

PREPARING TO DIE

We've been studying how to live. Now, we'll look at 'Preparing to Die':

Phil 1:21 For to me to live is Christ, and **to die is gain.**

Agabus prophesied of Paul's adversity but Paul was not deterred from his mission by it. How would you answer, if you knew such hardship awaited you? Try to reschedule for a less dangerous time or change your plans entirely? Paul's friends begged him not to go yet they could not convince him. Notice that, then they yielded to the Lord's will:

Acts 21:10-14 And as we tarried there many days,
there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus.
11 And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle,
and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost,
So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle,
and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.
12 And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place,
besought him not to go up to Jerusalem.
13 Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart?
for **I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die**
at Jerusalem **for the name of the Lord Jesus.**
14 And when he would not be persuaded,
we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.

Paul really meant it when he said he was ready to die for the Lord. He even told Festus so, even though he petitioned for Caesar to hear his case:

Acts 25:9-12 But Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, answered Paul, and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?
10 Then said Paul, I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest.
11 For **if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die:** but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar.
12 Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered,
Hast thou appealed unto Caesar? unto Caesar shalt thou go.

Before Jesus' disciples experienced the indwelling of the Holy Spirit

they all SAID they were willing to die beside Him:

Matt 26:35 Peter said unto him, **Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.**

Yet when He was arrested they ran from the scene to save their lives:

Matt 26:56 But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then **all the disciples forsook him, and fled.**

Later, the apostles of the Lord became good role models of suffering unto death for Christ's sake. What would you do if you faced death?

1 Cor 4:9-16 For I think that God hath set forth us

the apostles last, as it were appointed to death:

for we are made a **spectacle** unto the world, and to angels, and to men.

10 We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised.

Have you been without food and drink or clothes? Has anyone beaten you?

Did you lose your house and home because of your work for the Lord?

11 Even unto this present hour **we both hunger,**

and thirst,

and are naked,

and are buffeted,

and have no certain dwellingplace;

12

And labour, working with our own hands:

How do you handle verbal abuse? Do you respond with happiness?

being reviled, we bless;

How would you manage being harassed, injured, grieved, or afflicted

because of your belief?

being persecuted, we suffer it:

How would you deal with your reputation being harmed by libel or slander?

(1 Cor 4:13) Being defamed, we intreat (console, comfort, encourage):

Be forwarned! Life in Christ is no bed of roses outwardly-speaking.

Worldly people will label us as 'scum'. We will be an outcast from society:

we are made as **the filth of the world,**
and are **the offscouring of all things** unto this day.

14 I write not these things to shame you,
but as my beloved sons **I warn you.**

15 For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

Mid-Acts folks constantly quote **1 Cor 4:16,** and talk about 'following Paul':

16 Wherefore I beseech you, **be ye followers of me.**

What 'mid-Acts-ers' say is that only the epistles Paul wrote apply today.

What 'mid-Acts-ers' don't say is how GOD tells us to follow Paul.

For the Lord's sake like Paul we will be willing

to be hungry and thirsty, and without clothes or home,

to be beaten, but still working,

to be kind when abused,

to endure persecution with a good attitude,

to be degraded and spoken against, yet respond with favor.

It doesn't sound like a life of FUN and ease does it?

Yet would you endure to the end? Are you willing?

Psa 110:3 **Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power,**
in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning:
thou hast the dew of thy youth.

The focus of our life in Christ cannot be what we have or own in this world:

Luke 12:15 And he said unto them, Take heed,
and beware of covetousness: for **a man's life consisteth not
in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.**

Jesus taught 'what to do' in preparation for the **after-life for death:**

Matt 6:19-21 **Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth,**
where moth and rust doth corrupt,
and where thieves break through and steal:
20 But **lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven,**
where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt,
and where thieves do not break through nor steal:
21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

As we read in **1 Cor 4:11**, Jesus said not to be pre-occupied with the 'now':

Matt 6:25 Therefore I say unto you, **Take no thought for your life,
what ye shall eat,
or what ye shall drink;
nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on.**
Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

Don't be consumed with what you eat, or drink, or wear. That is **earthly:**

Matt 6:31-33 Therefore **take no thought,** saying,
What shall we eat?
or, What shall we drink?
or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?
32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:)
for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.
33 But **seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness;**
and all these things shall be added unto you.

If we are a saint of God we are in the kingdom of God and we
are blessed. We who are kingdom saints will share with others in need:

Matt 25:34-36 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand,
Come, **ye blessed of my Father,**
inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

(Matt 25:) 35 For **I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat:**
I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink:

I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

36 **Naked, and ye clothed me:**

I was sick, and ye visited me:

I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

Serving other believers IS serving the Lord Christ (Matt 25:40, Col 3:22-24). We should avoid those who serve their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches, deceive the hearts of the simple (Rom 16:18). We are to be **heavenly**-minded and follow Paul's example of suffering for Christ knowing God will replace our 'earthly house' and give us a new, glorified body when we see Him:

Phil 3:17-21 Brethren, **be followers together of me,** and mark them which walk so as **ye have us for an ensample.**

18 (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that **they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:**

19 **Whose end is destruction,**
whose God is their belly, (what you eat and drink?!)
and whose glory is in their shame,
who mind earthly things.)

20 For **our conversation is in heaven;**

from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

Our devotion ought to be on **heavenly** things in God's righteous kingdom:

Col 3:1-4 If ye then be **risen with Christ,** (also Col 2:12, Rom 6:1-11)
seek those things which are above,

where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

2 **Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.**

3 For **ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.** (Rom 6:8-9)

4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

What do you eat and drink? Do you eat and drink of Jesus Christ?

John 6:50-56 **This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.**

51 **I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever:** and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

52 The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?

53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you,

Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

54 **Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.**

55 **For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.**

56 **He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.**

When we believe in Christ though we die in the flesh we shall NEVER 'really' die because our life in Christ is ETERNAL. Jesus spoke to Martha about the resurrection of the dead when He returns from heaven. He also told her about resurrection life 'now' through belief in Him:

John 11:23-27 Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.

24 Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. (the resurrection of the dead at the end of the world)

25 Jesus said unto her, **I am the resurrection, and the life:** (presently, now) **he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:**

26 And **whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.**

Believest thou this?

27 She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

Jesus taught that everlasting life lasts right on through physical death:

John 12:24-25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but **if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.** (It bears fruit, even though it died, because of resurrection.)

25 He that loveth his life shall lose it;

and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

The angel Gabriel prophesied to Zacharias of his son John the Baptist who would "make ready a people prepared for the Lord" (Luke 1:17).

Jesus taught a story of a man who planned security for his retirement,

.... yet he was NOT ready to go when his soul was called:

Luke 12:16-21 And he spake a parable unto them, saying,

The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

17 And he thought within himself, saying,

What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow **all my fruits and my goods.**

19 And I will say to my soul, **Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.**

20 But God said unto him,

Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee:

then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

He was not clothed in the robe of righteousness, nor with the garments of salvation (Isa 61:10, Job 29:14), nor humility (1 Pet 5:5):

1 Tim 6:17-19 Charge them that are rich in this world,

that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches,

but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

18 That they do good,

that they be rich in good works,

ready to distribute,

willing to communicate;

19 **Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.**

What preparations have you made? Not your last will and testament, or funeral arrangements, or burial plots. Are you prepared to die?

This is David Dowell saying, "Think about it!"