

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

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IN OUR
PRACTICAL
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Living Stream Ministry
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CONSTANT SALVATION IN OUR PRACTICAL LIFE

According to the book of Philippians, there is a salvation which is constant in our practical life. To say that this salvation is constant means that it is a salvation we may experience every day, every hour, and every moment.

A SUBJECTIVE SALVATION FOR MAGNIFYING CHRIST

In [Philippians 1](#) and [2](#) Paul uses the word salvation twice. In [1:19](#) he says, “For I know that for me this shall turn out to salvation.” In [2:12](#) he says to the saints in Philippi, “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” The salvation in [1:19](#) denotes the salvation Paul experienced during his imprisonment in Rome. A typical Jew, he was held a prisoner in Rome, far from his native land. Using today’s terms, Paul was held captive by the Roman imperialists. It certainly was a shameful, dishonorable thing for a Jew to be held in a Roman prison. Most of the time, Paul was probably chained to a guard. It certainly must have been an insult for

an educated upper-class Jew to be chained to a guard in a Roman prison. It was also dishonorable for such an apostle of the Lord Jesus to be imprisoned in such a way. Nevertheless, Paul testified that his situation would turn out to him for salvation.

In 1:19 Paul is not referring to eternal salvation, the salvation from hell and the judgment of God. That salvation is objective. What Paul has in mind here is a very subjective, experiential salvation, a salvation experienced not once for all, but moment by moment.

When Paul said that he expected his situation to turn out for his salvation, he did not have in mind release from prison. Some readers of the book of Philippians may think that Paul's expectation was that, through the prayers of the saints, especially those in Philippi, he would be released from prison. However, according to the grammatical construction of [Philippians 1:19-21](#), this cannot be the meaning of salvation here. The salvation in [verse 19](#) is related to Paul's word in [verse 20](#) about not being put to shame in anything and about Christ being magnified in his body, whether through life or through death. Hence, in [verse 20](#) we have the definition of the salvation mentioned in [verse 19](#). Therefore,

salvation here consists of not being put to shame in anything, but of magnifying Christ in everything.

Salvation here certainly does not mean release from prison. Instead, it means that, no matter how difficult Paul's situation was and no matter how insulting, he would not be put to shame in anything. Rather, Christ would be magnified in his body. Not even being chained to a guard would hinder Paul from magnifying Christ. This is what we mean by constant salvation.

Actually, the word constant is not adequate to describe the salvation in 1:19. All our words are related to our culture. If a certain matter does not exist in our culture, we shall not have a word for it. The salvation here is altogether wonderful and marvelous, and no word is sufficient to describe it fully. Not even in prison would Paul be put to shame. Instead of being put to shame, he knew that he would magnify Christ. This was Paul's salvation.

Suppose instead of rejoicing in the Lord, Paul wept about his situation and complained, saying, "I'm an educated Jew and also an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, called, commissioned, and sent by Him. Now I'm in prison chained to

a guard. How terrible!” If Paul had wept and complained, he would have been put to shame. However, Paul did not weep or complain. On the contrary, he rejoiced in the Lord. Anyone who visited him in prison may have been astonished and amazed. Perhaps Paul even testified to the jailer that he was happy in the Lord and rejoiced in Him. Possibly Paul’s enjoyment of Christ in prison may have been a factor in bringing Onesimus, a runaway slave, to salvation. Anyone who observed Paul in prison would have seen a man praising the Lord and rejoicing.

When Paul was imprisoned in Philippi, he and Silas sang praises to the Lord ([Acts 16:23-26](#)). To be sure, the Philippian believers knew of Paul’s experience there in prison. They knew that the praises of Paul and Silas brought in a great earthquake. No doubt, while in prison in Rome, Paul also exercised himself to sing praises to the Lord. Far from being found complaining or weeping, he could be found rejoicing in the Lord, singing praises to Him, and testifying concerning Him. This is constant salvation.

ENJOYING A CONSTANT SALVATION TO LIVE CHRIST

In His eternal salvation God has rescued us

from hell and from His righteous judgment. But day by day we need to go on to experience a constant salvation in our practical life. When Paul was in prison, what he enjoyed was not simply God's eternal salvation with the hope it afforded him; he also enjoyed a constant salvation hour by hour. To enjoy this salvation is to live Christ. Actually to live Christ is to enjoy constant salvation in our daily life.

Every aspect of God's salvation brings us out of something on the negative side and ushers us into something on the positive side. Negatively, Paul was saved from being put to shame; positively, Christ was magnified in him. What a wonderful salvation!

SAVED FROM ORDINARY THINGS

In [Philippians 2:12](#) Paul tells the saints in Philippi, “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” The constant salvation in [1:19](#) is for a particular person in a particular situation, whereas the constant salvation in [2:12](#) is for all believers in common situations. We have seen that the salvation in [1:19](#) saved Paul in the particular situation of his imprisonment in such a way that he would not be put to shame, but instead would magnify Christ. Now we need to

see that, according to the context of [2:12](#), constant salvation is also for the believers to be saved from ordinary things in their daily living.

