Ring of Truth daily devotion

Ring of Truth provides 366 daily 'proofs' that the Bible is consistent throughout from Genesis to Revelation and relevant for our lives today!

1 November

Philippians 1:21

"For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain."

What an incredible thing to be able to say.

If you look back at Acts 16, you can read again the account of Paul's first visit to Philippi where he met Lydia and also a fortune-telling slave girl. The slave girl's release from bondage so incensed her 'owners' that they had Paul and Silas severely flogged and then put in chains in prison awaiting trial.

Here, Paul was in prison again. As he wrote to the believers there, including Lydia, he said, ***"For to me, to live is Christ, to die is gain."*** He was the original, who could look at his enemies who were intent on killing him and say, *"Go on - make my day!"* That is what I call an invincible attitude.

Paul loved life. He loved preaching the Gospel, whether to Jews or Gentiles. He obviously found travel exhilarating. He enjoyed his whole experience on earth. Why? ***"For to me, to live is Christ."*** What could be more fulfilling or exciting than to let Christ live through you?

Was Paul's a unique call? In a lot of ways, totally. He even said in Galatians that Peter was called to the Jews and he to the Gentiles (see Galatians 2:8). But let me challenge you today - if God has called you - called me - shouldn't we also be able to say with Paul, ***"For to me, to live is Christ"***? And yet our lives seem so trivial and insignificant in comparison, don't they?

Is it because the call is different or because our interpretation is different? The same God issued the call. The same dynamic power authorises and backs up the call. So why are the results so different? Could it be that Paul 'made' his call all consuming, and I make my call just an add-on - a supplementary or even complementary option? If Paul's God is my God and the 'call' I received came from the same God - then should not I also make it all consuming? Maybe then, I too would experience some of the dynamic power of God that he did.

What do you think? How do you feel about it? If you don't know your 'call', may I encourage you to ask God to reveal it to you? In the meantime, just answer the call of Isaiah 61:1-3 (and Isaiah 6:8).

"To die is gain." Many Christians are just waiting until they die. *'I've got my ticket for Heaven, I'll just sit on the train until I get to glory'*. That was never God's intention and was certainly not what Paul was talking about. He had an intense desire to be like Jesus, and He knew that ultimately that would happen only when he saw Him and was with Him. But also like Jesus, he knew he had to fulfil his Father's will on earth first.

That was an obligation but it was also a wonderfully awesome privilege. Why? Because he saw many captives released out of darkness into the Kingdom of Light, from bondage to freedom and saw the destruction of the devil's work. That should be the hallmark of our lives too.

Yes, we long to be with Jesus, but in the meantime enjoy the thrill of seeing many lives changed, released and saved and the destruction of the devil's work.

Where do you fit into all this?

For you to live - is it Christ?

Will you ***"gain"*** if you die?