

10/01/10 (pm) - Series on Philippians - Sermon 13

A Mark of Christian Maturity

Philippians 1:20-26

Theme: The mature Christian is content to remain in this life serving Christ or to go home to Christ.

Many Christians can say Phil. 1:21
from memory...

...but many Christians do not ***mean it
from the heart.***

Why not?

Because to live is Christ plus

Because to die is perceived as loss.

This attitude results from Christian
immaturity.

It is not wrong *to be* immature, it is
only wrong *to stay* immature.

Christians are supposed to mature in
the faith, *cf.* 1 Pet. 2:2.

1:21 shows Paul's spiritual maturity.

A. To live is Christ
(1:21a, 22a, 24-26)

Jesus was at the conscious centre of every aspect of Paul's life.

Living in the body meant fruitful labour for him:

a) fruitful labour *generally* (1:22) - His apostolic labours;

b) fruitful labour *specifically* (1:24-26) - among the Philippians.

First Principle:

Spiritual maturity causes a Christian to see that life is Christ.

'I have only one passion. It is He, none but He.'

(Count Nikolas von Zinzendorf)

B. To die is Gain (1:21b, 23a-b)

Paul would:

be totally free from the power and
influence of sin;

be home with Jesus (*cf.* 2 Corinthians
5:8).

Second Principle:

2. Spiritual maturity causes the Christian to see death as gain.

A Christian will only see death as gain if, like Paul, he can truly say *For me to live is Christ.*

What to Choose? (1:22b-24)

Paul was on the horns of a dilemma.

He preferred to *depart* and be with
Christ...

...but he was convinced that remaining
was in the best interests of the
Philippians.

Third Principle:

Spiritual maturity causes a Christian to be content whether to remain in the body serving Christ or to depart to be with Christ.

Fourth Principle:

Spiritual maturity causes a Christian to put others' interests before his/her own.

The mature Christian puts Christ first,
others next, self last. *Cf.* Romans 14; 1
Cor. 8:13.

*These principles are perspectives
gained when we become increasingly
spiritually mature.*

Conclusion—On to Maturity!

Let us not be discouraged that we perhaps cannot *mean* 1:21 yet!

Let us keep serving and, as we mature, this mark of spiritual maturity will come.