# Live Accordingly

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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. Well, we're in, again, Philippians chapter 1, and there is always the possibility when you study a book of the Bible that when we tend to go kind of slow and hopefully with some depth.

Each week we're learning things, hopefully, and each week we're growing in our biblical knowledge. But it is possible that by the time you get to the end of a book or a section of a book, that each week what we've learned is profitable, but that we would have failed to see how the whole thing fits together.

I don't want us to just have a lot of sermons from Philippians. I want us to understand the book of Philippians, and so from time to time, I think it's really helpful and necessary to just back up and take a little bit of an extended review of what we've studied.

So I want to do that for just a few minutes before we look ahead at verses 22 to 26. But so that we can keep the entirety of the letter, because, of course, when this is written, it would have been read from beginning to end.

All four chapters would have been read at one time. And I think it's important for us to keep in mind the flow and the rhythm of what was being written. So let's just remind ourselves by way of review a little bit.

[1:30] Back to verse 1 of chapter 1, where he says, I'm writing to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi with the overseers and deacons. And it reminds us that in the church, you've got saints and shepherds and servants.

Saints are all the redeemed. That's you. If you're a Christian, that's you. And that the truths he's writing to include you, because a church at its height is a bunch of people who are sinners saved by grace, who have been made worthy not by our works, but the work of Christ.

And we are all to be serving and all to be worshiping and all to be using our gifts. And so when the scripture says to the saints, we're not talking about some category of, you know, national honor society kinds of Christians.

We're talking to all of us who have been redeemed. If you're a believer, if you are in Christ, saved by grace through faith, we are by his grace, his saints.

And the overseers, these are the shepherds. The New Testament speaks of overseers or elders or pastor shepherds. These who are given by the Lord to lead the flock, not to dominate the flock, not to be dictators to the flock, but to be overseers, to be elders, to be shepherds and pastors, to be men who lead, who teach.

[2:55] First Peter 5 calls them to shepherd the flock of God among them, that there is to be a relationship, that this is about men who are gifted and called by the Lord to love the flock, to lead the flock, not to fulfill their own desires, but to shepherd the flock of God, 1 Peter 5, as God would have them.

There's saints and there's shepherds and there's servants. It says here deacons. These are the servants of the church. And our church is so blessed to have a godly group of deacons who love you and who love this church and who love Christ.

Verses 4 and 5 speak of that those who are part of the body of Christ, we join together in prayer and in partnership in the gospel. That we're to be a praying people.

That the work that we do is fueled by prayer. The ministry that we do ought to be bathed in prayer. We're praying for our lives, for each other, for our church, for our ministries.

We're to be a praying people. And as we pray together, we truly enter into this partnership, verse 5 says, in the gospel. And that is how we need to see ourselves here at First Baptist Church of

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Mustang.
[4:22] We are partners in the gospel. Don't ever think that it's the pastor's job to do all the work.

That's not true. Don't ever think that you need to have a different title or a greater influence to be useful for the kingdom. That's not true. Don't ever think that because you don't have a certain education or a certain giftedness that you're not important.
That's not true. We are partners in the gospel. Different strengths, different gifts, different roles, but partners in the gospel. And we must see our church that way.
That we pray with each other. We pray for each other. And we are partners in the work the Lord has called us to do. Verses 7, 8, 9 speaks of the importance of truth and love.
He says that we are to defend the gospel, verse 7. To defend the gospel, we have to know the truth. We have to be rooted in truth. We have to believe the truth.
[5:31] We have to care for the truth. And we are to be people of love, verse 8. That we yearn for each other with affection. That our love may abound more and more.

And so a faithful church is a church that upholds truth and love. These are not truths that are at conflict with each other.
Doctrine and love fit together. If we love each other, we're going to proclaim the truth. If we proclaim the truth, we're going to grow in love for each other. And so our church ought to be growing in our knowledge and in our love.
Verses 12 to 15 speak of God's providence. Paul would much rather be free to travel, to preach, to encourage, to plant churches.
God in this providence has him under house arrest. There is a submission that the believer has to have to the purposes and the plan of God.
[6:39] We have to rest in that. Verse 18 speaks of people that are speaking ill of Paul.

