

New Hebron Missionary Baptist Church

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Pastor Rodney E. Smith, Sr. Bible Study

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."
(Ps. 119:105)

Study of Philippians, "The Epistle of Joy" [pt.6]

{Philippians 1:21-26}

- **v.21)** For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.
- **v.22)** But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labor: yet what I shall choose I wot not.
- **v.23)** For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:
- v.24) Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.
- **v.25)** And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith;
- v.26) That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again.

v.21)

- "For..." Paul explains why he is content to magnify the Lord by either his death or his life.
- "me..." he also personalizes his commitment to God by saying that he can't speak for others, only for himself.
- "to live is Christ..." this phrase means that he wanted to live in union with Christ and that he had no thought of life apart from Christ. [Jn. 6:67-69]
- "to die is gain..." Paul knew that death is not a defeat to the Christian but it is merely a graduation to glory! [2 Cor. 5:1; 1 Thess. 4:13-18]

v.22)

- But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose. [NASB]
- Paul knew that the only reason to remain in this world was to bring souls to Christ and build up believers to do the same.

• "fruitful labor..." – although his life was on the line he was still thinking about working for the Lord. He was not lazy or apathetic about the work of the ministry and we shouldn't be either. [Rom. 12:11; Mk. 16:1-3]

v.23,24)

- Paul expresses that he is hard-pressed or hemmed in on both sides with two good options. If he is executed he will "be with Christ" [2 Cor. 5:8], but if he lives he still has work to do with the Philippians.
- "needful for you..." this is not a phrase of arrogance or pride, but it's a way of expressing that he'll continue to minister and serve them.
- It must be noted that Paul has gone to great lengths to make sure he did not appear to be filled with pride. [2 Cor. 12:2-4; 1 Cor. 15:9; 1 Tim. 1:15]

v.25)

• "having this confidence..." – being persuaded or having a settled confidence. It must be noted that Paul does not speak of having inside information from Rome or special revelation from heaven. But that he believed his ministry was vital to the growth of the Philippians and he believed God would spare him.

v.26)

• If he was spared, his deliverance would be traced to Christ, and they would rejoice together in one who had so mercifully delivered him.

Notes:		