Unexpected Gain

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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. Many times I have sat at the bedside of a believer, brother or sister in Christ from our church who has been in their final moments of life.

Many times I have been there and watched them as they took their final shallow breaths, sometimes so far apart that you thought they'd already taken their last breath.
And then been there when they have gone from this life to be with the Lord. It's an experience that unless you've been there is really hard to describe. If you've experienced it with your loved one or with your friend, you know that you will never forget it.
It is both a painful experience that is always accompanied by a silent sadness, and yet at the same time there is a beauty in it.
Though it is heartbreaking to say goodbye to someone you love, there is a joyful delight in watching someone in their final moments, knowing that as a Christian they are about to be with the Lord.
[1:29] They are about to have their faith turned to sight, and they are about to enter their eternal reward. That truth is the background of where we are this morning as we return to our study through Philippians, as we look at chapter 1, verses 19 to 21 that we've already read, where he says, for to me to live is Christ and to die is gain.

So we look at verses 19 to 21. I want you to make note of three things. First, make note of the, as we read this text, in Paul's words, we see confidence in deliverance.
Confidence in deliverance. And just put beside that, that this is our help. We have confidence in deliverance, and that truth is our help.
He says, yes, and I will rejoice, for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, this will turn out for my deliverance.
Where does the confidence come from? As you struggle, as you hurt, in the text where we were two Sundays ago, the preceding verses, Paul says that there are even those who are falsely accusing him, trying to attack him, trying to add even more pain to his imprisonment by saying things that are not true, and yet his conclusion is, I will rejoice.
[3:06] And he rejoices because he's confident in the deliverance he will receive. And that confidence comes through two things he mentions. First, the prayers of the church.

And second, the help of the Spirit. I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, this will turn out for my deliverance.
It's the prayers of the people, and it's the help of the Holy Spirit. Your prayers put strength into the spiritual muscles of others.
Church, never underestimate the value and the benefit and the blessing of truly, fervently interceding and praying for each other.
It is through your prayers, he says, that I have confidence. 2 Corinthians 1.11, You also must help us by prayer.
[4:08] When you truly pray for each other, you provide confidence and strength in the heart and the life of those that you lift up in prayer.

It's not just the prayers of the saints that gives him confidence, it's also the help of the Spirit. He says, this will turn out for my deliverance. Now, some take this to be Paul saying that he is confident that he is going to be set free, that he's going to be able to get out of house arrest.
That doesn't seem to fit the language that he uses here. There's a different word he could have used that would denote just physical rescue, if that's what he was wanting to convey.
That's not the word he uses here. I think what he's saying to us is that because of your prayers, you've strengthened me, and because of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, I'm confident in the end of all

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things, this is going to turn out for my deliverance.
This is going to turn out for my salvation. The Spirit is the help. The Spirit is the supply that we need. I think Paul is saying, I'm confident that whatever happens to me physically, in the end of all things, I have no doubt that this is going to turn out for my deliverance, for my salvation.
[5:32] I'm going to be with you. This is our help. The prayers of the body of Christ, the help of the Spirit, that reminds us that whatever we face on this earth, in the end, for the believer, the one who is in Christ, we will be with the Lord.

I know for some of you right now, you're going through your own significant trial, and the details of that trial may look different than others, but the reality of trial is everywhere.
And the truth is, we don't know how long that trial is going to last, and we don't know how hard it's going to get. What we do know is the prayers of the body of Christ give us strength as we go through it, and what we do know is that for those who trust in the Lord, in the end, we will be delivered.
No matter what this life brings for you, as a Christian, in the end, we will be delivered. That is our help. That we have confidence in what is coming.
Make note of a second thing we see in this short passage. That is, there is courage in all circumstances. There is courage in all circumstances, and put beside that, this is our hope.
[6:57] Our help comes from the prayers of the saints. Our hope is that we can be courageous in all things. Notice what he says. He says there are a couple of things here that give him courage.

