

## **Philippians 1:21-30<sup>iv</sup>**

For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which I prefer. I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better; but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, so that I may share abundantly in your boasting in Christ Jesus when I come to you again. Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel, and are in no way intimidated by your opponents. For them this is evidence of their destruction, but of your salvation. And this is God's doing. For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well— since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

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### <sup>iv</sup> **About Philippians 1:21-30**

The church in Philippi was Paul's first congregation formed on European soil, and his relationship with it remained consistently warm and close. Because of Paul's references to being imprisoned and to the imperial guard (1:13), it was often thought that this letter was written from Rome about AD 62. Some scholars now believe that it was written earlier from Ephesus, where the praetorian guard was also stationed.

In today's selection, Paul meditates upon the possibility of imminent execution. For Paul, both life and death are under the rule of Christ. Though life means communion with Christ, death will bring even fuller communion. Life, however, includes the opportunity to serve Christ further.