

# A Life Worth Living and a Death Worth Dying, Part 2

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[ 0 : 00 ] Philippians chapter 1 verse 18 through 26.

! 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.

For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me, yet which I shall choose I cannot tell.

I am hard-pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better, but to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your accounts.

Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith, so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus because of my coming to you again.

[ 1 : 24 ] May God add a blessing to the reading of his word. Would you please be seated? In the Gospel of Luke, chapter 18 and verses 18 through 30, Jesus meets a man whom the Bible calls a rich ruler.

And from Matthew and Mark, we also understand that this man not only is a rich ruler, but he is also young.

He's a rich, young ruler. And so you'd think, especially in our times, in our culture, and even back then, what more could a person want?

What more could a person want in life? He had wealth. He had power and influence. And he had vitality.

He seemed to have all the things that people covet and desire. He had fame.

[ 2 : 31 ] He had fortune. And he had the physical fitness, it would seem, to enjoy these things for quite a long time. Most people would think that such a man would be satisfied with their life, would be satisfied with their station in life, right?

What more could anybody possibly want than what this man had? Wealth, power, prestige, and health.

Most people would think, again, that a person like this would be satisfied. I got to thinking of Mark Zuckerberg, or Zuckerberg, that's how you say his name.

He's the CEO, founder of Facebook, and he's 33 years old. And he has amassed a fortune of \$33.3 billion.

And I think most people, when they think of Mark Zuckerberg, they wonder, why in the world does this guy still wake up and go to work every Monday? But he does.

[ 3 : 43 ] Why is that? How could somebody who seems to have so much still seem to be lacking satisfaction? Why isn't he satisfied with his health and his wealth and his power?

What could he still be chasing after? How much more does he need in order to feel like he's satisfied, like he has it all?

If life was only about these things, then certainly someone like Mark Zuckerberg and others should be satisfied. Perhaps someone like him is facing the same dilemma as the rich young ruler was.

Again, this man had everything, but still felt like something was lacking. He could tell that something was missing from his life.

And so he sought out Jesus with a question. He wanted to know what he must do to inherit eternal life. Now, probably, and this is reading into things a little bit, he probably inherited his wealth.

[ 4 : 52 ] And so this is how this man thought the world worked, that he had this great wealth to inherit, that he must be still in need of inheriting more.

He was lacking the assurance of his salvation. He wanted to have eternal life. And based upon his worldview of how the world works, he came to Jesus wondering what he must do to inherit it, like he had inherited everything else to this point.

And again, he was willing to work for it. In fact, he suggested to Jesus that he had kept all the commandments that Jesus had mentioned to him from childhood.

This guy wanted Jesus to accept these things that he was willing to offer. But then Jesus, knowing what was in this man's heart, asked him for something else.

Jesus knew how this man filled in the blank. Remember last week we talked about how you fill in the blank. For Paul, he says, for me, living is Christ.

[ 6 : 09 ] And so he filled in the blank by saying, dying is gain. And we see here that Jesus knows how this man is filling in the blank. For this individual, living meant being rich.

And so Jesus, knowing how this man filled in the blank, asked him for that very thing that he was using to fill in that blank.

And so Jesus says to him, one thing you lack. Sell all your possessions, distribute them to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven.

And then come and follow me. Now initially, when we read that, it might seem like he was offering not a better deal than what the rich man already had.

Right? I've got to sell all my stuff. I've got to give it to the poor. And then I've got to follow you. That doesn't seem like a better deal. But on closer examination, isn't it a much better deal that Jesus is offering him?

[ 7 : 18 ] Hey, sell all that stuff that is only earthly and temporary, and I have something to give you that is forever. But this rich man couldn't accept what Jesus had to tell him.

And so then in verse 23 of Luke 18, it says that when this rich young ruler heard these things, he became very sad because he was extremely rich.

So again, here's the question. Why would Jesus do that? Right? I thought Jesus wasn't supposed to make people sad. And this person is sad at what Jesus has to tell him.

