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# GOD'S OVERRULING PROVIDENCE

PHILIPPIANS 1:19-26

EYANRIN, SUNDAY (EVANG.)

Today, we shall be focusing on the message title: **"GOD'S OVERRULING PROVIDENCE"** on our text: **Phil. 1:19-26**. Let us read our text:

*19 For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, 20 according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. 21 For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. 22 But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. 23 For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. 24 Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you. 25 And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith, 26 that your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again. NKJV*

Brethren, for a more proper understanding of this message, we are going to classify this message into three specific sub-headings. For Apostle Paul had set his heart on:

1. AN EARNEST EXPECTATION (V.19 – 21)
2. A PERSONAL INDECISION (V. 22 – 24)
3. A PRESENT CONFIDENCE (V. 25 – 26)

## 1. AN EARNEST EXPECTATION (V.19 – 21)

While Apostle Paul was in the Roman prison, he wrote this letter to the Philippian Brethren. *"For I know that this"*—that is, the trial of his

imprisonment—“*will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ...*” (v. 19) One way or the other, he knew that he would be delivered from his imprisonment.

And he was assured of this deliverance because of two things. The first thing was of the prayer of his brothers and sisters in Christ for him. The prayers of God’s people once resulted in his fellow apostle Peter being released from prison.

An angel actually came to Peter’s prison cell, caused his chains to fall off, opened the prison doors, led him out to the street and sent him on his way. Paul had no doubt that God could do that for him too—in response to the prayer of his Philippian brethren—if He so chose.

But the other thing that assured Paul of his ultimate deliverance was “*the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ*”. When Paul became a believer, God placed the very Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ Himself into him; thus sealing Paul forever as belonging to Jesus, and assuring Paul that he could not in any way fail to be in Jesus’ presence in glory one day. This is true of all who are redeemed by faith in Jesus Christ. (***Ephesians 1:13b-14***).

*... the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory (Ephesians 1:13b-14).*

What is the message here? Paul was absolutely assured that he would be delivered one way or the other—either through his release from prison in God’s answer to the faithful prayer of his brothers and sisters, or through death by execution and his entry afterwards into the glorious presence of the One who sealed him for Himself by “the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ”. Either way, he would be delivered!

Paul’s greatest joy was that no one could take away is being with Christ as he wrote in **Rom. 8:35 -39**. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: “*For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.*”

*Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor*

*any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:35-39).*

## **2. A PERSONAL INDECISION (vv. 22-24)**

In this part of his letter, Paul was struggling with his choice of decision. If the choice were put to him—whether to be released and live, or to be executed and die—he wouldn't be able to decide which to choose. He went on to write; But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labour; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell.

For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless, to remain in the flesh is more needful for you (vv. 22-24).

He felt “*hard-pressed between the two*”; because there were definite benefits to either way things could go. You almost get a sense that he was glad that the decision wasn't his to make.

Now; there's a very important progression to recognize in all this. If Paul held to the earnest expectation that Jesus Christ would be magnified in his body—whether by life or by death; and if he was so submitted to Christ's will that he could rejoice in either living for Christ (which meant more fruitfulness for his labours), or dying for Him (which would be “gain”); then he would accept going on to live in and serve—and do so joyfully.

But Paul was so submitted to the Lord's will that he was prepared not only to allow Jesus to be magnified in his body by death, but also to allow Him to be magnified by his going on to live and serve His purposes. In verses 25-26; we find that his ‘earnest expectation’ led to a ‘personal indecision’, which—in turn—lead to . . .

## **3. A PRESENT CONFIDENCE (v. 25-26).**

He wrote and said, “*and being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith, that your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again*” (v. 25-26).

That he was confident that Christ would be magnified in his body either by life or by death. And whichever way the Lord chose to bring about that glory

was fine with him. As it turned out, the Lord wanted him to live on and serve; and to glorify Him through his life.

## **WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THIS MESSAGE?**

I believe that there are so many learning points from this message of Apostle Paul to us today.

### **1. THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER**

Whatever circumstance we find ourselves, whether good or bad, we must learn to pray. The importance of prayer as Christians cannot be over emphasized as we saw what the church did for Apostle Peter while in prison. *Acts 12:1 -10*.

### **2. OUR CONFIDENCE IN CHRIST JESUS**

Our faith in Christ must be our guard in whatsoever we do, believing that the Lord is with us always. Therefore, nothing should separate us from the love of Christ. *Romans 8:35-39*.

### **3. BE BOLD TO SPREAD THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST**

The Gospel is the powerhouse of saving the lost. Therefore, we must put our best effort to preach the Gospel with all boldness as did Paul even while in prison. *Mark 16:15 -16, Romans 1:16*.