

Honor your Journey

Philippians 1:19:30, 19 for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, **20** as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. **21** For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. **22** If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. **23** I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. **24** But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. **25** Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, **26** so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again. **27** Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, **28** and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. **29** For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, **30** engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

- **Polycarp (69 AD-155 AD)**, a disciple of John, who served as the bishop of Smyrna, is known for his steadfast faith, famously declaring, "**Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He has done me no wrong; how, then, can I blaspheme my King and my Savior?**" Moments after making this statement, he died a triumphant death where fire refused to burn him, and he would only succumb to the piercing spear of the Roman proconsul. And even as the blood flowed from his lifeless body, it is said that the stream extinguished the very fire meant to consume him. Like his apostolic predecessors, he honored his journey until the very end.
- There is a persistent theme throughout all scripture from the prophets of the Old Testament to the apostles of the new, we certainly see it in the life of our Lord and Savior, and if we be honest, we've seen it in the lives of our four parents grandparents and those that we have admired in the faith down through the years and that is the fact that no matter what they



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have had to go through a similar testimony rises "**I wouldn't take nothing from my journey now I've come too far to turn around.**"

- This is the very sentiment of the apostle Paul as he is writing this letter of gratitude to his beloved church at Philippi. The church at Philippi was made aware of the fact that Paul had been deathly ill and was even imprisoned for preaching the gospel. The Church took it upon themselves to raise a special offering for Paul to assist him on his journey and sent it to him by the hands of one of their elders, Epaphroditus. Upon receiving the gift, Paul was so encouraged that he penned what we now know as the book of Philippians.
- As we approach our text, we see Paul sharing very vulnerably with the Church. His struggle between wanting to live and continue the work of Christ or go home to be with Christ himself, and in the midst of this tension, we hear Paul say, "**To live is Christ, and to die is gain.**"
- And although Paul was being very transparent in this moment, he still concluded that he must continue for the sake of their progress and joy in faith, which leads us to the primary point of this message.
- **You must honor your journey to have joy along the way and to create a clear path for those who will follow you.**
- **Now the only question begs: how do I honor my journey amidst all of its abs and flows?**
 - **Pray along the way.**
 - **Watch what you say.**
 - **Know that everything you suffer and struggle with creates an opportunity for those who come after you not to have to struggle and suffer in the same way.**
 - **It is an honor to struggle, suffer, and even die for the sake of Christ.**