



ADVANCING
THE
GOSPEL

Philippians 1:18-30

Introduction

- We advance the Gospel by living for Christ in all that we do.
- Paul uses his own life as an example. Jesus is the all-consuming and singular focus of Paul's life. He is even willing to die to be with Him.
- He encourages the Philippians to stand firm in unity in their mission, to live lives worthy of the Gospel, and to see their suffering as an opportunity to advance the Gospel.

Introduction

- The word “rejoice” is used twice in a literary device the Greeks often used called a “tail-head construction.”
- The two “rejoices” are back-to-back, or more accurately tail-to-head, connecting two different reasons Paul is rejoicing. This created a smooth transition from one idea to another.
- Last week’s section and this week’s section are linked. In last week’s section, Paul talked about God’s using his suffering for the advancement of the Gospel. Today we look how their suffering can advance the Gospel.

Paul's Road to Rome



Ancient Tarsus



San Paolo alle Tre Fontane

Mamertine Prison



Roman Coliseum



Philippians 1:18-21

To Live is Christ

- When we get to verse 21, we read the bold statement by Paul; “For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain” (Philippians 1:21).
- Paul leads the Philippians to this statement through all that he has been saying about how God is using his suffering.
- In verses 18-19, Paul says he will rejoice because he is confident that through their prayers and the Holy Spirit, this will all turn out for his deliverance.
- He could be talking about his release from prison, but more likely is talking about death as deliverance.

To Live is Christ

- In life or in death, Paul will glorify Christ.
- Whether he is released from prison to do more ministry or whether he dies as a martyr, Christ will be proclaimed.
- Paul says he will “not be at all ashamed” (verse 20).
- The repeats what he wrote in Romans 1:16 - “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”

To Live is Christ

- Why is Paul not ashamed?
- Because he has confidence in the saving power of the Gospel. Because Paul has confidence and does not fear death.
- Matthew 10:28, 32-33 - “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell... So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.”

To Live is Christ

- Paul's boldness comes from his perspective.
- They can't hurt him; they can't threaten him because he doesn't fear death.
- Life after death will be his reward for finishing the race well (1 Corinthians 9:24; 2 Timothy 4:7-8). Being with Jesus is his heart's greatest desire.
- Paul can confidently say that death is gain for him. Because for him, his life is all about Christ.
- Dying and going to be with Him would be even better.

To Live is Christ

- Have you ever heard people say, “Music is life” or “Traveling is life”?
- They mean that it’s not just the best thing in their life. It’s what their life is all about. It’s what the rest of their life revolves around.
- Music brings them life. It makes them feel alive.
- People who love music have so much their lives revolving around it.
- When they’re hurting, they go to music for comfort. When they’re happy, they play fun music. For that person, music is life.

To Live is Christ

- This is how Jesus was for Paul. Jesus not only brings us life – eternal life in heaven and abundant life on earth, He is life.
- For Paul, Jesus was what his life was all about. What the rest of his life revolved around.
- Too many of us compartmentalize Jesus. He's just one part of our lives, maybe even the most important part of our lives.
- Paul reminds us that Jesus is life.

To Live is Christ

- If Jesus is life, not just part of our lives, we have a totally different perspective.
- It's not just about putting our faith first; it's about fitting everything else into our faith.
- Consider your work. It's not just, "I need to make sure I don't work on Sundays because I need to make it to church."
- It's "How can I glorify God with my work each and every day of the week?"

Philippians 1:22-26

To Be With Christ

- The same phrase “to live” is used in verses 21 and 22. These two sections are linked.
- In this section he connects with the previous section: for Paul, to live is Christ and to die is gain.
- Paul will either die for Christ or live for Christ.
- To die would actually be preferable, because he would be with Jesus.
- But, if God wants him to continue to live, he will live for Christ.

To Be With Christ

- But Paul knows that even though he desires to be with Christ, God still has work for him to do on earth.
- For Paul, both options are about Jesus. Going to heaven is about being with Jesus and staying here is about working for Jesus.
- Paul says that he needs to stay here for the sake of the Philippian believers – “to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account” (verse 24).
- He is convinced, for now, that God wants him to stay with them, for their “progress and joy in the faith.”

Philippians 1:27-30

Stand Firm

- The word used here for “let your manner of life” is uncommon for the New Testament (verse 27). It means “live as a citizen” and is actually connected to the word from which we get our word “politics.”
- Philippi was an official Roman city. Its citizens had full Roman citizenship and legal benefits, which would have been a source of great pride and superiority in their culture.
- Paul intentionally uses this word to subtly challenge their thinking. A more literal translation would be “live as a citizen worthy of the Gospel.”