Again, Jesus wasn't in any way insinuating that this man's wealth was what was preventing him from eternal life. That's not what Jesus was telling him. That's not the point that Jesus was trying to make.

What was preventing this man from eternal life was that he made his wealth his God. And that's what Jesus sheds light on.

[ 8 : 22 ] The man claimed that he was serving God, but Jesus revealed the truth to him. That he wasn't really serving God. That God wasn't really his God, but that his wealth was his God.

And that's how he filled in the blank. For him to live was money. And it's also how he identified himself. His wealth.

His power. That's where he got his identity. And so Jesus asked for the one thing that this man felt that he couldn't live without. Why did he do that?

So that he could give him the one thing that he truly couldn't live without. And that was himself. And Jesus is trying to be merciful and he is offering grace to this man.

But he couldn't receive it. Jesus knew that this man's life would continue to lack satisfaction. And he would continue to be basing his identity on things that are false.

[ 9 : 28 ] He would continue to worship a God who was incapable of bringing him the purpose and meaning that his life lacked. And that he was so desperate for. We are people, all of us, who are created to worship.

We are worshipers. Just watch an OU football game or go to an OU football game and see that. Or like for me, a KU basketball game. And you see people worshiping.

That's who we are. We will worship. Our hearts are little idle factories.

Constantly finding things for us to direct our worship and praise at. And Jesus meets each of us like he met the rich young ruler.

And he reveals to us through his word where our true affections lie. Why? Why would Jesus ask us to give these things up for him?

[ 10 : 38 ] Well, look with me at Mark chapter 8 verses 34 through 38. You don't have to turn in your Bible. I got it on the screen for you if you want to follow along. In calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

For whoever would save his life will lose it. But whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?

For what can a man give in return for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the son of man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his father with his holy angels.

You see, our lives will be wasted when we pursue things that cannot give us the meaning and purpose that we feel the need for.

And at times, many people are desperately lacking those things. Why does Jesus want to fill in that blank with himself for us?

[ 11 : 56 ] Well, because he's the only one who can provide a life worth living that results in a death worth dying. The rich young man could lose earthly treasure, and if he did so, he would gain a treasure that was eternal.

Yes, he'd have to suffer a momentary loss, but as a result of that, Jesus is telling him, you could have, you will have, eternal, everlasting joy.

Paul had experienced this very same thing himself. There was a time in his life for him, living wasn't Christ. That's not how he filled in the blank.

Instead, he was trying to put an end to the church. For him, living meant being a religious man. It meant being a Pharisee. That's what he was living for.

But here, we'll see later on, as we get there, but we'll read today, that he has experienced just that. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, he writes, I have more, circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews, as to the law, a Pharisee, as to zeal, a persecutor of the church, as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

[ 13 : 16 ] But, whatever gain I had, all those ways I was filling in the blank, I count as loss for the sake of Christ.

Indeed, he says, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Jesus, my Lord. We are all filling in the blank somehow.

Every single last one of us. The Bible declares to us that Jesus is better and that living for him and putting him in that blank will result in us living a life worth living and experiencing a death that is worth dying.

So, let's review for a moment before we continue on. We've been talking about what it means to live the good life. And we've been doing that for several weeks now as we've gone through the book of Philippians.

What that means and how that is experienced is what we've been going over. And we saw initially that living the good life means living for Christ instead of living for yourself.

[ 14 : 31 ] We saw after that that living the good life is experienced by living in community with other believers. This is the life that is meant to be lived with others who are believers within community.

Then again, living the good life means that we are focused on the gospel. Living the good life means that you care more about Christ's glory than your own.

And then last week we saw what results from living this life. Living this way produces joy. And it produces confidence within us even in the midst of uncertain times.

Even when we are experiencing things in life that we would think would rob us of our joy and rob us of our confidence. Because we are in Christ, living for Christ, when we face those moments, we find ourselves joyful and confident as a result of living our lives this way.

