Decisions, Decisions

Philippians 1:19-26

Introduction:

I. Should I Magnify Myself or God? – 1:19-20

A. Paul’s Confidence – 1:19a

“For I know (οἶδα) that ﻿﻿this will turn out for my deliverance”

1. The Source of His knowledge

There are three basic words for knowledge,

to know by experience- not in this passage.

οἶδα – to know from some source – v. 19 and 25.

νωρίζω – to make known – v. 22

How do I know that touching the hot barbeque will hurt?

1. I touched it once – experience- 
2. My mother told me so. οἶδα

If I tell my little brother that the barbeque will burn,

3. That is making it known – Γνωρίζω

This source is either: Paul’s expression of hope, or a revelation from God. Probably both.

2. The Basis of His Knowledge – 1:19b

a. Prayer of the saints through your prayer God works through the prayers of His people.

b. The supply of the Holy Spirit and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

The word supply has the idea of support, like a ligament gives support for the body (Eph. 4:16 – the body, the church)

3. The Content of His Knowledge –

“this will turn out for my deliverance”

“deliverance” is σωτηρίαν translated “salvation” in many places.

It may refer to:

* Justification: Past tense (Acts 16:31)
* Sanctification: Present tense (Phil 2.12)
* Glorification: Future tense (Rom. 13:11)
* Healing: (Mark 5:34) - Saved from her sickness
* Circumstances: (Matt 8:25) Salvation from a storm on the sea of Galilee.

This “salvation” was probably from his circumstance (prison) and is properly translated “deliverance.”

B. Paul’s Conclusion – 1:20

1. I will not be Marginalized

“according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed,”

This seems to point to his upcoming trial before Caesar and his subsequent ministry. He did not want to take the easy way of compromise to avoid death or punishment.

1. Christ will be Magnified

“Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life ﻿﻿or by death.”

Paul has made up his mind – Christ shall be magnified.

There are two facets of this magnification: To make Him larger and bring Him closer like a telescope. He also, like a microscope, wanted to enlarge their vision of Christ so that people can study Him in detail.

If Caesar turned thumbs down, so be it. If not, so be it, as long as Christ is magnified.

II. Should I Live or Die? – 1:21-23

A. His Preference – 1:21

1. About this life – 1:21a

“For to me, to live *is* Christ,”

Paul’s wanted to live as Jesus lived. Every word was the Father’s word; every action was the father’s action. Paul wanted his life to be that kind of picture of Christ.

2. About that Life – 1:21b

“and to die *is* gain”

Paul had been there before, (2 Corinthians 12) Paul “was caught up into ﻿﻿Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.” He wasn’t allowed to talk about it, but he had a vivid picture in his mind. No doubt, to die is gain.

Hadn’t he done enough? Hadn’t he suffered enough? No doubt Paul was ready to go! Can we say this along with Paul? We cannot say, “to die is gain” unless we can say, “for me to live is Christ”

B. His Preparedness – 1:22-23

1. The Fruit-Bearing Live Down Here – 1:22

“But if *I* live on in the flesh,” this *will mean* fruit from *my* labor;

“live on in the flesh” - Paul was not concerned about living. Nero could kill his body, but he had no power over life itself.

Paul had plenty of reward earned, but he could still earn more – more crowns to lay at the Savior’s feet. yet what I shall choose I ﻿﻿do not make known.

This word, γνωρίζω, is the third of the three words above. It occurs 24 other times in the N.T. and is translated, “Declare” or “make known” every time. Yet not one translation out of the 25 I examined translated it “make known” here. Nor could I find a commentator who did.

The lexicon were on my side, but not the commentators. Then I found out that I overlooked on commentary from the Greek text. It was by M.R Vincent. He translated it: “I do not declare my choice.”I felt vindicated. Thank you Dr. Vincent. There is no reason to believe that Paul did not have a choice. He just was not going to tell them.

2. The Far Better Life up There – 1:23

“For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a ﻿﻿desire to depart and be with Christ, *which is* ﻿﻿far better.”

Paul is “hard-pressed” between the two alternatives. We might express it as “between a rock and a hard place”

The word, “desire” is translated “lust” in 33 other places in the N.T. Paul had a “lust” to go to heaven. “desire” does not do the word justice.

The word “depart” is to be “loosed away upward” It is like a balloon tethered and straining to get away. That seems to be Paul’s choice. But he is not ready to make it known. There is no right or wrong. And the choice does not belong to Paul.

III. Should I Serve Myself or Others? – 1:24-26

A. Paul’s Assessment – 1:24

“Nevertheless to remain in the flesh *is* more needful for you.”

Looking at the facts, Paul is saying that the best alternative is to stay in this life and keep on serving the Lord.

That does not mean that that is his personal choice apart from anything outside of himself. He is saying that, considering their need, he knows that he will stay and help them.

And remember that he is in constant prayer fellowship with the Lord and that is shaping his thinking. He wanted to go, but he was willing to stay.

B. His Assurance – 1:25-26

1. Looking at the Realities – 1:25a

“And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all.”

Paul was confident in spite of the fact that he was about to face one of the world’s most feared rulers even to the present time. He had an uncertain temper, vile lusts, and uncontrollable passions. He thought he was god. He is the one who fiddled while Rome burned. He then blamed it on the Christians.

But he was judge in a human court. Paul was in under the authority of a higher court - the real Supreme Court.

Paul said, “I Know” (οἶδα) that is knowledge from a source above himself. He was not depending on his own experience.

2. Looking at the Reasons – 1:25b-26

a. To increase your joy of faith – 1:25b

“for your progress and joy of faith”

The Philippians were one of the better churches in Paul’s ministry, but like every church, they needed grow more and more in their faith.

b. To visit with you again – 1:26

“that ﻿﻿your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again”

Paul longed to see them in order to continue his ministry in the Word to them.

He would rejoice in the opportunity to minister to them and they would rejoice in seeing and hearing him again.

Yes, Paul, like his Master had chosen to “minister rather than to be ministered to” (Mark 10:45).

Conclusion: