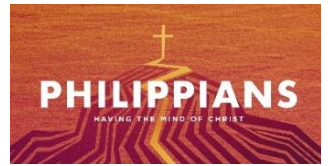


Title: Philippians Part 4: Empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Speaker: Neil Chotai

Passage: Philippians 1.19-26

Big idea: There are 3 empowerments that the Holy Spirit gives us to live out our journey.



This week we are continuing our message series on the book of Philippians - having the mind of Christ.

Paul is writing a letter to the Church of Philippi. He is writing this letter to encourage them as they face persecution from the society around them. And as they experience the daily stresses of life, something we all face as well.

Paul is full of unspeakable joy and with this joy he writes a letter of encouragement. But Paul himself deserves to be receiving encouragement instead.

Here is why, Paul is in prison. All the while he is writing this letter, he is in prison as punishment for sharing the gospel. However, Paul does not stop sharing the gospel, and continues to preach to the Roman guards. I can only imagine what the soldiers are probably saying, "here he goes again with this Jesus guy". Paul should really be distraught, but he is not.

Paul is full of joy because he has received from God grace and peace through his relationship with Jesus Christ. Because of this joy, Paul has created an atmosphere of intrigue towards the gospel message. This atmosphere is from being empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Today we will be talking about the Holy Spirit. Who he is, what he does, and his role in our life.

The Holy Spirit is the third member of the Trinity, however, even though his title is third, he is equal to the other members of the Trinity. They are three distinct persons, but one God.

There are distinct functions each of the members have within the godhead. The Holy Spirit's function is omnipresence - he is everywhere. When you look at the Old Testament in book of Genesis, you see that the Spirit was there at the creation and has eternally existed with the godhead. The Holy Spirit interacts with a person to make the decision to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. As soon as a person accepts Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, immediately the Holy Spirit, God Himself, indwells the individual forever. You are sealed with the Spirit; you are sealed with God forever.

If the position of the Holy Spirit had a job description, it would be, hold the spotlight on Jesus. So, in our lives we are to be filled with the Holy Spirit so that we can live the life that the Father wants. With Jesus as our model, Jesus gave all to the glory to the Father. We can do this through the relationship that we are called to have with the Trinity. The Holy Spirit is to be active in our lives.

We should be open to what the Spirit of God wants us to do - it is very important because the Holy Spirit guides us in this life and points us to Jesus.

So, the title of my message is...



19 for I know that through your prayers and God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. 20 I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. 21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. 22 If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me.

Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! 23 I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; 24 but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. 25 Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, 26 so that through my being with you again your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me.

Now I need to bring in a part of verse 18 into this passage of scripture for this morning. Because in the rendering of the NIV, the NASB and ESV other versions of the Bible, verse 19 is part of the sentence of verse 18. So, I do want to also include now a part of verse 18 which goes like this.

Philippians 1:19-26

He prefaces verse 19 with part of verse 18, "Yes, and I will continue to rejoice". This is important for us to grasp because joy comes from God alone. We must be people empowered by, or filled with the Holy Spirit, so that we can live a life full of joy. Just like the Philippian church and just like Paul, to live out our journey joyfully pursuing Christ.

But how are we, those in the 21st century, to be empowered by the Spirit? The big idea for today is:



The first empowerment by the Holy Spirit is with Strength.

Phil 1:19

for I know that through your prayers and God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance

This strength comes from the prayers of the church and through the help given by the Spirit. There is a relationship between the prayers of the church and the help given by the Spirit. It is the Spirit that encourages the church to pray for Paul, in turn strengthening him. So, in other words our strength is totally dependent upon the Holy Spirit. The word provision in the Greek means to assist, or to support. This is a reference to Ephesians 4:16 talking about ligaments which act to support the body.

This help comes during his imprisonment for sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This strength allows him to look forward, confidently, to his deliverance.



The use of the word deliverance in this text points to Job 13:16. In early Greek translations of the Old Testament, the wording of Job 13:16 is identical to what Paul writes. So, there is no doubt that he is quoting from the Old Testament. He is confident that whether he is acquitted or not, his stand for Christ will be vindicated. This was the expectation of Job, who was also on trial. It needs to be shown to everyone that he is in the right. For Job, it was a desire to prove his integrity. For Paul it is a desire to affirm his Apostolic standing against anyone who may question this title because of his imprisonment.

So, he calls both divine and human help to answer his critics. The help he knows that he can count on is the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to give him Strength.

Jesus promised this strength, to the disciples in the Gospels. [Matthew 10:20](#), [Mark 13:11](#), [Luke 12:11-12](#).

We can count on the Holy Spirit when we need strength for our deliverance. The Holy Spirit is there and infuses us consistently and constantly with what we need to make it through difficulty and trials. In our lives when we are in situations, you need to remember it is not our strength that is making us go forward, but it is the strength that comes from Holy Spirit. This is true for our daily lives in the things that we go through, but also when it comes to our witness in the world. The Holy Spirit empowers us with strength to testify of the grace and mercy of God through Jesus.

The second empowerment by the Holy Spirit is with Courage.

[Philippians 1:20](#)

["I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed but will have sufficient courage"](#)

Paul goes on to say that he will not be ashamed of the gospel, especially when he is called to stand before the judges. He will have sufficient courage through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to face these accusers. The words ["eagerly expect"](#) refer to the anticipation of the future. Like stretching or moving the neck to see what lies ahead. His desire is to see Christ exalted through this entire ordeal.



No matter what happens, Christ will be the centre and will be praised for all things. May Christ be exalted in what we face.

Philippians 1:20

“sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death”

When Paul wrote the words “in my body” it confirmed the view that the apostle had destiny in mind. And that destiny is in life or death. If Paul is released Christ will be magnified by his ministry. If the verdict goes against Paul, Christ will still be glorified in Paul’s death. In both life and death, Paul is an example of the power of the gospel.

Paul then writes a very impactful verse.

Philippians 1:21

“For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain”.

Paul emphatically declares this, stressing that his faith cannot be shaken no matter what happens. It doesn't matter what the courts say, it doesn't matter what people say, his faith is unshaken in Christ Jesus.

In the original Greek there is no verb “is” within this verse. So, this is what Paul is saying; to live, Christ, to die, gain. Living is for Christ to become the reason for action. The goal of Paul’s life in ministry is to live out Christ to others. Dying after such a life would be gain, as Paul would meet Jesus and hear the words ‘well done good and faithful servant’. To die at the hands of Rome was to be a witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The next few verses reveal this tug of war going on with him.

Philippians 1:22

“If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know!”

If Paul survives the trial and does not get executed, he says “this will be fruitful labor for me”. He will have the opportunity to share more about Jesus in other parts of the known world and be involved in the creation of more communities of Christ followers. How wonderful it is that the gospel will expand more and more around the world and Paul, led by the Holy Spirit, would take part in this mission. This is a wonderful thing that Paul longs to be part of.

But at the same time, he says “what shall I choose?” Well, obviously, in this he does not have a choice of what the outcome will be, because Christ is sovereign over all of this. But he does have his heart is split in two:

Philippians 1:23

“I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far;”

“I’m torn between the two”. If he is executed, he will immediately be with Christ forever (1 [Thessalonians 4:17](#), 1 [Thessalonians 5:10](#)). This is far better. How wonderful would it be in the presence of God? It eclipses life here on earth 100%.

In both situations, whether he lives or dies, the result is Christ’s exaltation. Christ is exalted if Paul lives to share the Gospel message. Christ is also exalted through his martyrdom. He will go down in history as a person who died for the Gospel of Jesus Christ, because it was worth it.

Paul is so committed to the will of God that both death and life hold certain attractions. If it was up to him to decide he would not know what to do.

We are called to have courage, to exalt God in everything that happens in our lives. No matter what situation we are in, we must be individuals that always give God the praise. Whether it is in the worst moments of our lives or the best moments of our lives. We have the courage to exalt God in all situations and be an example to the world around us.

People need to see God working in you in good times and in bad times, especially in the bad. If we only exalt God when things are good, what kind of people are we? God is good every single time and we are to exalt him even when it is hard, we do this by the Spirit who gives us strength and courage.

The third empowerment by the Holy Spirit is with Service.

Philippians 1:24

“but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.”