We saw that living for Christ is the only life that is actually worth living. And now we will see that living this way results in a death that is worth dying.

[ 15 : 36 ] For again, review. The good life is experienced by living for Christ. The good life very clearly, very simply is experienced by living for Christ.

And as a result of that, Paul shows us that the good life is experienced by dying in Christ. The good life is experienced by dying in Christ.

Now, I don't know about you, but I'm sure that you would probably agree with me that you don't want to waste your life. That you don't want to waste your time here. I want to spend my days living for something that will matter not just for today, but will matter a billion years from now.

And if you're a follower of Christ, I'm sure that you would say the same. And so I'm telling you, and Scripture is telling you, that if you fill in the blank with Christ, if you agree with Paul and say living is

Christ, then you will find out and you can live joyfully knowing that if that is the case for you, then when you die, it will be gain.

It will be gain. Living for Christ takes the sting out of death. And not only does it do that, but get this, as I pointed out last week, and again, this may sound weird to you, but if you're a child of God, then it won't sound all that weird.

[ 17 : 04 ] I think you'll agree with it, that not only does living for Christ take the sting out of death, it makes death attractive. Not that we're seeking to end our lives or praying for death every day, you know what I'm saying, but we don't look towards that day, towards that time, with fear and trepidation.

Because we have God's Word promising us and telling us right here, as we're seeing, that if we die in Christ, we will experience gain. Like we've never known in this life.

Like we will never know in this life. And so it makes it attractive. How can this be? Well, it begins with this. Dying in Christ begins with dying to self.

Dying in Christ begins with dying to self. Look again at verses 22 through 24 in Philippians. Paul writes, If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me, yet which I shall choose I cannot tell.

I am hard-pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. The concept of dying to self is found throughout the New Testament.

[ 18 : 23 ] It expresses the true essence of what it means to live the Christian life. It is a life that is marked, as we've seen, by taking up your cross daily and following Christ.

The Bible says that dying to self is part of what it means to be born again. The old self dies and the new self then comes to life.

Not only are Christians born again when they are saved, but they also continue dying to self as a part of the process of sanctification. We are enduring this and we are experiencing this every single day.

Last week we had the opportunity to witness a baptism. And baptism expresses the commitment of the believer to die to the old self, to those old sinful ways, as Romans chapter 6 says.

And then to be born again to a new life in Christ. And so in baptism, the action of being immersed in the water symbolizes dying and being buried with Christ.

[ 19 : 30 ] And then the action of coming out of the water pictures Christ's resurrection. And baptism identifies us with Christ in his death and also in his resurrection.

Portraying symbolically the whole life of the Christian as being what? As being a dying to self and living for Jesus Christ who died for us.

Look at a couple of verses with me in Galatians. Galatians chapter 2 verse 20. I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.

And the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. Galatians 5 verse 24. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Dying to self means that the things of the old life are put to death. Most especially the sinful ways and lifestyles that we once engaged in before we were saved.

[ 20 : 40 ] Where once we pursued our own sinful pleasures, our own sinful desires, we are now with equal passion pursuing the things that please God.

And as a result of that, in pursuing them, they bring us great joy. Here's the thing. Now you might hear that and you think, wow, that's tough.

And I don't disagree with you. But some of you might hear that and think, well, what if I don't want to do that? Well, Scripture never portrays dying to self as being an option for the followers of Jesus Christ.

It's not an option. It's a commandment. So what does this look like? You might be wondering. You know, do I have to wake up in the morning and picture myself dead in those old ways?

I mean, if that helps, go for it. But how does this look like? What does it mean to really die to self? Well, here's some practical ways that dying to self is carried out in our lives.

[ 21 : 48 ] And I want to share a quote from Kyle Eidelman who gives us a great example of what some of these practical ways of dying to ourself can be all about or are all about. What's it look like to die every day, he says?