One, is that he will not be ashamed in the end, and two, Christ will be honored. Let's look at both of those together. He says, it's my eager expectation, and my hope, that I will not be at all ashamed.
That phrase there, eager expectation. It's a rare term in the New Testament. It's used only here. One of the places in the New Testament, Romans 8, we find that same expression.
It's a compound word, and you put the two compound words together. The first part of it means the head, and the second part of it means to watch. He says, it's my eager expectation, head and watch.
His expectation, he says, is that with my head, essentially, I'm watching. In other words, he's looking. He's taking it all in. He's watching what is happening around him, and as he watches, and sees, and observes his circumstances, it is with joy, and anticipation, not fear, that he goes through this trial.
[8:42] Whatever his situation, whatever his condition, he will act in courage, not fear. It is my eager expectation, and hope, he says.

This isn't because he's ignorant of his circumstances. This isn't because he is pretending everything is going to be great. He says, I'm watching.
I'm observing. I'm awake. I'm aware. I'm going through this. Here he is under house arrest. He wants to be out preaching. He wants to be out ministering.
The Lord has him under house arrest. He doesn't know if he's going to be freed, or if he's going to be freed when he's going to be freed. He knows that outside, there are those who are falsely accusing him, and saying things about him.
He can't really do anything about it, because he is the one that is shackled. And yet, as he takes all of that in, he has courage in all circumstances, because he knows in the end, he will not be ashamed.
[9:53] He will not be ashamed. Shame is a funny thing. Shame has fallen on hard times in our culture.

You know, there are some things that people ought to be ashamed of. It's a shameful thing to dishonor the Lord.
It's a shameful thing to act in a way that is evil or wicked. It's a shameful thing to be a liar or a thief. It's a shameful thing to live a dishonest life. And yet, our culture just seems to parade their shame.
But in the end, in the end, when they stand before the Lord, those who do not know Christ, who have flaunted their wickedness and disobedience, in the end, they will be brought to utter shame.
There's also this concept, you see this in the Old Testament repeatedly, where it speaks of what it means to be ashamed, that those who have trusted in idols, that they will be brought to shame.
[11:08] In other words, that which they have trusted in will not be able to deliver them. And a biblical theology of shame includes not only that we ought to have repentance from our sin, it also includes the confidence that the believer should have that in the end of all things, we who have

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trusted in the Lord will not be brought to shame.

We will not be disappointed. We will not be let down. That those who trust in Christ are trusting in the only one who will deliver them in that final judgment.
And this is where his courage comes from. This is where his hope comes from. He says, I have an eager expectation, and I have a hope that when all things are said and done, when all accounts are settled, he says, I will not be put to shame.
In context, he says, look, the people on the outside, they can accuse me of what they will. It's not true. It's not fair. They're trying to add to his pain, he says, in the verses we looked at two weeks ago, verse 17, thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment.
They're trying to use his imprisonment against him. Here's what he says, in the end of all things, when the truth is made known, when all the records are made clear, he says, I will not be put to shame.
[12:32] And ultimately, ultimately that's true because those who trust in Christ will have had their sins completely wiped out by his work on the cross, and we will be delivered by the good grace of our Lord as he welcomes us home.

His courage is that not only will he not be ashamed, but also that Christ will be honored. Look at that again in verse 20, but that with full courage, now as always, Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death.
He says, whatever happens to me, Christ is going to be honored. Christ may be honored as I live for Jesus.
Christ may be honored as I die for Jesus, but whatever comes my way, Christ will be honored. It was 1555 in Oxford, England.
You're likely familiar at least with some of the details of this historical account when Hugh Latimer was led to the stake to be executed. The man known as Master Ridley was with him.
[13:56] He was referred to as Master Ridley because of his degrees he had earned in education. They had come to prominence as spokesmen for the Reformation, England, under Henry VIII.

They had helped to carry the gospel of salvation throughout the town, but then the lady named Bloody Mary has come to the throne and godly men everywhere were being executed.
And like one who had run a good race and one who had kept the faith, Latimer went to the fires calmly. At the last, he called out, be of good comfort Master Ridley and play the man.
We shall this day light such a candle by God's grace in England as I trust shall never be put out.
Whether by life or death, Christ will be honored in the body of the believer.
Marsh and I have stood at that very spot. a couple of years ago I was preaching in London and surrounding areas. We stood at the very spot where that event took place.
[15:17] You can't help but wonder, would I have that courage? Would I have that confidence if that were me?