Stand Firm

- Paul describes how to live as a citizen worthy of the Gospel:
 - Standing firm (verse 27)
 - In one spirit, with one mind (verse 27)
 - Striving side-by-side for the faith of the Gospel (verse 27)
 - Not frightened in anything by your opponents (verse 28)

Stand Firm

- Paul again emphasizes their mission, what they are to strive for: the Gospel.
- By standing firm in unity.
- No matter what happened, no matter what their opponents did to them, even unto death.
- Striving side-by-side.
- The imagery is of a team working together to accomplishing a goal.

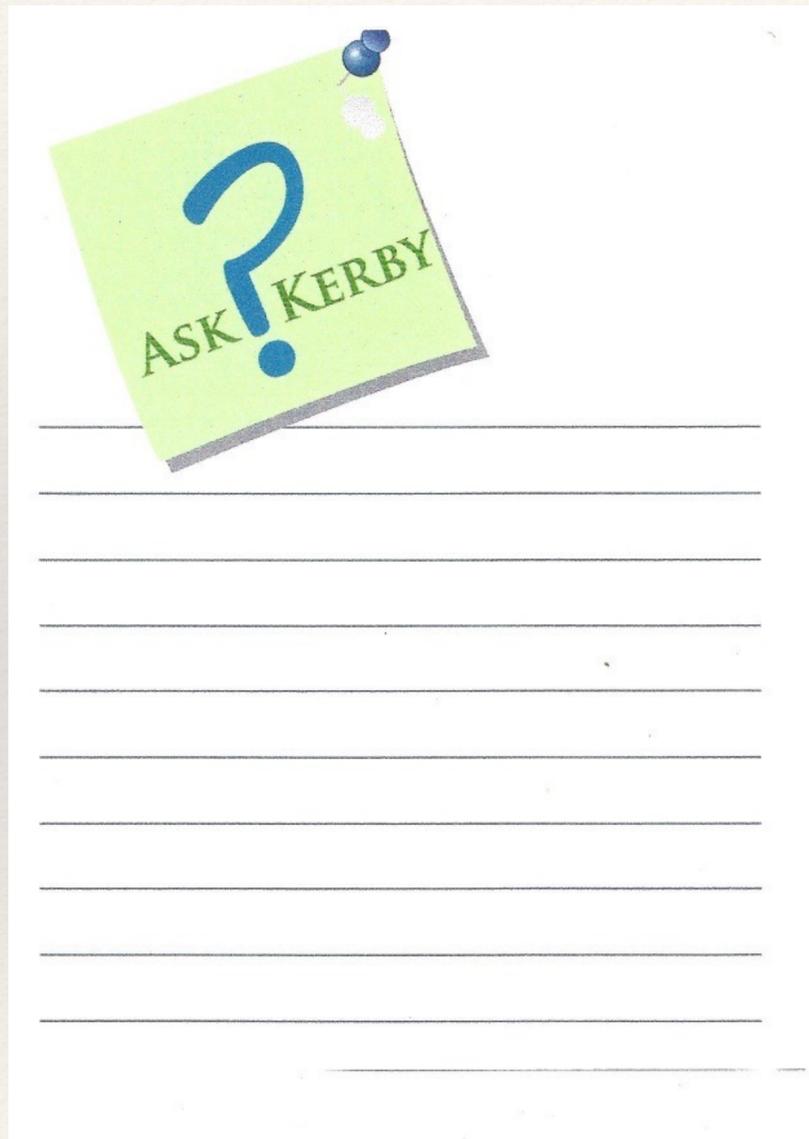
Stand Firm

- All of this leads Paul to his final point of connection.
- This is what he has been building up to this whole chapter.
- It has been granted to the Philippians to suffer for the Gospel just as Paul had (verses 29-30).
- Granted to them, as if it were a gift, a blessing, an honor.
- The word for “granted” in this verse is another form of the word for “grace” or “favor.” It means “to show favor, to give freely.”

