to depart. I desire to break loose, He says. And the word He uses here is a word that was used to talk about a ship that was breaking loose and moving on the water.
It was also used of soldiers who had left home to go fight in some kind of battle or conflict. And then when that battle is over and they have their temporary dwelling, their temporary home, their temporary place there, they would break loose.
They would tear it down and go back to their real home. He says, I desire to depart. I desire to break loose.
Like a soldier who has been on a temporary assignment that now is going to break loose and go to their true home. And He uses that word to describe what it would be like for the Christian going to heaven.
[7:32] Breaking loose from this earth and going to our true home. I desire to depart.

I desire to break loose. I desire to be where my true home will be. The writer of Hebrews said, Here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city which is to come.
We're longing for that eternal home. We're longing for heaven. We're longing to be with the Lord. And we have a promise of heaven, and we should live according to that promise.
So, we have a purpose on earth, which is fruitful labor, and we should live according to that. But while we're laboring for the Lord, we also have the promise of heaven, and we should live according to that promise.
Why? Well, He tells us, My desire is to depart and be with Christ. Look at the end of verse 23. For that is far better.
[8:46] It's far better. This is a double comparative. This is the highest kind of superlative He could use to describe this. He's saying this is very much better.

If I live here in the flesh, it's fruitful labor. It's a gift from God. I'm going to make the most of every day. But, while I have a purpose on earth, I'll never forget, He says, I have the promise of heaven, and to be with the Lord is very much better.
It's far better, He says. Yes. Paul considers what it would be like to be with Christ. And he says that's even better.
Now, let's put all this together, because in verse 21, a couple of Sundays ago we studied this, where he says, For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. Which means, for the Christian, every day you get from the Lord is a gift, and to go to be with the Lord is gain.
So, here's the perspective of how Christians should live their life. Every day is a gift, and death is gain. These are the two realities for the Christian every moment of your existence, that you either get the gift of another day to live for the Lord, or the gain of heaven, and going to be with the Lord, which is why the Bible rightly says, What can man do to me?
[10:18] I get the gift of a day to worship the Lord, to serve the Lord for fruitful labor, or I get to go be with the Lord, and if I go be with the Lord, that's even greater gain.

Which is why he says, in verse 23, I'm hard pressed between the two. The two choices, and not so much choices as just the possible outcomes.
The Lord may extend my life, and if he extends my life, I get the gift of more time for fruitful labor, or the Lord may take my life, call me home, and that will be even greater gain.

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These are the two realities for the believer. I either get gift, or I get gain. And every day that we live, we ought to consider the purpose we have on earth, and the promise we have of heaven.
Now, why does he say that to be in heaven is far better? Well, the answer is found in the phrase right before that.
[11:25] My desire is to depart, here it is, and be with Christ. That's why heaven is gain.

It's because we are with Christ. And I want to ask you, friends, to check your heart this morning, because one of the ways you can know if you truly belong to the Lord is to ask yourself, why do you desire heaven?
Please understand, there are all kinds of people in this world who do not believe in Christ, who are not converted, who have no forgiveness of sin, who have no salvation, yet in their mind, they would tell you when they die, they're going to heaven.
And if you ask them what heaven will be like, they'll describe a bunch of different things they anticipate enjoying. What you will not hear an unconverted person say they long for is to be with Christ.
That's uniquely what the Christian desires. Streets of gold will be amazing. That's not what's going to make heaven heaven. All the joy and the happiness will be incredible.
[12:43] That's not the sweetest part of heaven. The sweetest part of heaven is what he says in that verse right there that when I depart, when I break loose from here, I will be with Christ.

What makes heaven uniquely heaven and the home of believers for eternity is that we are with Christ. We have the promise of heaven and should live according to that truth.
So enjoy your life. Every day you get a gift. Make the most of it. Enjoy your family.
Enjoy your career. Enjoy your friends. But remember what chapter 3 verse 20 of this book teaches us. Our citizenship is in heaven.
Heaven. That is our true home. If you're in high school, graduating high school is great. It's fun.
[13:50] It's a thrill. It's a mark of a completion of a season. But heaven is better. If you're single and long to be married, nothing wrong with that.

If that's what God has planned for you, it's a wonderful gift. Being married is great. I love it. Heaven will be better. The Lord wills to give you children.
It's just the sweetest thing. It's not God's will for everybody, but for those who are able to have a child. Being a parent is an unbelievable joy and privilege.
Heaven will be better. Having grandkids is a thrill. Heaven will be better.
There are things on this earth that we go through and there's things we enjoy and there are times where we think to ourselves, I don't know. I don't know if I'm ready for heaven. I don't know if I'm ready for the Lord to call me home in the Lord's return because there's more things I want to do and I want to challenge you to live according to your purpose.
[15:06] You ought to desire fruitful labor. You ought to desire time with your family. You ought to be grateful for every day. Every day is a gift. But if the Lord were to call you home before you experience something, trust me, you'll have missed out on nothing.

Heaven will be better. And for so many people, even those who claim the name of Christ, if they're honest, if they're honest, if they're honest, there are so many seasons of life where they would think of going to heaven, going to be with the Lord as some kind of divine interruption that kept them from experiencing something they really wanted to enjoy.
I just want you to know that heaven is better. That's the testimony of Scripture. That's the very word of God, from God, about being with God, that to be with Christ is far better.
Far better. I enjoy my life. I'm grateful every day. I'll take as many days the Lord wants to give to me.
I love being married to Marcy. I love being a dad. I love being a grandpa. I love pastoring here. I enjoy the people I work with. I love being a part of this church, being a member together with each of you.
[16:26] I enjoy my life. But when the Lord calls us home, we've missed out on nothing because heaven will be far better than anything else.

in a few weeks, Christmas rolls around, you'll see pictures of people with their gifts and you'll see kids and children with their Christmas presents and there will be some children that will get a little bicycle and because it's their first bicycle, they'll have training wheels on the side and they'll be riding around the driveway and you'll see three, four-year-old, five-year-old riding around with

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training wheels on a bicycle and that's great and that's fun.
I'm not going to, this year, I'm not going to open gifts and think to myself, I didn't get the training wheel bicycle. No, why? Because there's something that's far better.
Having a car is far better than training wheels. The training wheels were great in their season, but there's something that's far better.
Time on this earth that we have is good and for a season there's so much joy and delight, but what we will experience in heaven is far better. No adult ever thought to themselves, where's my training wheels?
[17:59] And no one in heaven will ever be in heaven thinking to themselves, I wish I had more of what I left behind. No, when you get to heaven as we looked at a few weeks ago, you let go of everything you don't need.

You hold on to everything you do need. You take on new things you never had before. It is far better. We have a purpose on earth and should live according to it, but we have a promise of heaven and should live according to it.
And until we get there, we think about heaven. We read about heaven. We sing about heaven. I think one of the sweetest things we can do are sing songs that remind us that heaven is our home. old songs like let us then be true and faithful, trusting and serving every day.
Just one glimpse of Him in glory will the toils of life repay when we all get to heaven. What a day of rejoicing that will be.
[19:06] When we all see Jesus, we'll sing and shout the victory. It's good to think about heaven, sing about heaven. To sing new songs about heaven are good too.

One of my favorite newer songs about heaven is a song called Almost Home. It starts this way. Don't drop a single anchor. We're almost home.
Through every toil and danger, we're almost home. How many pilgrim saints have before us gone? No stopping now.
We're almost home. We're almost home, church. We're almost home. For some in our congregation, you're so near to being home.
For others, you're near being home and don't realize it. For some, you've got 30 or 40 or 50 years.
[20:22] But for those of you who are on the younger side of that, ask your grandma and grandpa how fast those years go. it goes real fast.