Let me remind you friends that God gives us the grace we need in the moment we need it. And for true believers, you need not wonder or worry if the Lord would see you through in the end.
You may not think you have the strength today for that but you don't need the strength today for that. His mercies that are new every morning meet your every need.
He says whether by life or by death I'm going to honor Christ. There's confidence in His deliverance that's our help.
There's courage in all circumstances that is our hope. It takes even a step further. He's content in life and death.
[16:24] He's content in life and death and put beside that because He knows His home. He knows His home. These are familiar words to us.

Verse 21 for to me to live is Christ and to die is gain. He knows where His home is. He knows that as Christians in this life we're just aliens passing through.
It's a joyful life. It's an abundant life. The Lord is good to us. The Lord gives us mercy and grace to enjoy the days He gives to us. We also recognize this place is not our home.
Hebrews 13 says, speaking of life on this earth here, we have no lasting city, but we seek the city which is to come. This is temporary. temporary. Our bodies are temporary.
We're going to receive glorified bodies. The pain and the trials of this world are temporary. They're light and momentary compared to the glory that will be revealed.

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[17:31] Even creation itself, Romans 8 says, is groaning in anticipation of what will come as there will be new heavens and a new earth. When you're confident in the Lord, He gives you courage in all circumstances, and when you have that, you can be content in life and death.

How does our contentment in Christ get expressed? One is through daily devotion. For to me, to live is Christ.
this is our daily devotion as believers. What does it mean to say that to live is Christ? It means that every day you're given, you tell others about Christ.
You strive to live like Christ. You pursue to know more of Christ. You forsake anything that rivals Christ. Colossians 3 4 says, Christ, who is your life.
It means that you understand that everything about your life ought to be seen through the lens of what Christ has done for you. You're not your own.
[18:47] You've been bought with the price. When you look at the richness of what is being said here, it just makes all of the shallow, trivial, silly things that so many Christians or professed Christians and churches spend their time on.

Look, I don't need to be told how great I am. I know otherwise. What I need to be reminded of is that in Christ, I've been given something so perfect and so lasting that whatever man may do to me, they can't take anything that matters.
To live is Christ. To live, to really live is to understand that every day you awake with breath and beating of your heart that it's a day to make much of Jesus.
You don't have to be heroic, just be faithful. Tell your children about the Lord. Pray for your grandchildren.
Read your Bible. Serve your neighbor. Use your gifts in the church to make much of Jesus. Pray for those who are hurting.
[20:18] Pray for missionaries around the world. The world doesn't need a bunch of heroes. The world just needs faithful brothers and sisters who understand that to live is Christ.

Every day you're given is a day to make much of Christ. This day you've been given. You're not promised tomorrow but you're here today.
You've been given today so to live today is to make much of Christ. Honor Christ today in your life, in your words, in your thought, in the way you treat people, in the way you deal with joy, in the way you deal with disappointment.
Today is a day to make much of Christ. In your daily devotion, make much of Christ. And there's a second way though that we show our contentment, not just through our daily devotion, but there's a second half of verse 21, where he says to die is gain.
This is by recognizing heaven as our desire destination. To live is Christ. Lord, if you give me breath tomorrow, it's a day I want to live for Christ.
[21:38] It's a day that I can honor you, that I can worship you, that I can commune with you, that I can use your gifts to serve your people, to bring you glory.

If you give me life tomorrow, it's a day to live for Christ. And if you don't give me life tomorrow, and I don't wake up, if I close my eyes, and I never wake up again, then I will believe and confess in my heart even today, of that coming day, that to die is gain.
That's so counterintuitive. that there's something even better than living. The psalmist said, because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you.
There's something even better than life. I mean, if you're not a believer, life, this life, it's all you've got in the way that you see things.
Here's the sad reality. If you reject the gospel, this life isn't all you have. There's an eternity of judgment that awaits. But in the perspective of the one who doesn't believe in the things of God, in their mind, this life is all they have.
[23:03] And so, to lose this life would be to lose everything. Scripture says for the believer, this life is a gift, and we'll enjoy it, and we'll make much of Christ, but to die is gain.

