



PARTNERS FOR A CAUSE - Philippians 1:12-26

FANTALES' wrappers have 'who am I' details on them. Apart from a few life statistics there is information that captures what the person was known for. Information about what they lived for or what was their cause. Apart from the few life statistics what information would on a Fantale wrapper to capture what you live for.

Today we are going to learn what Paul lived for from the book of Philippians. It is captured in what he says in Philippians 1:21. "For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain."

Last week we looked at the picture of Partnership and what it means to be in Christ. This week we are looking at PURPOSE of this PARTNERSHIP in the example of Paul under two headings.

Firstly, Consumed by Christ in prison so people know Christ.

Read: 1: 12-14

It is Christ and the Gospel that dominates the paragraph. Why? Because it is Christ and the Gospel that dominates Paul. It is what consumes Paul.

No doubt the Philippians would be concerned about Paul. Concerned about how he was coping being in prison. There's sense that Paul is letting them know how he is going.

We see Paul's goal. His definition of what is success. It is whether the Gospel has been made known to others. He says this has happened. He says the Gospel has advanced in v.12 and Christ is preached in v18.

This has happened in two ways.

1. All the guards heard the Gospel. v.13
2. It gave a backdone for others to speak. v.14

Not all good is good though.

Read vv.15-17

Whoever the groups are what matters to Paul is that Christ is made known. This is what Paul says in v.18 . What might be seen as stumbling blocks are actually stepping stones.

When I think of someone with passion living for a cause I think of Steve Irwin. There were others who had a passion for wildlife conservation but not like Steve Irwin. From a Christian perspective I think of Norm Edney. After he became a Christian he went and served in the Pacific Islands to make Jesus known for about twenty years. He came home to retire and decided there was no such thing as Christian retirement and so is still serving with Student Life at the age of eighty.

Ryan Holmes has a desire to give his life to the cause of Christ beginning with the Ministry Training Apprenticeship. I am hoping we can commit on commitment day to start to see that happen for him.

He has a heart desire especially for the youth at Lakeshore and for the youth who are not yet here. Who need to know Jesus. He wants to follow the example of Paul.

What's Paul example? The advance of the Gospel is the most important priority. It is THE cause to live for. He is not focused on his circumstance. He is not focused on this comfort. He is not worried about his reputation. His hurts I'd be sitting around having a pity party. I can't believe God has put me in prison. The chains hurt. The cell is uncomfortable. The other prisoners smell. The guards are harsh. The food is shocking.

Paul is living to live with Christ and loving to take as many people with him as possible.

What is your most important priority? What is your ambition? How do measure success in your life? Comfort? Making money? A good retirement? Good education for your kids? They are all FOR the cause of Christ.

Do you see yourself as a partner in Christ living for the cause of Christ first?

God may have you at the moment as a full time mum or an engineer or a student or a builder but you are a Christian first. So that you will think and say like Paul I want to know that what has happened to me has really served to the advance the gospel.

One of the mission statement words at LAKESHORE is MAKING. Our mission is to make disciples of Christ. Our projects for 2012 are focused on this. We want to be sitting here next year surrounded by people who have come to know Christ. DON'T WE?

Are you living as a partners in Christ living to take as many people with you to be with Christ.

Secondly Consumed by Christ in death & life so people grow in Christ.

Read: 18b-26

Paul says: "For to me to live is Christ to die is gain." This is a summary of this section. Living is all about Jesus. Knowing him and living for him. Whatever happens to him. Whatever is done to him he can still live for Jesus. Even if you do the worst and kill him, you only do him good because he will be with Jesus. It is a WIN WIN situation. Jesus lived and died for the salvation of people so for Paul living for Jesus is the salvation of people.

Read v.25-26

As he weighs up his choices he asks: *What is best for the church? Is that what we ask when we are making a decision?*

If you stretch a piece of string across the width of the room and put a dot in the middle. Imagine left of the dot represents all the time since the foundation of the world and right represents all the time left. The dot in the middle it represents the days of our lives. Don't live for the dot. Some people live for the dot. They know they have 60,70, 80 years and then what they do is pack as much fun as possible.

I urge you, plead, beg you to be like Paul and live for the cause that goes beyond the DOT. It may start with the dot but it doesn't stop within the dot. It will keep on going and it's effects will last into eternity.

Live to take as many people with you. We are not meant to be saved alone.

God wants your heart to love him fully. God wants your mind so you are transformed by His Word. God wants your feet that take the good news of Jesus. God wants your hands. Hands that serve others.

If someone was to place one word on your grave to capture what you were known for what would it be?

Steve Jobs - Apple

Albert Einstien – science

Steve Irwin – crocs

Darren Lockyer – football

Billy Graham – preacher

It is clear what Paul would have on his – CHRIST. *"For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain."*

It could have been a bunch of other things. Pharisee, letter writer, tent maker. Only one word will do – CHRIST.

Will you live for THE cause of Christ? Living for him. What changes do you need to make in your mind so they that you live for the cause of Christ? What changes need to be in your heart? What changes need to be made in your life? Your weekly timetable? Your daily habits?

Picture yourself at: WORK – SCHOOL – SOCIAL life – FAMILY this week. What will you change so you are living for the cause of Christ?

Someone said to John G Paton in the 19th Century when he was planing to go as a missionary to the Vanuatu. "You'll be eaten by cannibals."

Paton replied, *'Mr Dickson, you are advanced in years now and your own prospect is soon to be laid in the grave, there to be eaten by worms; I confess to you, that if I can but live and die serving and honouring the Lord Jesus, it will make no difference to me whether I am eaten by cannibals or by worms; and the Great Day my resurrection body will arise as fair as yours in the likeness of our risen Redeemer.'*

This sounds extreme and the exception rather than the rule but it is not extreme and it should be the rule. Christ gave his life for lost and dying people. People without Christ are lost and dying. What greater cause can you live for than to make Christ known to them.

Live for the Cause of Christ.

"Only one life, twill soon be passed; Only what's done for Christ will last."