Well, dying to yourself today may mean spending your lunch hour serving food to the homeless at the shelter down the street from your office. It may mean the next time you talk to your neighbor, instead of playing it safe and keeping comfortable, you bring Jesus into that conversation. Dying to yourself may mean changing your vacation plans. Instead of taking your kids to Disney this year, you take them to the Dominican Republic and volunteer in the feeding centers where hundreds of kids come each day for their family meal. Dying to yourself may mean walking by that empty room in your house and asking God if there is an orphan child in another country that should be sleeping in that bed. Dying to yourself may mean you selflessly love a spouse that you have cheated out of the marriage that she or he so desperately wanted.

[ 22 : 54 ] It's practical. I experienced this just the other day. And if you know me, especially if you knew me years ago like my wife did, she knows how big of an introverted person I am.

I love privacy. I don't mind quiet. With two little kids, we don't often experience quiet in our home. So I really like quiet these days. But that's just my nature.

And there would have been a time where for me to come home meant, okay, let's lock all the doors. Let's shut all the windows and we're home and nobody bother us.

But I've realized that as a pastor, that sends the wrong message to your neighborhood, especially if they know that you're a pastor. And so I know that I've got to change that about myself. And what was funny, and I'm not in no way am I praising myself.

This is all to God be the glory because this is who I was. I would see my neighbors and put your head down, go inside, shut the doors, okay. You know, I hope they're okay, but I don't really want to have any of those conversations.

[ 23 : 53 ] So yesterday or Friday, I can't remember when it was, but we've met a lot of our neighbors. And there was one we hadn't yet met yet. And so I was out raking some leaves or doing something, and Danny was checking the mail.

And our neighbor came out to check his mail. And I made eye contact with her, and she made eye contact with me, and the race was on. And I beat her to that neighbor. And we had a conversation. But that would not have happened with me before.

But that's part of what it, for me, it means to die to myself, is that I've got to put to death those ways that I sinfully want to be in order that I can be the person that Christ has now made me to be.

And it might be something different for you, but it's a very practical thing. It means living for Jesus.

Dying to self means being more like Jesus. It means thinking more like Jesus.

It means talking more like Jesus. And it means living more like Jesus. And we can do this very simply. Very easily. Paul knew and understood, and he practiced this.

[ 24 : 53 ] We saw this demonstrated, and we see it demonstrated here right before our very eyes. He loves these people. He's endured a lot of suffering for the gospel.

And as a result of that suffering, we saw that it has made him even more joyful, even more confident. But he cares so much about them. And so he has a dilemma. He's in prison, and he says, if I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me.

Yet which shall I choose? I cannot tell. I am hard-pressed between the two. You know, he's saying, I know that God is sovereign, and I know that God has a plan, and I know that in God's sovereignty and in God's plan, I could end up dying in prison.

And I'm good with that. In fact, I welcome that. In fact, that's what I'm most looking forward to. But I understand that you are a church, and you still need me. And so it's God's will that I stay so that I can continue to suffer here in my serving you.

I am willing to do that, and I gratefully and thankfully would do it. So this is his dilemma. He's torn between these two options. The Christian who dies to self shares in this dilemma, or we should share in this dilemma.

[ 26 : 04 ] Because we know that living for Christ means fruitful or should mean fruitful labor for us. But that dying, ultimately, we will experience the ultimate reward, which is to have Christ completely.

And so as I'm trying to think about, you know, how Paul is feeling in this dilemma, and I try to, you know, think about, well, how would that be for me? And so I put it this way, or I thought of it this way, maybe this will help you.

I love my wife, and I love my kids, and my children are still young. And I couldn't imagine dying and leaving them at such a young age, and my wife to have to take care of them and provide for them for so many years.

But to die is truly gain. And if that was God's calling for my life, then I know that when I got to heaven, I wouldn't be like, well, send me back, Lord.