Victory. It's our profit. Things get better for the believer when this life comes to an end. I love the words one pastor said of this verse.
He said, death is a threat to the degree that it frustrates our goals, our greatest goals. Death is fearful to the degree that it threatens to rob you of what you value most.
But if your greatest delight is Christ and your greatest joy is the Lord, there is nothing this world can take from you that matters.

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to live as Christ, to die is gain. I told you about two men who in history lived that out.
[24:18] Let me tell you of another. 1536, William Tyndale stood trial. October 6th, 1536, a year and a half after his confinement he would be brought to his execution.

The guards bound his feet to the bottom of the cross as a chain was fastened around his neck, pulling him tightly to the beam of wood. Beneath him prearranged was combustible material, gun powder sprinkled all throughout the brush.
Tyndale looked up and recorded his final words, Lord, open the king of England's eyes. The noose was tightened and he was strangled.
Yet, even after his death, his executioners were not satisfied, so they grabbed a torch and threw it on the straw and the brush and the blazing fire caused the gunpowder to explode, blowing up his dead body.
every English translation of the Bible we have today has its origin in the work of William Tyndale. But for William Tyndale to live was Christ, and he used his life to serve the body of Christ, but to die was gain.
[25:52] Why is death our gain? I can't improve on what's already been written many years ago.

Came across these again recently. Let me just share these three truths with you of why death is gain. Number one, because we lose everything we don't need. Death is gain because we lose everything we don't need.
We lose the world, we lose the flesh, we lose our trials, we lose our troubles, we lose our tears, we lose our fears, we lose our weaknesses, we lose everything that we won't need.
Death is gain secondly because we keep everything that matters. Our identity, our love for the Lord, our love for other believers, the knowledge of who God is.
Death is gain because we lose what we don't need, we keep what matters and third, death is gain because we gain what we never had before, heaven.
[27:03] In the presence of saints who have gone before us, the angels, in the very presence of God himself.

2 Corinthians 5.8 says we are of good courage because we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. Death is gain because we lose what we don't need, we keep what matters and we gain that which we never had before.
I want our church to be filled with saints who really believe Philippians 1.21 I want our church to be filled with people who say you know what to live as Christ I'm going to make much of Christ that our lives don't revolve around silly things our lives don't revolve around earthly things our lives don't revolve around selfish things but that we really would make much of Jesus every day that he gives us to live as Christ to live as Christ to be able to say that and mean that means that we've got to recognize the idols that exist in our life and our culture has got many idols to live as Christ is to say every day the Lord gives me I want to make much of Jesus and nothing will have the place in my heart that only Christ should occupy and I want our church to be filled with people who really believe but to die is gain which brings the question should believers weep or rejoice when a Christian dies well of course we do both of course we do because it hurts to lose a friend or a parent or a child it hurts of course we weep when a Christian dies we miss them we feel that in our church there are people that have gone to be with the Lord and we miss them greatly here we miss their teaching we miss their service we miss their friendship we miss their steady example it hurts to lose of course we weep but we don't weep without hope we do rejoice we weep and we rejoice we weep because it hurts to lose a loved one we rejoice because we know that to die is gain it's just impossible for me to do a funeral for someone who has lost their husband or wife and not grieve with them and yet there is something beautiful about someone who has been faithful until death parts them to live is
Christ to die is gain I want to give you one last example from history Christopher Love was beheaded in 1651 for his alleged conspiracy against Oliver Cromwell Love's last letter to his wife included exhortations for her to be a godly mother and even to rejoice with him in his death asking that it would be an event that would bring glory to Christ in fact he dates his final letter to his wife the day of my glorification he used the scaffold the place of his execution as his final pulpit his last words heard on this earth were blessed to be God for
[31:28] Jesus Christ when he was near his execution he was seconds away from being with the Lord but it was going to mean leaving behind his wife she was pregnant with their sixth child it would be the fourth child to live then what would her response be we think often of the one who is

