

# Sermon Discussion Questions: The Foundation of Christian Hedonism

## Philippians 1:18b–26

The following outline and discussion questions have been prepared to accompany the sermon on February 4, “Gospel Hope: The Foundation of Christian Hedonism” (Phil 1:18b–26). The questions can be used for discussion in small groups or for personal reflection.

### Passage Outline:

- I. The Situation: Unstoppable Advance of the Gospel (1:12–17)
- II. The Response: Unbridled Celebration (1:18)
  - A. Present Celebration of the Gospel’s Advance (1:18a)
  - B. Anticipation of Future Celebration (1:18b–26)
    - 1. His Steadfast Hope of Future Deliverance (1:19–24)
      - a) The Means (1:19)
      - b) The Manner (1:20)
      - c) The Reason (1:21)
    - 2. His Internal Conflict Over Future Deliverance (1:22–24)
- III. The Conclusion: A Humble Embrace of Future Ministry (1:25–26)

**Main Point** (1:12–18) When Christians are consumed with a passion to glorify God at all times and in all ways, they are able to find gospel-hope, joy, and satisfaction in every circumstance.

### Sermon Outline:

- I. A Steadfast Confidence (1:18b–20)
  - A. Rejoicing for two different reasons (1:18)
  - B. What kind of deliverance? (1:29–20)
  - C. The content of his confidence
- II. A Single Passion: Jesus is everything (1:21)
- III. A Question: Do you really want to live a life that matters?

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## Discussion Questions:

- In verse 18, Paul says, “What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice. Yes, I will rejoice.”
  - What is Paul celebrating in the first rejoicing?
  - What is Paul celebrating in the second rejoicing?
- What kind of “deliverance” is Paul anticipating (1:19)?
- Pastor Mark gave four reasons that Paul was not thinking first-and-foremost about deliverance from prison. Do you remember what they are?
  - How do the two OT texts that pastor Mark cited help substantiate this understanding?
    - Job 12:15–16
    - Isaiah 28:16 (Cf. Rom 9:33; 10:11)
- *What does Paul anchor his hope in that he will be delivered and not be ashamed (i.e., counted unworthy) on the last day?* [Hint: 1:19a]
  - *How does this further inform our understanding of Paul’s prayer in Phil 1:9–11?*
- How can Paul say that death is more desirable than life; yet, not be contemplating suicide (1:21)?

## Application Questions:

- *I think that almost every Christian wishes they could truly say, “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (1:21); but, they don’t know where to start.*
  - *What would your life look like if you were wholly captured by this singular vision of life right now? (Same job, same life and health circumstances, same education)*
  - *What would it sound like when you talk?*
  - *Look up these passages and integrate them into your discussion of the two questions above.*
    - 1 Corinthians 13:1–7
    - Galatians 5:22–26
    - Phil 2:1–4
    - 1 Timothy 3:1–7
  - *What makes this so hard for you? What gets in your way?*
  - *If Paul believed that his ultimate success was dependent upon biblical community and their prayers for him, what should this tell us about our dire need for prayer AND the need to pray for our brothers and sisters at Olympic?<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> See “Ordinary Means of Grace” in, *The Westminster Larger Catechism*, § 154ff.

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- *What do you think our church would look like if we were consistently praying Christ-exalting, God-centered, “Christian-hedonistic”<sup>2</sup> prayers like Phil 1:9–11 and Eph 1:16–20 for ourselves and the entire congregation?*

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<sup>2</sup> Christian Hedonism: “God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him.”