Send me back. They need me. Because I would know that God is sovereign. And that in His plan, He would provide. But that's the dilemma. You know what I'm talking about? There might be things here on this earth that you think, there are things that I, you know, children I'm raising, or other things that I'm doing, and I'm doing it for the Lord, and I'm going to continue to do that.

[ 27 : 14 ] But we've got to understand that truly to live means to live for Christ, but to die, it truly is gain. And so that's the dilemma that Paul is thinking about here. I really know that they need me, and I want to be continuing, be able to serve them.

But I understand, Lord, that if it's Your will that I die, that that truly would be a gain. And so he's torn between the two, but here he expresses his desire in the rest of verse 23.

He said, My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. What's interesting here is that when Paul speaks of dying, the reward he anticipates gaining isn't a mansion.

It's not a crown. The reward he anticipates isn't even seeing dead relatives that he might hope to see again or be reunited with.

To him, the gain is being in close, intimate, personal relationship with Jesus Christ. You know, there's been a lot of books that have come out, especially here over the past several years, and the authors claim to have gone to heaven.

[ 28 : 25 ] And then they come back and they write all the things that they experienced. But for me, in hearing what they've written about, it doesn't seem to match what Scripture says, does it?

Because in their accounts of what heaven is like, they treat Jesus as if he's like the hostess at the restaurant. You know, hey, glad you're here. I'm going to go find a seat for you.

I want to introduce you to everybody. You know, or they treat Jesus like he's the greeter at Walmart. That he's just there as kind of like a, you know, just to be there, and he's kind of on the side. No, not in heaven.

That's not what it's like. Jesus is everything. Jesus is all. And when you see Jesus, you won't want to see anything else.

You won't be able to take your eyes off of him. You will be so amazed by what you see, that like those who have encountered visions of heaven in Scripture, Isaiah, Ezekiel, John, even Paul, that they couldn't come to grips with what they were seeing.

[ 29 : 31 ] Remember? Remember, they felt as if dead. They couldn't believe what their eyes were seeing, and they struggled to be able to convey what they saw into human language because it was so beyond this world.

That is awesome. I can't wait for that. And I hope you can't either. Yeah, there are other things, and there are other people that I would love to see in heaven.

But I can't wait to see Jesus. And when you see Jesus again, you will not want to look at anything else because nothing else can compare.

Your eyes, I think, will continually be looking to him. In the Greek, when Paul speaks of depart, this is a nautical term. And it's used to describe a ship that is drawing up anchor and is setting sail.

About a month ago now, Danny and I went on a cruise for our 10th anniversary. And when we departed from Miami, and Miami is a dirty city.

[ 30 : 39 ] If you've ever been there, it's just not kept up very well. And if you're from Miami, you know, forgive me, but it's just not a very nice place. And so we spent the night in Miami, and then we got on the ship.

And then if you've ever gone on a cruise before, you know that you all go up on the top, and you kind of watch everything fade into the distance. And it's not long before you are out in the middle of nothing but water.

And then what's amazing is that you go to sleep. And then I remember waking up the next morning and opening the blinds in our room and beholding the beauty of the Caribbean Sea.

It's like we were taken to a whole other world. And so this is what Paul's trying to tell us of what it's like to depart from this world is we're going to see something much greater than the Caribbean Sea.

We are going to see Jesus Christ. When we live with that desire to see the Lord, to be with the Lord, it will change the way that we view this world.

[ 31 : 43 ] It will change the way that we live. It will change the way that we think. Because we will know that no matter what we encounter or face in this world, no matter how great things may seem to be going, that nothing will ever compare to what we will one day see.

And so for the Christian, there is always hope in knowing that the greatest and the best is always yet to come.

It's always in the future in this life for us. It's always yet to come. So that was Paul's desire. But now he's got a decision to make in verses 24 through 26.

Again, he's trusting in God's sovereignty. He's not saying as if it's his choice. It's coming down to, and will come down to God's choice. But he's good with it. To remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account.

Again, he knows the Lord. He has been praying about this. And so he's convinced of this. And I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus because of my coming to you again.