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dying but what about the one who is losing at least in earthly!

sense his last letter to his wife dated the day of my glorification her last letter to him knowing his execution was coming was June 14 1651 allow me to read this letter it's a little lengthy but listen carefully if you would she says before I write a word further I beseech thee think not that it is thy wife but a friend now that writes to thee I hope thou hast freely given up thy wife and children to God who has said in Jeremiah 49 11 leave the fatherless children I will preserve them alive and let thy widow trust in me thy maker will be my husband and a father to thy children oh that the Lord would keep thee from having one troubled thought for thy relations I desire freely to give thee up into the father's hands and not only look upon it as a crown of glory for thee to die for Christ but as an honor to me that I should have a husband to leave for Christ I dare not speak to thee nor have a thought within my own heart of my unspeakable loss but wholly keep my eye fixed upon thy inexpressible and inconceivable!
gain thou leavest but a sinful mortal wife to be everlastingly married to the Lord of glory thou leavest but children brothers and sisters to go to the Lord Jesus thy eldest brother thou leavest friends on earth to go to the enjoyment of saints and angels and the spirits of just men made perfect in glory thou dost but leave earth for heaven and changest a prison for a palace and if natural affection should begin to arise I hope that spirit of grace that is within thee will quell them knowing that all things here below are but dung and dross in comparison of those things that are above I know thou keepest thine eye fixed on the hope of glory which makes thy feet trample on the loss of earth my dear
I know God hath not only prepared glory for thee and thee for it but I am persuaded that he will sweeten the way for thee to come to the enjoyment of it when thou are putting on morning oh think I am now putting on my wedding garments to go be everlastingly married to my redeemer when the messenger of death comes to thee let him not seem dreadful to thee but look on him as a messenger that brings the tidings of eternal life when thou goest up the scaffold think as you have said to me that it is but thy fiery chariot to carry thee up to the father's house and when thou layest down thy precious head to receive thy father's stroke remember what you have said to me though my head is severed from my body yet in a moment my soul will be united to thy head the [35:45] Lord Jesus in heaven and though it may seem something bitter that by the hands of men we are parted a little sooner than otherwise we might have been yet let us consider that it is the decree and will of our father and it will not be long ere we shall enjoy one another in heaven again let us comfort one another with these sayings be comforted my dear heart it is but a little stroke and thou shalt be there where the weary shall be at rest and where the wicked shall cease from troubling remember that thou mayest eat thy dinner with bitter herbs yet thou shalt have a sweet supper with Christ that night my dear by what I write unto thee I do not hereby undertake to teach thee for these comforts I have received from the Lord by thee

I will write no more nor trouble thee any further but I will commit thee into the arms of God with whom ere long thee and I shall be farewell my dear I shall never see thy face more until we both behold the face of the Lord Jesus on that great day to live as Christ and to die is gain every day you are given is a day to rejoice but Christian as Jesus has said be glad for your reward is in heaven Lord we thank you today for the words of scripture that remind us of these truths that are not only so deep and theological but so practical and helpful and we remind ourselves this morning that the hope that we have of heaven is only ours because of the work of your son who on the cross laid down his life that we could take up our lives and live with the confidence that we will be with you the courage that there is nothing this world can do to us and the contentment that whether we live or we die we belong to you in Christ's name amen let me encourage you on behalf of
First Baptist Church of Mustang we want to thank you for joining us this morning for our live stream broadcast we are so thankful for the gift of technology and that we are able to reach so many people not only across the state and in our nation but around the world and what a truly indescribable gift that is I do want to encourage you if at all possible if you are able to be here in person there is no substitute for gathering with the people of God in person so we encourage you to be here in person at any one of our services but once again if we can help you in any way please feel free to contact us and we would love to serve you and will have in yourimes in your room in your room and your house is about your house and your house and your house in your house and your house is just what it is with your house and your house and your family have your home have them or have had full happened

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