People who are saying things that are untrue. Things that are unfair. And his response in verse 18 is, is what then? So what? It's not about his name.
Not about his life. Not about his reputation. He says, here's what I am consumed with. Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed.
And in that, I rejoice. As a church, we've got to remind ourselves that it's the name of Christ that matters.
And that's part of how we are to pray for each other. And part of our partnership in the gospel is that we remind ourselves that we are on one team, a part of one family.
[7:35] And the goal of our team and the aim of our family is to make much of Christ, not ourselves. But we partner together for this.

We pray together for this. We encourage each other to do this. Even this past week, when I had the privilege of being at Midwestern Seminary to preach to the students and faculty there, I went representing you.
I went with your prayer, with your support. I may have been the one that's physically behind the pulpit. Mars and I are the ones who physically are there at the seminary. But I'm there representing us as a church, as a family.
And I can't do that if you don't pray for me. And I can't do that if we don't have godly men who are here to teach and serve and preach and lead in my absence.
It's a partnership. It's not about who is seen. It's not about whose name is visible. It's all about this, that everything we do is a joint partnership working together for the cause of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
[8:42] That's what Paul reminds us of. He says, what then? So what if life is hard? So what if life is unfair? He says, the only thing that I'm concerned with is that the name of Christ is magnified.

And that's got to always be our hope. That's got to always be the forefront of our mind. We just want to see Christ magnified. And then last week we looked in verses 19 to 21, ending with, for to me to live is Christ and to die is gain.
This mentality that says every day is a gift. Every day that the Lord gives us, let's live for Christ. Let's make much of Christ.
Every day the Lord gives us is a day to honor Him, to love Him, to serve Him, to make much of Him. But we don't live in fear because even when this life comes to an end, to die is gain.
And this is why as a church we gather every Lord's Day to remind ourselves of these truths. Because if we're not careful, though we believe that and though we affirm that, our hearts and our

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minds can drift.
[9:58] And we can start to love the things of the world too much. And we can start to live with a little bit of panic and a little bit of fear. And we start to think about 10,000 unknowns about tomorrow or next year or what the future is going to be like.

And so we gather every Lord's Day to remind ourselves of the simple truths of the gospel. That to live is to make much of Christ. And one day when we take our last breath and we die, it's gain, not loss.
It's gain. And then we add on to that as we pick up today in verses 22 to 26. 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.
[11:19] So that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus because of my coming to you again. Sometimes you hear of churches and they get divided into categories.

You know, you say this is an evangelistic church. This is a discipleship church. This is a church that's strong in preaching. This is a church that's strong in music ministry.
And you have churches that sometimes it seems that they choose to emphasize one thing over the other. And while churches will have personalities and churches may have things that they are stronger in, it shouldn't be that a church would choose to be faithful in one area at the purposeful neglect of another.
We ought to strive to be faithful in all the Lord calls us to do. In the same way, it must be true of our doctrine. That we don't want to hold one doctrine high while neglecting another doctrine.
We want to believe all that the Lord has called us to proclaim. An example of that would be, if I were to ask you as a Christian, should you long to go to heaven?
[12:35] What's the biblical answer? Yes. If I were to ask you, should you enjoy life on this earth and live it to the full? What's the answer?

Yes. Well, these are two things that are true at the same time, but they're not at odds with each other. They are understood in relationship with each other. And so it's important that we are a church that understands the beauty of heaven, the glory of heaven, and so we don't live in fear of what's to come.
The longing of our heart is that we would train and equip and disciple members of this church that when you come to the end of your life, you're not filled with doubt, you're not filled with worry, you're not filled with regret because you know what awaits you.
But to do that, we have to maximize every day and live for his glory and live in the light daily of the truth of the glory of heaven for all eternity.
So, Hebrews 13, 14 says, here, speaking of earth, here, we have no lasting city. We seek the city which is to come.
[13:52] We long for heaven. We think of heaven. We eagerly await the Lord's return to get us and to call us to be with him. And yet, while we're waiting, we also proclaim truths such as Ecclesiastes 9, verse 10.

Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might. Whatever your hand finds to do with all your might, do it the best that you can. Whatever you're doing.
So, yes, we seek the city which is to come. We long for the heaven that awaits us. But while we wait, we receive every day as a blessed gift from the Lord.
And we need to live like that. Not emphasizing one truth over the other, but understanding how they fit together. Truth and love.
Evangelism and discipleship. Waiting for heaven and enjoying every day the Lord gives to us. And that tension of all of those things, you see that here in Philippians 1.
[15:05] You can hear the tension Paul lives with. To live is Christ, but to die is gain. I long to be with the Lord.

