



Your Death - Your Life

This week's text – 2 Corinthians 2:12-17

The gospel parades the victory of Christ; therefore, we should thank God for it, choose life in it and live to spread it.

Sermon ideas

Thank God For It & Choose Life In It

Additional Text: Acts 20:24 & 1 Corinthians 15:54-57

Paul's entire life was devoted to being on God's mission, because he believed the gospel was the hope of the world. Jesus had radically changed his worldview and his reason for existing. As a result, Paul was compelled to tell the world about the grace of God and to complete the mission God had given him as the apostle to the gentiles.

In this text, Paul reminds the Corinthians of Christ's victory on their behalf. Comparing the triumphal victory over sin and death to a Roman war victory, was something that would have profoundly hit home to them. As Roman citizens, they would have witnessed and perhaps even participated in victory marches through the streets, cheering on the victor in his full splendour, while jeering at the captors, as they were taunted and mocked in their chains. This picture would have reminded the Corinthians that Jesus was the mighty conqueror, while death, sin, Satan and his demons were the captors in chains. They had so much to be thankful for.

When we really grasp, at a heart level, what Jesus has saved us from, we cannot help but be thankful. It also reminds us that although the mission of God is often difficult, and filled with trouble and obstacles, Jesus was, is and always will be victorious, and his mission will advance.

The mission is not left for us to accomplish alone, Jesus is leading it, and his power and presence is with us every step of the way, through the Spirit. Many of us miss out on experiencing the power and presence of God in tangible ways, because we are so focused on our own plans, which we try to accomplish in our own strength. But when we choose to focus our lives on the mission of God, we have no choice but to fully depend on him, and it is then that we experience him working powerfully through us.

Paul knew that God's mission was critical, and that people all over the world were dying every day without hearing the good news that Christ has won the victory over death. The mission is still critical today. Because of our sin and rebellion against God, death awaits us all. We will all face physical death, but after that we will face God's judgement, and then without God's intervention, we will face a far worse spiritual death. (Hebrews 9:27)

But God does not want us to die spiritually separated from him, having to face the penalty for our sin, which is why he conquered sin and death through the life, work, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. His victory has given us a choice to make: life or death. We choose life by believing in his name, repenting of sin, and surrendering our lives to him as king. We then get to experience new life in him by the Spirit, and we experience true meaning in life when we join God on his mission.

Live to spread it

Paul travelled extensively and went to great trouble to make sure that the gospel was heard across most of the Roman empire. The charge was to take the gospel to the ends of the earth, and so he did his best to preach it wherever he went. He built friendships and partners in the gospel with others, breaking social norms and cultural barriers, so that together, they could reach everyone, everywhere. This is still our mission today, and like Paul, we get to unite with people of all races and backgrounds for the sake of the gospel. We get to build friendships and partnerships with people of all walks of life, so that we can advance the kingdom of God. We have no idea whose hearts God has already prepared to hear and respond to the message. But we can be sure that there are many people waiting for us to tell them the good news. If we are willing, we are likely to see God's power and presence go before us as we boldly share the gospel with the people in our everyday lives.

Discussion Questions:

1. Paul had been a profoundly religious man prior to meeting Christ. What was it about meeting Jesus that transformed his life so radically, making him so willing to endure hardship, persecution and emotional pain for the sake of the gospel?
2. What impacted you most in Paul's description of Jesus being the victor in a triumphal procession? Explain why.
3. Why do you think Paul starts out by thanking God for Christ's victory, and what are we supposed to learn from this?
4. Why is being on mission with God so difficult and yet essential for living a truly meaningful life?
5. Why does the mission of God require the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in order to succeed, and how does this compare to other areas of our lives?
6. Why is the gospel our only hope against death?
7. Why is the gospel a breaker of social norms and cultural barriers? Share how this has become a reality in your own experience.
8. Go around the group and ask each person to briefly answer the following question: What is this week's big take-away for you and how do you think God wants you to respond?