Stand Firm

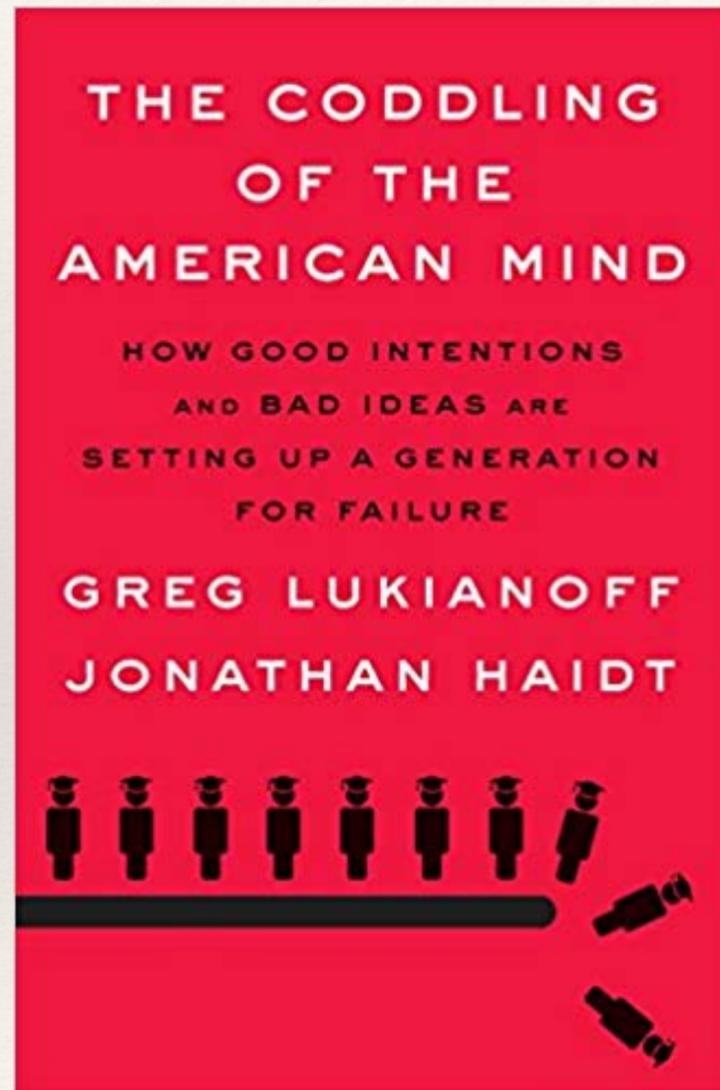
- Paul didn't just resign himself to suffering; he rejoiced in his sufferings.
- He saw privileges in suffering for Christ's kingdom the way the Philippians saw privileges in their Roman citizenship.
- He told the Philippians that suffering for Christ was the way to advance the Gospel (verse 12), the way for Christ to be exalted (verse 20), and the way to experience God's grace (verse 29).

Ask Kerby



Why the conflict on
campus and in society?

Coddling of the American Mind



- Something has been going wrong on many college campuses in the last few years.
- Speakers are shouted down, while rates of anxiety, depression, and suicide are rising.
- First Amendment expert Greg Lukianoff and social psychologist Jonathan Haidt have some possible explanations they first published in *The Atlantic* and now expand in this book.

First Untruth

- The untruth of fragility: What doesn't kill you makes you weaker.
- Nietzsche said, "What doesn't kill me makes me stronger."
- Of course, Kelly Clarkson also sang that, but millennials don't believe it.
- Antifragility - is different from fragile and resilient. An antifragile system requires stressors and challenges. Otherwise they become rigid, weak, and inefficient.
- The rise of safetyism - students can feel unsafe if you use the wrong pronoun.

First Untruth

- Safe spaces - this developed from “concept creep” where safety also included not having to face contrary ideas.
- Trigger warnings - these are issued in order to allow students to avoid anything that might be a trauma to them. They are counter-therapeutic.
- The iGen generation (internet Generation) suffers from far higher rates of anxiety and depression than the Millennial Generation.
- Jean Twenge says they believe “one should be safe not just from car accidents and sexual assaults but from people who disagree with you.”

Second Untruth

- The untruth of emotional reasoning: Always trust your feelings.
- Cognitive behavioral therapy - patients tended to get caught in a feedback loop in which irrational negative beliefs causes powerful negative feelings.
- Triad - “I’m no good,” “My world is bleak,” and “My future is hopeless.”
- Microaggressions - brief and common daily verbal indignities, whether intentional or unintentional.
- The slights are defined entirely in terms of the listener’s interpretation.

Third Untruth

- The untruth of us versus them: Life is a battle between good people and evil people.
- We may excuse the actions by someone in our tribe, but vilify actions by someone else in a different tribe.
- Two kinds of identity politics - common-humanity identity politics (Martin Luther King, Jr.) versus common-enemy identity politics.
- Identifying a common enemy is an effective way to enlarge and motivate your tribe.

Resources