That is far better. But I want to remain with you to be able to help and strengthen you. We've got to live with that tension.
I see it played out in the lives of people all the time. Older saints in our church, when they get toward the end of their life. When their body is breaking down.

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And they're ready to be with the Lord. But they do love their family dearly. And they look forward to an existence in the glory of heaven.
Worshiping their Savior without pain. Without hurt. Without loss. And yet, they hold their grandbabies tight.
[16:10] And their children tightly. As they tell them how much they love them. Many of you have felt the same tension. Maybe when your loved one was near death.

And no part of you wanted to let them go. In that you wanted them to be here. Yet, you know what awaits them is better than what they're experiencing here.
And so you also long for them to be with the Lord. It's just that tension as Christians that we live with. The reality that heaven is better. Yet, life is a gift.
And we have to understand that. And to understand that, we have to get both parts of that truth. Every day is a gift.
And heaven is gain. As we look at verses 22 to 26. This next paragraph. We're going to look at this in two parts.
[17:10] This week and next week. We're going to look at three headings. Let me give them to you. We're going to look at just the first one this morning. The first truth I want you to see is that Christians have a purpose on the earth.

And should live according to it. Christians have a purpose on the earth. And should live according to it.
The second truth I'm going to show you is that Christians have a promise of heaven. And should live according to it. We have a promise of heaven.
And we should live according to it. And then third. Christians have a partnership with other believers. And should live according to it.
We have a partnership with other believers and should live according to it. These three truths are clearly explained in verses 22 to 26.
[18:11] Let's take just the first one for this morning. Christians have a purpose on the earth and should live according to it. Back to verse 22. If I am to live in the flesh.

That means fruitful labor for me. Now remember. That's why I did the lengthy review. Because this statement verse 22. Is a part of what he's just said in verse 21.
To live is Christ. To die is gain. With that truth in mind though. In verse 22 he says. If I am to live in the flesh.
That means fruitful labor for me. So. Here's the two realities for Paul's life. He can be killed. And have gain. Or he can have his life extended.
And have fruitful labor. This is true for you. When you're sick at the end of your life. Or what could be the end of your life. If you are called home.
[19:10] As a believer. It's gain. If he extends your life. It's time for fruitful labor. Either way. We joyfully accept the providence of God.

And have reason to rejoice. Life for the believer. Is fruitful labor. Friends. This is your purpose on earth.
Why are you here? For fruitful labor. That's why our church exists. That's why you exist. That's why when you were saved. You weren't immediately taken to heaven.
You remain here. Why? For fruitful labor. Now. Don't confuse fruitful labor. With heroic labor. You're to be fruitful.
You don't have to be famous. You're to be faithful. You don't have to have some widely known reputation.
[20:10] Be fruitful. By being faithful. Fruitful. Fruitful. Means you do what God's called you to do.

The way he's called you to do it. That's how we bear fruit. There are some people in our church. There are some people in our church. That if they were to walk up here behind the pulpit.
Most of you would know their name. There are hundreds of people in our church. That if they walked behind the pulpit today. And you saw their face.
Many of you would say. I kind of recognize them. I'm not exactly sure of their name. There are others who could walk up here. And you would say. I don't know that person. The measure of fruitfulness and faithfulness is not fame.
The measure of fruitfulness is doing what God's called you to do. The way he's called you to do it. Now. Let me be clear.

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[21:09] Within the confines of a church. Relationships matter. We ought to strive to be. To be building relations with each other. We ought to work hard. To know people. That are older members.

Newer members. People who are young in age. Old in age. People who are just like us. People who are different than us. We ought to strive to be building relationships. With people in the church. So that we're not a bunch of strangers to each other.
That's important. However. The fact that somebody may not know who you are. Does not mean your ministry is unimportant. Fruitful labor means you're doing what God's called you to do.
The way he's called you to do it. And for some. That's very public. And for others. It's very much behind the scenes.
For some. It's heavy loads of responsibility and leadership. For others. It's ministry where you don't feel that weight.
[22:09] But all together. We're just partners. Serving how and where God has us. Fruitful labor. Heroic labor.