After having this tug of war situation in his mind, body and spirit, Paul comes to the determination that it is more necessary that he remains in the body. That is even if he had a choice, which he really doesn't. It would be better for the church to be there for the believers and to be there for those in the faith.



Paul has a personal desire to be with Christ in Glory, but that must take second place to his responsibility to the Church. It is more in harmony with the master plan for the church as he takes into consideration what Christ has done on the cross for the benefit of the church. It's almost as if he is having a [2 Corinthians 11:28](#) moment to examine himself before the Lord - a reflecting moment. For these words that he has just said, it is important for him to serve in the faith.

Philippians 1:25

“Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith”

Paul has an optimism, and he is expected to be released. His confidence that he will continue with the church of Philippi. Let's look at this word “continue” because in the original language it is not just continue. There is also an emphasis on the word “remain”, as he stays with his fellow Christians at Philippi. He is looking forward to resuming the ministry of the church and looking forward to progress in the believer's spiritual life. This progress will come as a deepening of joy and a strengthening of faith in Jesus Christ. The believer should never be stationary or static but must be characterized by a growing understanding of spiritual truth. This will lead to an increase in joy, as they enter more fully into the understanding of Christ and give themselves of to be empowered by the Spirit of God.

Philippians 1:26

“so that through my being with you again your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me.”

The word joy according to Paul was their ground for boasting or glorifying. The emphasis is not on the action, but on the basis for it. The church would experience a progression in joy because Paul's service in the faith. This reason for glorifying Christ Jesus is because of what God had done in Paul. Paul's service in the faith among the church would enable the Philippians to see more clearly the incredible riches of their salvation in Christ and him alone.

We must choose to serve the Faith, being the Church, in the way God has called. We all have differing gifts that we can use to serve God in his church. For he is the head of the church, the giver of gifts, and the one that loves to see us use those gifts. Service is something that do because we want to, not because we are forced to. We do it out of our love for God.

Being empowered by the Spirit means that we have the Spirit of God within us. The only way the Spirit of God can be in us is if we have a relationship with God.

So, Father God sends his only begotten son, Jesus Christ, to earth. Jesus is born of a virgin, he was without sin, and ministered on earth for three years. In that ministry he spoke about God and the relationship that humanity can have with God. Jesus died on the cross, the wrath of God is taken up on him, and he pays the penalty of sin instead of us. Jesus then rises from the dead, he ascends to heaven, and the Holy Spirit comes and resides with every believer. So, when you become a Christian the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, God himself, lives within you. We are sealed with God, and we receive the assurance of eternal life by the Holy Spirit.

Now we who are Christians have that assurance that the Holy Spirit is with us, and that we will spend eternity with God.

Philippians 1:21

21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

Are you ready to die? That might be a crazy question. But for the Christ follower “to die is gain” should be as strong of a statement as “to live is Christ”.

Over the past number of months, I have done a lot of funerals here. The amazing thing is that those who have passed away were individuals who were assured of their faith in Jesus Christ. For them this verse Philippians 1:26 was so true example of assurance of eternal life.

Some of them as I talked personally or as family members said, they were content and had this trust in Christ knowing that when they breathed their last breath on earth it was ok, because in the next moment they would be with Christ - “to die is gain”. It was so encouraging to see and hear Christians how they lived their life for Christ - to live is Christ and the assurance they had in Christ, - to die is gain.

Do you have that assurance of eternal life today?

The greatest journey that has ever existed is the relationship with Jesus Christ and he wants to be with you.

When I was in high school, I had two friends who always talked about Jesus. For two years they tried to share Jesus Christ with me and my response ‘here they go again’. But, once as they were talking to me, I had this feeling, that I just can’t explain, a tugging at my heart. That was the Holy Spirit calling me into relationship with God.

I don't know what your life has been in the past. I do not know where you are spiritually right now. But if you are not in Christ follower then you do not have assurance of eternal life with God. Instead, you have the assurance of eternal separation from God. I’m here to tell you that God loves you, that God cares about you, and that he wants a relationship with you. So much so, that he did all the work to make it possible to have relationship.

Do you want assurance of eternal life?

The only way you can do that is by making Jesus the most important in your life.