From [Philippians 2:14-15](#) we see that these things include murmurings, reasonings, blame, guile, blemishes, crookedness, perverseness, and darkness. These are general characteristics of the condition of fallen man everywhere. No matter where we may be, there will be murmuring, reasoning, blame, guile, blemishes, crookedness, perverseness, and darkness. These may be found not only in society generally, but even in the family life of believers. It is common for wives to murmur, and for husbands to reason. A wife may complain about something, and her husband may vindicate himself. Then neither the wife nor the husband is blameless, and both may also have guile and blemishes. At times, a husband and wife are also crooked and perverted in their dealings with each other. Who can say that he has never been crooked in his relationships with others? Children may even be crooked in relation to their own parents. Although we have received God's eternal salvation, to a certain extent we may still be crooked, not altogether honest and straightforward in certain matters. Thus, we need a constant salvation

with respect to all the negative things in [verses 14 and 15](#).

Paul tells us that we need to work out our own salvation. By working out this salvation, we shall be saved from murmurings, reasonings, blame, guile, blemishes, crookedness, perverseness, and darkness. To be sure, it is not easy to be saved from such things. Paul deliberately used these words to indicate the fallen condition common to all.

HOLDING FORTH THE WORD OF LIFE

However, just as the salvation in [Philippians 1:19](#) has both a negative side and a positive side, the salvation in [2:12](#) has two sides. The negative side is in [verses 14 and 15](#); the positive side is in [verse 16](#), where Paul speaks of “holding forth the word of life.” The Greek word rendered holding forth means to apply, present, offer. To hold forth the word of life is to present it to others and offer it to them, applying it to them in their situation. Wherever we may be, we need to hold forth the word of life; we need to present the word of life to others. What we offer to those around us should not be words of murmuring or reasoning, nor anything related to crookedness or perverseness.

We should offer nothing other than the word of life.

To hold forth the word of life is identical to living Christ. Whenever we live Christ, we hold forth the word of life. Once again we see that the book of Philippians is a book on the experience of Christ and a book also on living Christ. What Paul wrote in this Epistle is related to the experience of Christ and to living Christ.

I hope that we all shall be deeply impressed with the need to enjoy constant salvation in our practical life day by day. We need a salvation which we can term our own salvation. This salvation saves us not from hell, nor even merely from sin, but from murmurings, reasonings, blame, guile, blemishes, crookedness, perverseness, and darkness. When we experience this salvation, we spontaneously hold forth, present, apply, the word of life to those around us. This is to live Christ.

PARTICULAR SITUATIONS AND COMMON SITUATIONS

In Philippians 1 and 2 we see a constant salvation that is, on the one hand, for a particular person in a particular situation and, on the other hand, for all believers in the common situations

of daily life. Under God's sovereignty, we may become a person in a particular situation. Paul became such a person when he was imprisoned in Rome. Imprisonment caused him to be a person in a particularly difficult situation. But being a person in that kind of situation afforded him an excellent opportunity to experience and enjoy constant salvation. We may also find ourselves in particular situations. For example, a brother may suddenly find himself without a job. This brother needs the salvation in [1:19](#).

Most of the time our situation is rather common, ordinary. As we have pointed out, the daily situation of fallen man includes murmurings, reasonings, and many other negative things. In our married life we need a constant salvation in order to be rescued from murmurings and reasonings. We also need a constant salvation in order to be rescued from crookedness and perverseness. For example a brother may not be honest or straightforward in dealing with his wife. Thus, he needs a present, constant salvation. If he does not experience this salvation, there will be no way for him to hold forth the word of life.

Day by day we need a constant salvation to save us from anything that is not Christ. This

salvation brings us into a condition where spontaneously we live Christ. Then in our living we shall present the word of life to others. This word of life held forth by us also is Christ. For this reason, to hold forth the word of life is to live Christ.

How much we need the Lord's constant salvation in our married life! Suppose a brother is working around the house and his wife calls him to dinner. However, because he is occupied with what he is doing, he does not respond. After calling him again and again, the wife may begin to murmur, to complain. The husband may react by reasoning to vindicate himself. Then their dealings with each other in this situation become crooked and perverse. Both need a constant salvation.

Paul knew the situation of fallen man. In [Philippians 1](#) he presents his own case as an illustration of God's constant salvation. Then in [chapter two](#) he shows that this salvation is for all believers in the common situations of daily life. Although the salvation in [1:19](#) may not always apply to you specifically in your circumstances, you cannot deny your need for the salvation in [2:12](#). You may not be a particular person with a particular case, but you certainly are an ordinary

person in a common situation. In ordinary daily life we all are bothered by murmurings, reasonings, crookedness, and even perverseness. Thus, we need a constant salvation day by day.

WHAT IT MEANS TO LIVE CHRIST

We need this salvation not only to bring us out of negative things, but also to bring us into a glorious condition of presenting the word of life to those around us. The salvation in [Philippians 1:19](#) brings us into a state where Christ is magnified in us, and the salvation in [2:12](#) brings us into a condition where we hold forth the living Christ as the word of life to others. To have this salvation, which we need daily and hourly, is to live Christ in a practical way.

Do you know what it means to live Christ? To live Christ means that no matter what our circumstances may be, Christ is magnified in us and we are not put to shame in anything. Hence, the salvation in [Philippians 1:19](#) is equal to living Christ. To enjoy and experience this salvation is to live Christ. Furthermore, to live Christ also means that in our daily life we are saved from murmurings, reasonings, crookedness, and perverseness, and that we present our living Lord as the word of life to those whom we meet day by

day. What a tremendous salvation! We all need this daily, constant salvation, a salvation which is nothing other than Christ Himself.

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