Seeks to be noticed. Fruitful labor. First. Fruitful labor. Fruitful labor. Seeks to be faithful. Make sure.
Like verse 22 says. If we are to live in the flesh. It will mean fruitful labor. For us. So can I just ask you this question.
Is your life. Fruitful. And if it's not. Today. Is the day.
To change your priorities. To change your schedule. To change your habits. To change your spending.
[23:08] To change your decisions. Today. Is the day. To inspect your heart. And your life. And say God. My desire.

Is to be fruitful. And whatever needs to change. Let today. Be the day. That change. Begins. If I am to live in the flesh.
That means fruitful labor for me. Keep reading. Yet. Which I shall choose. I cannot tell. Now. This is interesting.
Because. It's not like. Paul really gets the choice. I mean. They're not coming to him. Saying. Do you want us to. To kill you or not. They're not coming to him.
Saying. Do you want us to execute you. At this time. Or not. And yet. You just sense this tension. That Paul feels. As he. Where he rehearses in his mind. If the Lord calls me home.
[24:03] That's going to be my ultimate gain. And that's far better. But. If the Lord leaves me. To hear. That means to live as Christ. And that means. Fruitful labor. And you can kind of.

Just feel the inside of his heart. And mind. As he. Wrestles with the reality. Of what may or may not. Happen to him. But he's not really.
Making the choice. This is God's sovereignty. That's over his life. But you can understand. The internal. Wrestling with his mind. As he plays these things out.
In a much. Much. Much. Less important scale. I feel. Something like that.
On Saturdays. When I'm watching college football. And I'm watching these two teams. On any given Saturday. That I don't really care about. I don't know their players. I don't like their team.
[24:56] And I'm trying to decide. Who do I want to win. And who do I want to lose. And I'll rehearse it in my mind. Through the lens of. What's the best. For the team I cheer for. So.

If this team wins. How will that help us. If this team loses. What does that mean in the future. And what are the standings. And how would this affect. The conference standings. How would this affect.
The college football playoff. And I'll sit there. And rehearse. All these outcomes in my mind. And if they win this game. Could they lose next week. And could they win that game. And I'll sit there. And think.
I can't decide who I want to win. And then I'll remind myself. I have no say anyway. Who cares. And inevitably. I'll invest three hours.
Cheering for a team. I don't even like. And they let me down. At the end anyway. In some small way. In some small way.
[25:50] That's kind of the internal. Reality of Paul's mind. In a much more important situation. To be sure. But just kind of rehearsing. And playing out. These different outcomes.

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What if I live. What if my life's extended. What will that mean. What will I do. Well that will be fruitful labor. It means I need to dedicate myself. To living for Christ. But what if he calls me home. Well if he calls me home.
That means. To die is gain. And that's very much better. He says. In the next verse. So we kind of can. Sense that. That tension.
That. Paul lives with. And the reason. He lives with that tension. Is because he wants to make the most of every day.
Yet he's ready to be with the Lord. And if I could pray. For our church. To grow. To a place.
[26:47] Of a reality. To truly grasp. That would be it. That we would get to the place. Individually. And collectively. Where we want to make the most. Of every.

Single. Day. Yet. Be ready. To meet. The Lord. This is the tension we live with.
This is the truth that we. Live with. Every day is a gift. And yet to die is.
Gain. Verse 23. I am hard pressed. Between the two. The two what?
Well the two outcomes. Living and dying. Having your life taken from you. And going to be with the Lord. Or having your life extended.
[27:43] And living in fruitful labor. I am hard pressed. This Greek word he uses here. This verb. It's used in the gospels.

It's used in the book of Acts. Several different ways. It's used at times to describe. The grip of disease. He's hard pressed. Like a. Like a disease. That's squeezing you.
It's used also to describe. Crowds that are pressing in. If you've ever been in a place. It's just super crowded. And everyone just pressing. All in around you. You feel hard pressed.
In the crowds. That word is used that way. It's also used to describe. An opposing army. That's advancing towards you. That verb is used all those different ways.
Paul says. Which should I choose? Is it better to be alive for fruitful labor? Or to be with the Lord forever? Then he says. I feel hard pressed. I feel squeezed in.
[28:40] It's not because the two options are two bad options. These are two glorious options. He just understands the glory and the beauty both ways. On the one hand.