[ 32 : 56 ] So this is what it looks like to die to self. Whose joy is Paul most concerned about here? He's concerned about their joy, not his own.

He's putting their needs before his needs. With this in mind, let me ask you now four questions. They're aimed at believers, or three questions, excuse me, and they come from verses 24 through 26 to see if you're living like this, right?

Let's examine ourselves this morning. First, are you serving others? To live for Christ, to die in Christ, means that we are serving others.

Paul says that it is necessary for the Philippians that he stay alive. So think about this. Is it necessary for you to stay at your church?

Is it necessary? If you were to die, would you be missed by your church family because of the great service that you gave that now would be missing?

[ 34 : 15 ] Paul is insinuating that if he left the church that everything would fall apart, right? He understands that the church would continue on, that Jesus is Lord over the church, but they would at this point in their life miss him greatly.

And so Paul is convinced that he must stay so that he can continue to serve them. This is what it means to live a life worth living, to die a death worth dying.

It means that we are willing to serve others. So the question is, are you serving in such a way that if you left this church, you would be sorely missed by everybody else?

Next question. Are you serving for the progress and joy of others? If you are serving, then what are you serving for?

Are you serving so that you get the spotlight? Are you serving so that you get the blessing? Are you serving so that people will look at you and be in awe of who you are and your talents and abilities? Or are you serving so that others will progress and have joy?

[ 35 : 26 ] You know, a church needs to be a place where disciples are making disciples. If we're going to grow, it's because we are helping each other grow spiritually. We are seeking the progress and joy of each other.

Are you doing that? Third question. Are you serving so that others may boast in Christ? In all that you're doing, in all that you're serving, in all that you're giving here, what's the end game?

So that you can be promoted to some office within the church? So that you can be given some kind of responsibility that you think will make you important?

Or are you doing it so that people will look at what you're doing and give God all the glory? That's what it means to live for Christ. And if you do so, you will die in a way that is worth dying.

So how can you live your life this way? How can you have a life filled with meaning like this? And how can you know that you have a death like this?

[ 36 : 36 ] A death that will mean that you will die with great joy knowing that you will be with Christ forever. Here's the thing. Everybody wants to live.

Everybody wants to live. Everybody wants something to live for. And here's the other thing that sometimes we forget or neglect or deny. Everyone will die.

But there's only one way to have a life worth living that results in a death worth dying. And that is very simply to look to the one who conquered death for us.

If you live your life for him, you will live a life without regrets. And as a result of that, you will look to death not with fear, not with trepidation, but with joy.

And when people see that in you, their minds will be blown because they don't see that in the rest of the world. They don't see people who look at death as being gain.

[ 37 : 41 ] I want to close with a story. Some years ago, about three years ago, we had a lady in our church who had been diagnosed with cancer. She had lung cancer.

And she had battled through chemo and all different kinds of cancer treatments. But we came to the point where she knew that her time on this earth was limited, that she would die soon.

And they gave her about six months, I believe. And I remember hearing this news. She had some sisters in the church. This woman had been through a lot in her life. She just had experienced a lot of pain, a lot of hurt.

And now she had been diagnosed with cancer and she knew that it would mean that she would eventually die from it. This woman had nothing. She had no money.

I remember pulling up in her house. I was going to go see her and her house was falling apart. And I remember being in my car.

[ 38 : 45 ] I knew she was a believer. And I had met her before and we had talked on several occasions. Didn't know her really well. But as I was in my car thinking, okay, I'm about to go into this house, Lord.

And this woman has nothing. And what she does have, her life, she's losing it and she will soon die. Lord, would you please give me words of encouragement for her?

And so as I walked up to her house, and there wasn't a doorbell, I knocked on the door and I didn't hear anything. So I was like, okay, maybe she's sleeping or she's gone. And I was about to leave and then I heard a tapping on her window.