That's not to say that to worry or be afraid of it. Because to be with Christ is far better. We're almost home.
Don't drop a single anchor. Don't drop a single anchor. This past summer when I was having a root canal done and I thought I was very close to going home.
And I promise you I was ready to go home at the dentist office as you lay down and weep and cry. Above you is a TV and you can have on headphones and listen to music.
And so I had on a YouTube playlist of some hymns and that song came on like literally when I thought I'm about to die that hymn Almost Home came on.
[21:32] And there were a couple of guys that wrote it together. One of them was a friend of mine and I texted him while I was getting my root canal and I said I'm listening to Almost Home right now praying I will make it soon.

Songs have a way of getting us through. You need to know songs about heaven. You need to sing songs about heaven. And if that sounds morbid to you you need to have a biblical theology of heaven because there's nothing sad or morbid or dark about longing to be home.
It is far better. Now let's make sure we keep this in balance. You have a purpose on this earth and should live according to it.
And that purpose of fruitful labor is a gift. And you have the promise of heaven and that's even better.
So let's not be people who are afraid to go home. It's even better. But let's not be people who waste our days because every day is a gift and we should live according to it.
[22:45] And then a third reality we see in this passage and that is that Christians have a partnership with other believers and should live according to it.

Christians have a partnership with other believers and should live according to it. Look at verse 24. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account.

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Convinced of this I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith. This is the partnership. So it's not only that you have a purpose for fruitful labor.
It's not only you have a promise of heaven to get you through. But also a partnership with other believers. And that partnership reminds us that the Christian life has never lived in isolation.
That we are to help each other, serve each other, love each other, carry each other's burdens and one day we'll be with the Lord together.
[23:55] And you can just sense the thought process back and forth and back and forth of Paul as he thinks about his life and considers the different outcomes.

Will I be set free? Will my life be extended? Will my life be taken from me? If you extend my life that's fruitful labor, that's my purpose. If you take my life from me I've got the promise of heaven. But he says here's his plan and that is to continue to live in a partnership with other believers. Reminding himself that his life and his ministry is not just about him but about the others there he can encourage as well.
So the fruitful labor that he speaks of in verse 22 is not just about his own life or his own walk with the Lord.
It's about partnering with others to help them. This is critically important for people to understand. in this culture that is so individualized we would do well to remind ourselves we are part of a family and part of a community and we are in partnership with each other and not even just with each other in the church we are in partnership with all who are true believers all who preach the Bible all who make much of the Lord Jesus Christ.
[25:30] We're partners. Now that's especially fitting today when we right outside here today have so many things set up for you to look around and look at talk to to consider to see the people we partner with in ministry and the mission trips we're getting ready to go on.

Why? Because we want to be partners with people all around the neighborhoods and the nations. This isn't just about us individually this isn't even just about us as a church this is about partnering with other people everywhere we can because that's what it is to be a part of the family of God is to live your life in partnership with those who love him and are doing his work.
And so he says I'm going to remain and continue with you all this isn't just about his survival this is about contending with them for your progress and your joy in the faith.
Please understand this connection here. His life and his ministry is all about helping other people walk with the Lord.
your progress and your joy verse 25 says. So here's a way to test yourself.
[27:01] When people are around you is their walk with the Lord made stronger? Is their joy made deeper?

we don't want to be the kind of people that are just all about ourselves.
We don't want to be the kind of church that's just all about ourselves. We want to look to others and say how can we help you make progress in the faith?
How can we help your joy increase and get even deeper as you walk with the Lord? Certainly we want to be faithful to walk with the Lord ourselves.
We want to be faithful to make sure we're in the Word of course but it's not just about us and it's not just about our church. It's about being a part of strengthening the faith and the progress and the joy of other people everywhere in every way that we can.
[28:05] and we've got to keep this in mind because here's what happens we can get so fixated on ourselves and our family and our ministry and even our church that we can forget that there are other people out there who are depending upon us to be faithful support for them and encouragers for them and to disciple them and to help them and we must live with a view of partnership in everything we do.