He feels the tension of. The joy of being in heaven. Remember as Paul writes this. He was in jail. He was shipwrecked.
He's now under house arrest. The last four years. All he's known has been this turmoil. And this trial. And Paul says. If I am to be set free.
From all these pains and burdens of the earth. I'm going to be at home with the Lord. But if I remain. I'm going to strengthen you. And pray for you. And together do fruitful labor with you. He knows either way is a blessing.
[29:42] Because he loves his people. And he loves his Savior. He loves his people. And he loves his Savior. I want us to grow to the place.

Where we don't live with fear. Not afraid of tomorrow. Not afraid of death. We trust the Lord will take care of us.
We trust the Lord will see us through. And we really do believe. That the greatest joy of the believer. Is to be absent from the body.
And to be present with Christ. I pray that for me. I pray that for you. I feel that as a pastor.
I feel that as a husband. My wife and I have been married nearly 30 years. And I pray the Lord gives us.
[30:47] 30 more. I would take that in a heartbeat. But I'm not going to live in fear of the future.

And I want every day with Marcy I can get. I want every year he'll allow us to be married. It's the absolute joy of my life.
To be her husband. But one of these days death will part us. And the one that's going to be with the Lord.
Is receiving the greatest gain imaginable. But I want to enjoy every day we have until then. And if my wife is sick one day.
I'm going to pray the same way for her. You would pray for your spouse. I'm going to pray for her body to be strengthened. Because I want her to be around. I want to have time with her. I want to enjoy every day with her. But one of these days.
[31:59] If the Lord calls her home. I'll grieve like crazy. And I'll rejoice at the same time. It's just that tension as a believer.

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That embraces every day really is a gift. And heaven really is gain. Paul believes that.
And that belief shapes how he sees his trials. And that belief shapes how he feels with disappointment. The things of the world can hurt.
But they're not going to hurt that long and that deep. Because we've got greater truths that we're consumed with. Every day is a gift. And heaven is gain. If you believe that.
You're free to really. Really. Live. Scared people don't live well.
[33:01] Courageous people do. And courage comes from knowing this truth. Every day is a gift. And for the believer to die is gain.

And we hold those two truths at the same time. And enjoy the beauty and the glory of both of them. And don't think that your life has to be a long life.
For it to be a fruitful life. I praise the Lord for every believer that he gives 80 or 90 or 100 years. What a wonderful thing.
Some of my greatest joys as a church member and pastor here. Is to have friends in this church that are in their 80s or 90s. I treasure those relationships.
But your life doesn't have to be long to be fruitful. William Tyndale. Humanly speaking. The reason you have an English Bible.
[34:05] Died at 42. Jim Elliot. Who taught us that he is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep. To gain that which he cannot lose.

Died in ministry at the age of 29. Charles Spurgeon. Known as the Prince of Preachers. Died at 57. Oswald Chambers.
Whose influence millions through my utmost for his highest. Died at 43. Robert Murray McShane. Died at the age of 29.
You don't have to have a long life. To have a fruitful life. But you do have to live according to truth. Every day is a gift.
And heaven. Is gain. Christians have a purpose on this earth. And we should live according to it.
[35:17] Lord we thank you today for the truths of your word. And pray that you would even today. Even this moment. Use them to help us. And to strengthen us. Lord I pray that you would.

Even today. Convict us. Where we're not living fruitfully. That we would repent. And turn from that. Lord I pray that any parts of our lives.
Where we have been seeking. Praise of men. Rather than simply living for your honor. That you would reveal that to us. In any way we've been living with fear.
Anxious thoughts. May we repent of that. And trust you. And live with courage. Knowing that if you give us one more day.
That's a gift. And if you call us home to glory. That's our gain. Lord. And we can say these things. Because of the gospel. Because we know that we were sinners.
[36:16] Deserving of judgment and hell. Yet you sent your only son. The Lord Jesus Christ. Who lived a perfect sinless life. And lived a life we could not live.

And died a death we did deserve. And in his sacrifice. And in his sacrifice. Those who would believe in him. And have faith in him. Would not perish. But have everlasting life.
And because of his death. And his bodily resurrection. From the grave. He has demonstrated. That our debt has been paid in full. And as he declared on the cross.
It is finished. And he said. And he said. I pray. Even this morning. For someone who may not know Christ as Savior. That even today. They would repent. Of their sin.
And call upon the Lord Jesus. And be saved. Even this day. You are good. And you do good. For your people.
[37:11] May we live in fruitful labor. Until the day you call us home. And then we'll enjoy our reward in heaven. For the rest of eternity. In Christ's name. Amen.

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