

**“The Ultimate Win/Win Scenario”  
(A Life Verse For A Southeastern Graduate)**

**Philippians 1:21**

**Introduction:** 1) If I have a life verse this would be it. Anytime I am asked to sign a Bible it is this verse that I place right below my name. It captures so clearly and simply what fills my heart on my best days.

2) I strongly suspect if we were to ask the apostle Paul “what is your life verse, or your life philosophy?”, he would respond with these 12 words found in our English Bible in Philippians 1:21: “For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” It is all the more remarkable to remember that when Paul penned these words he was in prison with an uncertain future. Would he be set free? Would he be executed, his eventual fate? Regardless of the future, Paul says in life or death, “it is all about Christ, it is all about Jesus.”

3) To those graduating today I want to say to you, wherever you go, whatever you do, whether in life or by death, it is all about Christ! To live for Jesus and to die for Jesus is without question “the ultimate win/win scenario!”

4) And, for family and friends who are here to celebrate this wonderful milestone in the life of these graduates the message, it is the same for you. To live for Jesus is to know and experience life as God intended, and to die is to embrace death not as an enemy, but, in a real sense, as a friend.

**Transition:** You see this simple verse teaches us 2 basic and wonderful biblical truths.

## I. **There is a life worth living.**

- Maltbie Babcock who wrote, “This is my Father’s World,” said “Life is what we are alive to.” In other words what moves you, excites you, turns you on is what you are alive to, what you are living for.
- For Paul it was Christ. It was to show that Jesus is awesome, magnificent, great, unsurpassable. What will it be for me? What will it be for you? Note 3 things about a life worth living, a life lived for Christ.

### 1) **It is personal.**

- “For to me.” A. T. Robertson, the great Greek scholar, points out the personal pronoun is in the emphatic position in the sentence (*Paul’s Joy in Christ*, 93). To me! To me!
- This is what life means “to me” regardless of what it means to others. This is how I govern my life, this is how I prioritize my life, this is what life is all about to me. Others may chart a different course or choose a different path. They may have a different organizing principle that determines life’s decisions. But for me, I have made a clear and definite decision for life.

### 2) **It is practical.**

- To live. Life, real life is not just “marking time” or “punching a clock.” No, real life has meaning and purpose. Paul believed it was found only in Christ!
- In John 11:25 Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.” And in John 14:6 Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth and the life...”

- Life is a one shot deal, and it is a 24/7 occupation while it lasts. It is a day by day reality with ups and downs, good times and bad times, good decisions and bad decisions that affect every day living. It is a very personal and practical thing.

### 3) **It is powerful.**

- Is Christ! Back up. Remove the last words, and truthfully and honestly fill in the blank.
- For to me to live is \_\_\_\_\_!  
“For Paul, and I pray for you it is one thing, no, one person: Christ!
- I live to serve Jesus. I live for Christ! No secrets from Him. No locked doors for Him. No area of my life is off limits to Him. There is no “no trespassing sign” for Jesus in my life.
- Colossians 3:4 Paul said, “When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.”
- Galatians 2:20 Paul wrote, “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”
- Jesus Christ had so taken possession of Paul that Paul’s autonomy, his identity, could not be separated from Christ! Life means Christ! To go on living means more of Jesus! Count Nickolaus von Zinzendorf, the German Moravian and father of Protestant missions said, “I have but one enthusiasm; it is He [Christ], only He [Christ].”
- You ask, “why is it powerful?” Paul provides that answer in Philippians 4:13! “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

## II. There is a death worth dying.

- Paul was not afraid of life. Paul was not afraid of death. Either way he was confident in Christ! Either way he wanted to glorify Jesus! No wonder he could be filled with joy and contentment regardless of any circumstances.
- No wonder he could write in Colossians 1:27, “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” For the Christian, death is simply more of Jesus.
- John Piper, “Experiencing Christ as gain in your dying magnifies Christ. It is the essence of worship in the hour of death... because I gain Him.”

### 1) It is inevitable.

- “And to die”
- Hebrews 9:27: “And it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.”
- You will die. I will die. It will happen. You may cheat many things in life but no one cheats death. The grim reaper has your number and when he calls, you will not be able to turn him away.
- Paul’s point is about to become transparently clear: Living for anything other than Christ = “and to die is loss.”

### 2) It can be profitable.

- “Is gain.” Once more remove the last word, truthfully and honestly fill in the blank.
- To die is \_\_\_\_\_.

- For to me to live is money and to die is to leave it all behind.  
 For to me to live is fame and to die is to be forgotten.  
 For to me to live is power and to die is to lose it all.  
 For to me to live is sex and to die is loneliness.  
 For to me to live is a career and to die is to be eternally unemployed.  
 For to me to live is sports and to die is eternal retirement.  
 For to me to live is food and to die is eternal hunger.  
 For to me to live is travel and to die is to go nowhere.  
 For me to live is T.V. and to die is the loss of entertainment.
- My agnostic friend Mike Bryan, “Life’s a \_\_\_\_\_ and then you die.”
- Oh, but listen to 1 John 3:2, “Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” So, death in Christ becomes not an enemy but a friend, my escort into His presence!
- And, hear Paul in Philippians 3:8, “Yet indeed I also count all things for loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish that I may gain Christ.”  
 Christ is my gain in life. Christ will be my gain in death. Why? How do we know?
- 2 Corinthians 5:8 tells us, “We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.”

**Conclusion:**

- What is your life? What will be your death? For the servant of Christ, the child of God, life is Christ and death is more of Christ! It is the ultimate win/win scenario! In this life you join with those who have gone before us, many of whom laid down their life in martyrdom, who gladly said, “For me to live is Christ and to die is gain.” Christ is worth more than life. Christ is worth more than falling in love. Christ is worth more than marrying and having children. Christ is worth more than seeing my children grow up and become independent. Christ is worth more than making a name for myself. Christ is worth more than finishing my career. Christ is worth more than the dream spouse and the dream house and the dream cruise and the dream retirement. Christ is worth more than all my unfinished plans and dreams. Christ is worth more than a popular ministry and a comfortable situation in a church.  
  
“It is better to be cut off in the midst of my dreams, if I might gain Christ.”
- However, there is the ultimately lose/lose scenario too. Because for life to be anything other than Jesus is for death to be loss; a loss now and a loss for eternity. But, it does not have to be this way! You can have Christ and you can experience gain “now and forever.”