And I looked and it was her. Her voice was too weak to be able to call me in. And so I opened the door and you know what I saw? And I can't, I even pictured it now and I can't forget it.

The biggest, most beautiful smile that I think I've ever seen. And I couldn't believe it. Smiling ear to ear, just beaming with joy.

[ 39 : 53 ] This woman who was dying. This woman who had nothing. And immediately, I thought, okay, Lord, I don't have to give this woman encouragement because she's being encouraged by you.

And I sat down and I visited with her and we talked about everything and she, you know, already was, you know, I know that these are the people in my life who aren't saved and I'm praying for them and I'm doing all that I can in these last days so that I can be used by God to reach them. And she's like, I have all these things with the church one and she hadn't, not much, but could the church use any of these things? And I'll tell you what, when I left my meeting with her, you know who was encouraged?

You know who was filled with joy? Not the woman dying, but the man who was going to give her encouragement. And you know what that made me do? I wanted to go see her more.

And so I did. And each time I would see her as the day drew closer and she knew it was coming, it was like she was filled with greater joy. How could that be? She understood that to live was Christ, but she was about to die and that meant gain for her.

[ 41 : 02 ] She was going to be healed completely. And right now, she is. That's what it means. When you live for Christ, you will die in such a way that will cause others to experience joy and to see the goodness of Jesus.

Do you want to die that way? I do. I do. I hope if given the chance that my death would bring much glory to Jesus Christ. It's truly the life worth living.

And if you experience it, it will mean a death that is worth dying. And I don't know where you're at in this building this morning, but maybe you're not living for Christ.

And you've heard these verses, God's word has spoken to you, and you get a sense that maybe your life is missing that meaning and that purpose that you desperately want.

That you've filled in that blank with something else and you're realizing that, you know what? And you're fearing, I think, even. If I get that thing, will it really, truly bring me the satisfaction that I'm seeking?

[ 42 : 25 ] And the fear is that you know that it won't. And I'm telling you that it won't. God's word is telling you that it won't.

The only thing that can give you a life worth living that will result in a death worth dying is Jesus Christ himself and nothing else.

And if you want that, you can have it. You can have it. All you've got to do is to pray. You talk to God.

You begin just speaking to him. Pour out to him what's on your heart. And that life worth living for you could begin today.

And if you have the courage and the guts to come forward today to receive that, I would love to be able to pray with you to put you on that path to knowing the good life.

[ 43 : 27 ] Let's pray. Lord God, we thank you again for your word. Lord, even as followers of yours, we need to be reminded.

Life can present so many obstacles, so many difficulties. Lord, you never said that it was going to be easy. In fact, you told us the opposite. You said that living for you means that we are going to have to pick up an instrument of death every day and follow you.

But Lord, you've promised as a result of us doing that, that something strange is going to happen. Our lives are going to have more joy. Our lives are going to have more meaning. Our lives are going to be more blessed as we look to the day when you come for us or we go to be with you and we will experience for ourselves that truly to live is Christ but to die is truly gain.

So much better. God, in these lives that you've given us, I pray that we would seek to be obedient to what your word has called us to do. That instead of thinking about ourselves, thinking about our own, what would benefit us or how can I get what I want, that instead, Lord, in our church that we would think about the other.

Lord, what can I do to make their life better? What can I do to serve them? What can I do to serve other people who don't know you yet? God, I pray that you would, if you haven't already, just change our minds, renew our minds.

[ 44 : 56 ] Help us to be in tune with that mind of Christ that you've given us so that we look at people, we look at the world, we look at our lives the way that you look at those things. Said again, Lord, we would receive the peace and the joy that we know that you've made available for us.

And God, if there's anybody here today and they have come to the realization that they are filling in the blank with something else besides you, Lord, I pray that in your mercy, that in your grace, that in your love, that you would reveal that to them and that you would reveal to them how much you love them, how much you want to give them a life worth meaning, a life with purpose, a life worth living so that they will experience that ultimate gain to be with you forever.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Thank you.