**The Effects of Paul’s Imprisonment (Part 2)**

(Philippians 2:21-24)

Paul’s firm conviction that **“to die is gain”** is the fifth factor. He shows indifference to death and makes clear that dying at the hands of Rome was no tragedy in his eyes. Such a death would be an added witness to the truth of the gospel and would serve as the portal to Christ’s presence.[[1]](#footnote-1)

So now deal with me as you will;

command my spirit to be taken from me,

so that I may be released from the face of the earth and become dust.

For it is better for me to die than to live,

because I have had to listen to undeserved insults,

And great is the sorrow within me.

Command, O Lord, that I be released from this distress.

Release me to go to the eternal home,

and do not, O Lord, turn your face away from me.

For it is better for me to die

than to see so much distress in my life

and to listen to insults. **Tobit (3:6 NRS[[2]](#footnote-2)V), who became blind and impoverished while in exile in Nineveh after courageously burying an executed fellow Jew, laments to God**:

1. Paul compares the options of **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** and **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** in a kind of **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**.
2. **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is** an act of speaking one’s thoughts aloud when alone or regardless of hearers, especially by a character in a play.
3. His broken, irregular syntax in these verses suggests instead a current **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** as he contemplates the prospects of his future.
4. A part of him desires **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** as a gain, but his duties as Christ’s apostle **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** him to realize that his continued life offers the opportunity to be more fruitful in his mission work. Martin, 76–77, elucidates Paul’s train of thought in these verses by showing that he counterpoises the alternatives, life versus death:
5. The statement “**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**” is not some pious cliché. Since Paul always carries in his body “**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**” and is always being “given over to death for Jesus’ sake” (2 Co 4:10 -11),
6. **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** entails continuing to participate in Christ’s sufferings (Php 3:10; Col 1:24).
7. It means **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** God, **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** himself, and **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** his life for others as Christ obeyed, **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** himself, and gave his life for others.
8. Paul does not have a “**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**” and does not regard earthly life to be insignificant in comparison to the heavenly realm.
9. **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** on earth presents the opportunity for “**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**.” His dilemma is created by the extraordinary value he places on his service to Christ and the church (Lincoln, 103–4).
10. **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** in the flesh (“living in the body”), with all of its weaknesses and temptations, is not a **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** condition for Paul but presents a **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** opportunity for him to labor fruitfully in the cause of Christ (Ro 1:13).
11. Paul is hard-pressed between the two alternatives of **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** and **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**. He clearly prefers death, but he will choose life because of his love for them.[[3]](#footnote-3)
12. Only one thing may be said from Paul’s discussions about the believer’s death that is without debate: we shall “**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**” (cf. 2 Co 5:8; 1 Th 4:17; 5:10). Paul’s, discussion of his imprisonment makes clear that what is most important is not his own **will** and **desire** but the “**progress**” of the gospel (cf. 1:12). An increase in their love for one another (1:9; 2:2) will provide evidence of their progress in the faith (Fee, 153). Love begins when one makes someone else’s needs more important than one’s own.

1. David E. Garland, [“Philippians,”](https://ref.ly/logosres/ebcrev12?ref=Bible.Php1.18b-20&off=6725&ctx=h+remains+weak.%0a(5)+~Paul%E2%80%99s+firm+convicti) in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Ephesians–Philemon (Revised Edition)*, ed. Tremper Longman III, vol. 12 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 203. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. NRSV New Revised Standard Version [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. David E. Garland, [“Philippians,”](https://ref.ly/logosres/ebcrev12?ref=Bible.Php1.22&off=2457&ctx=commitment+to+them.+~He+is+hard-pressed+b) in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Ephesians–Philemon (Revised Edition)*, ed. Tremper Longman III, vol. 12 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 205. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)