

Upcoming Events

Revelation class: Today at 2:30
“Numbers in the Bible and in Revelation”
Business meeting, Today at 3:30 p.m.

Tuesday Meet Up Class
July 13 at 7:00 p.m.
New Location:
77682 Country Club Drive A-2
Palm Desert

Latest Preacher’s Blog
Brother Critchfield’s *“Bible Thoughts”* for the week!
Are Some Sins Bigger Than Others?
Check it out!

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To Live is Christ/To Die is Gain

Mike Johnson

Paul wrote the book of Philippians, as well as some other books, while in a Roman prison. He was in prison awaiting a decision about his fate. He might be released and would then be able to continue preaching. However, the decision could go against him, and he could be put to death. The attitude Paul had while facing these two alternatives is very interesting. In Philippians 1:21, he said, *“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”*

First, Paul said *“for me to live is Christ.”* This meant if he lived, Christ would continue to be seen in his life. He would continue to serve and exalt Christ, living for Him. If Paul lived, his preaching would continue to help other people such as the Philippians. In verse 24 he said, *“Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.”* On the other hand, Paul said if he died it would be gain. This is contrary to what most people would say as death is usually thought of as a loss instead of a gain. However, Paul looked at death as an avenue which would allow him to leave this life, with its hardships, persecutions, and pain, and go to a place of rest, joy, and peace. It would cause him to have a new union with Christ, and he would be able to enjoy the rewards of the afterlife.

For Paul to live would be a great advantage for those he taught. However, even his death would work to his good as he would be with Christ. We need to make sure we live in such a way so we too can say, *“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”* Sadly, for many, to live is Satan and to die is loss.

Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.
Sunday.....10:45 a.m.
Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

Preacher:
Jack Critchfield

Church of Christ
81-377 Ave 46
Indio, CA 92201
(760) 342-1859

(Address Service Requested)

We're in God's Army Now

By Joe Slater

War in Gaza. War in the Ukraine. War in Iraq. War in Libya. There is no shortage of wars!

Christianity has never been advanced at the point of the sword. *"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal"* (2 Corinthians 10:4). But yes, Christians are engaged in warfare, though it is of a spiritual nature. Do we take this war seriously?

Our goal is not to "go along and get along," but to destroy satan's strongholds and capture as many people as we can for Jesus. Meanwhile, we strive not to become casualties ourselves. As soldiers of Christ, we put on the armor of God (Ephesians 6).

We have a cause that is worth fighting for. Paul called it "the good fight of faith" (1 Timothy 6:12). This is not some petty squabble. Absolute evil is pitted against total righteousness. There is no such thing as neutrality; either we are with Jesus all the way, or we are against Him, even if we don't intend to be (Luke 11:23).

Once we have enlisted in God's army, there is no honorable discharge or retirement. We are a soldier for life unless we defect. As he faced imminent death, Paul looked back over his life and said he had fought the good fight (2 Timothy 4:7).

Semper Fidelis – Always Faithful. That motto would fit Paul, and we ought to serve so that it fits us. Such service may involve enduring "hardship as a good soldier of Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 2:3). It certainly will mean putting Jesus and His church first and foremost in our lives, rather than being preoccupied with mundane matters. *"No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please Him who enlisted him as a soldier"* (2 Timothy 2:4).

One last thing about this army: It's all volunteer! Becoming a Christian is something we do of our own free will. We *"obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered"* (Romans 6:17). God doesn't force anyone to serve Him; we are free to *"choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve"* (Joshua 24:15). May we all make the right choice, and may we be always faithful!

The Last Fight

Robert F. Turner

Plain Talk, January 1971

On the ruins of a theater in Ephesus there is a memorial to an athlete of the 2nd century A.D. which reads:

**"He fought three fights,
and twice was crowned."**

Watch out for that last step! You see, those "athletes" fought to the death. A man's last fight was always fatal.

So, the crown meant only that one changed opponents; and sooner or later the last would slay him. What a difference in this crown, and that of the apostle Paul:

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day..." (II Timothy 4:7, 8).

Paul did more than fight *"unto death"*—he fought unto life, eternal. If his fight of faith cost him his earthly life, it only meant he was now free to claim the crown that counted most (Revelation 2:10, II Corinthians 5:6ff.). How different from those who die without hope.

Paul sought an enduring victory -- one that could not be taken from him. He exhorted Timothy, *"Lay hold on eternal life..."* (I Timothy 6:12). This called for training, perseverance, and above all, self-control (I Corinthians 9:24-27). The athlete trained his body only to prolong the day when it would fail him, but Paul trained his that it might the better serve the Lord, and thus serve his eternal purposes.

We are all engaged in some sort of battle, and in a very real sense, it is *"unto death."* The fatalist, the fool, resigns himself to shortchange. Though he fights 3,000 times, he can expect but 2,999 temporal crowns, not one of which he can take with him beyond that last fight. The futility of it all is enough to make a man throw in the towel.

The Faith gives purpose to life. The Christian fights, hard and often. But he has submitted himself to God's will, *"strives lawfully"* (II Timothy 2:5), and his fight is never in vain. Jesus Christ has provided for him a crown, and not for him only, *"but unto all them also that love his appearing."*