Our church carries this out. Our church every month every week literally we partner our part of our giving that comes to our church with other churches all around the country and we are able together to support seminaries and able to support church planters we're able to support missionaries all around the world in partnership with each other.
In addition to that our church has other partners that we support directly to help them to keep them doing what the Lord's called them to do and then we go on mission trips short term where we're there to try to encourage and strengthen and help other people to make progress in what they're doing we've got to remind ourselves the importance of partnership in the gospel look we love this

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local church and we should but the Lord is at work in places far beyond just this church and the more places you're aware of where God is at work the more joyful you'll be Christian partnership is one of the great ways for us to stop getting involved in self pity and self indulgence and to instead have a heart for the nations for what
God is doing all around the world he says I'm going to remain I'm going to continue with you for your progress and for your joy in the faith I want to challenge you church pray for other churches pray for other pastors pray for church planters pray for missionaries pray for the persecuted church pray for churches that are struggling pray for the work and the power of God to be unleashed all over yes including our church but let's make sure we have a vision larger than just our church because our God is at work all over the world and we want to give thanks and worship him for all he is doing which is why the more people you're aware of around the world the ministry they're doing their needs how you can pray for them how you can support them it's not just about their progress look at the end of this text so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in
Christ Jesus this all discipleship the glory of Jesus Christ that's the goal the goal isn't for our church to have a reputation the goal isn't for a church to build a building the goal isn't for a church to reach a certain number of attendance those things are so less than what matters the most it is all about the glory of Christ and so let's sum this up Paul says this he says and my purpose is to do fruitful labor and that labor I'm a part of is to the glory of Christ and I have the promise of heaven and so every day of my life I'm going to live with the promise of heaven in mind and the only reason I'm going to make it to heaven is because the work of Christ and so my home in heaven is all about the because of the work of
[32:28] Christ so in everything we do in our purpose on earth in our promise of heaven and our partnership with others the end goal is all about the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ this is the way believers are to live live according to these things so how much time do you have left on this earth who knows maybe a week maybe a year maybe 50 years James says it's a vapor here today gone tomorrow and the reason why that should not depress you is because it should focus you it should clarify things for you and the clarity and the focus that it should give you is to say every day you wake up this is a gift not owed this day it's a gift and if a gift from

God it's a day that I want to live for his glory and I'm going to be faithful and fruitful with what he's given me to do today and while I'm doing that and life gets hard and things get disappointing I'm not going to let it shake me too much because this isn't my home anyway I'm just passing through and I'm ready to depart and be with Christ because I had the promise of heaven and that's very much better so the world can bother me a little bit your words can wound a little bit the disappointment to this earth can hurt and sting a little bit but not too much and not for too long because here we have no lasting city but we seek that city which is to!
we are going to remind ourselves that we have brothers and sisters all over this world and we are to love them and to support them and pray for them and help them because we are not in this for ourselves or by ourselves we are in this with the full body of Christ and not for our own glory!
but for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ! This is how we live so trust the Lord with all your days make the most of every day you've been given and then one day you'll be called home to heaven for those who are in Christ and on that day you'll say I believed it because the scripture said it but now I've experienced it this is far better to be with Christ live according to the promise of what awaits you Lord we're grateful today for your word and thankful for your care in our lives and
Lord even this morning as we have conversations in the hallway with mission partnerships and mission opportunities may we remind ourselves that every day is a gift that we do want to partner with others who are doing the work of the gospel and when you call us home that will be our infinite gain gift and gain the realities for those who are in Christ and for that we give you thanks it's in his name we pray amen let me encourage as you pass through as you pass out don't pass out that'd be a bad deal as you pass through the hallway go out the tables talk to the people who are there see what mission trips are coming up in 26 see what mission partnerships we're a part of ask them how you can pray for them get to know them the work that they're doing and we'll pray the Lord will use even the conversations today as a way to encourage us five o'clock evening worship tonight be back and be a part of that
[37:14] God bless you you're dismissed

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