

TUESDAY Jan 13**Being Confident**

- Ever stood between/2 good choices/not knowing which better?
 - Where Paul found himself / as he wrote from Roman prison
Philippians 1:23–24 “For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you.”
 - Uncertain if he would live / die = opened his heart to Philippian believers = sharing his / dilemma of faith
 - **“I am hard pressed between the two.”**
 - One hand = longed to continue his work
 - Strengthening the churches = winning souls
 - On other = felt weary from hardship / longed for the day
 - he could rest = be w/ Christ
 - Paul’s words **“to depart and be with Christ”** = misunderstood
 - Many assume he meant = moment he died = he’d go to heaven
 - Inconsistent w/rest of his writings / Bible’s teaching on death
 - Let’s see = if we can understand / more completely
 - Bible is clear = death is not an immediate entrance into heaven
 - Rather = peaceful /unconscious sleep = until resurrection.
- Ecclesiastes 9:5** “The living know that they will die,
 but the dead know nothing.”

John 11:11 “Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up” **vs. 13** Jesus spoke of his death [death of Lazarus]

- When Jesus arrived at Bethany = Lazarus / been dead four days
- If true souls go to heaven at death = After four days in glory would Lazarus desire to return to this sinful / suffering world?
- Jesus described death = as sleep/ precisely what it is
 - Unconscious rest /until day of awakening/ His 2nd coming

- Paul understood truth = what happens at death = completely
1 Thessalonians 4:16–17 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout... and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them... and thus we shall always be with the Lord.
- At His glorious return= believers resurrected = truly w/ Christ

1 Corinthians 15:51–54 ⁵¹Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— ⁵²... in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet....trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. **And when this happens,** ...then shall be brought to pass: “Death is swallowed up in victory.”

- When Paul said he desired **“to depart and be with Christ,”**
 - Wasn’t describing an immediate journey to heaven
 - Just expressing longing for day when = after death’s sleep
 - he would open his eyes = see his Savior face to face

2 Timothy 1:12 I know whom I have believed /am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.

- For faithful = death / resurrection = separated by
 - what feels like only = blink / breath
- Next conscious thought /after death = sound of last trumpet
 - voice of Life-giver = calling His children from their graves

John 5:28–29 the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice ²⁹and come forth—those who have done good, to **resurrection of life**, and those who have done evil, to **resurrection of condemnation**.

- Paul understood = if he slept / few days / thousand years
 - when his eyes next opened = be in presence of his Savior

- No idea of disembodied soul / floating to heaven
- Promise of bodily resurrection / literal return / real reunion
- Trumpet/sound= graves/open= redeemed rise/meet Lord in air
- Moment every believer can claim= w/confidence

Philippians 1:21 Paul wrote earlier/same chapter, **“For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”** Profound statement!

- Whether he lived / died = Paul’s life / wholly centered on Jesus
- If he lived = continue to preach Christ / strengthen believers
- If he died = his death /still bear witness to Christ’s power/truth
- His courage in facing death = testify to world that his faith= real
- That’s why Paul could = call death “gain”
 - Not because he expected = instant glory
 - But because dying for Christ = would magnify Christ
 - Paul’s life = sermon / his death would be, too
- Paul / torn between two powerful desires
 - to rest from his labor = Sleeping till first resurrection

Philippians 3:10–11 ¹⁰that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, ¹¹if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

- or to stay = continue serving / church
- Knew what lay ahead for him = prison / suffering / persecution / eventually, martyrdom
- Yet knew his continued presence = encourage young believers
- **“Nevertheless /to remain in flesh /more needful for you.”**
- Even when facing death = Paul’s first thought was for others
- His great love for Philippians & for all the churches
 - Mirrored selfless love / of Christ Himself

- We have = Hope of resurrection = hope of soon return of Jesus
- Death is not / end = it's **rest stop** before eternal morning
- Until that day / our call is clear = to live for Christ
- Whether young / old = strong / weak
 - Every day = gift to use for His glory

FINAL THOUGHT:

- We can live w/ same confidence Paul had: **“For me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”**
- Live for Him = Trust in His promises = Rest in His victory
- One day soon = when trumpet sounds / graves are opened
- We'll rise to meet our Lord = be w/ Christ forever