

GCFSM SUNDAY BULLETIN

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SERMON OUTLINE

TAKE COURAGE IN CHRIST

PHILIPPIANS 1:18c-26 | REV. BOBOT ANDALIS

Today, we delve into the powerful words of the Apostle Paul in Philippians 1:18c-26. Written from prison, Paul's message radiates a deep sense of courage and unwavering faith in Christ. This passage encourages us to anchor our courage in Christ, regardless of the challenges we face.

Paul begins by saying, "Yes, and I will rejoice." His joy is firmly rooted in the proclamation of Christ, regardless of his imprisonment. Paul's confidence is grounded in the prayers of the Philippians and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, leading to his deliverance. This joy exemplifies the joy we have from the gospel of Christ (vv. 18c-19).

Anchoring in verse 20, Paul expresses his eager expectation and hope:

"...as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death..." Paul's courage is anchored in his hope to honor Christ in every

situation. He seeks to exalt Christ in his body, whether through life or death. This verse shows that true courage comes from focusing on Christ and making Him the center of our lives. We must have the courage from the gospel of Christ (v. 20).

Paul's declaration, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain," in verse 21 is a profound statement. Living for Christ means continuing his fruitful labor for Him, and dying is gain because it means being with Christ. It shows the faithfulness of God to us through the Gospel of Christ (v. 21).

Paul shares his internal struggle: "If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. 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 on your account." Paul wrestles between his desire to be with Christ and the necessity of remaining alive to serve the Philippians. This selfless service

highlights Paul's commitment to others over his personal desires. We should desire to make our lives fruitful by living for the gospel of Christ (vv. 22-24).

Lastly, Paul settles with his conviction: "Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again." Paul's ultimate goal is to see the Philippians progress in their faith and increase their joy in Christ. His commitment to their growth exemplifies the importance of community and mutual edification. Likewise, as believers, we should commit to grow in the gospel of Christ as a faith community (vv. 25-26).

My prayer is that we will all take courage in Christ amidst the challenges and circumstances of life.✳

LET US IMAGINE

REV. MIKE TRINIDAD

Imagining is free and available to anyone and everyone who dares to look beyond what we see, hear and feel, beyond what we know is the reality of our times in a highly imperfect world.

It would be ideal to imagine a perfect world where we can live in peace and harmony with those around us, a world where peace and order prevail, where discrimination does not exist, in a city where basic services work seamlessly. People experience the benefits of living without graft and corruption in government.

The Israel-Hamas (Palestinian) War has been going on since October, 2023. An early attempt at a ceasefire broke down, and both sides agreed to a new ceasefire that has been in effect for fourteen days now. With thousands reported killed on both sides, this war hammers home the point of the brutality of war – the unfortunate toll taken on human lives and destruction to many homes and buildings, leaving victims permanently scarred. Unfortunately, the emotional damage is forever etched in the hearts and minds of people on both sides.

In February 2022, a similar war broke out between Russia and Ukraine which rages till today. Attempts to broker a ceasefire between the two countries have been hugely unsuccessful in spite of valiant efforts by

the United Nations and other peace-loving countries in Europe and North America. Both sides point a finger at the other with accusations of ill intent and malice. And then again, similar to the Israel-Palestinian War, it is the hapless victims of war that are left devastated by the useless strife.

While the rest of the world watches and prays for a peaceful resolution to both wars, we also grapple with the devastating effects of man's wanton disregard for environmental concerns, which has caused extensive damage as a result of higher intensity weather patterns, such as typhoons, hurricanes and most recently, the wild fires that have wreaked havoc on the affluent Pacific Palisades community in California. The unprecedented phenomenon of wildfires have been looming in Southern California for many years but the recent catastrophe has brought the urgent call for action to a higher level to prevent more damage to other areas, as well.

In our own country, we continue to reel from the many political issues that divide the population and the constant threat of corruption that wreaks havoc on the country. Left again watching helplessly and reaping the damaging effects of the greed and avarice by these officials are the countless hapless Filipinos who are mired in poverty as these officials mismanage the financial affairs of the government to fuel their own selfish interests.

Amidst these frustrating and discouraging scenarios, I invite you to imagine a perfect world where wars don't exist and political motives are set aside for the common good. But, alas, we know that while it would be most ideal, it may seem difficult to see it happen in our lifetime if we don't take concerted action. Let's get back to reality, then, and be reminded of what we know is for sure – God's love for us that is immeasurable and steadfast. We have a perfect God who will help us navigate through this highly imperfect world.

The sure-fire reminder of this immeasurable and steadfast love is encapsulated in John 3:16, but the verses following, vv. 17-21 tell us that God sent Jesus so that the world might be saved through Him.

The many ills we see in the world today would cease if people would come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. In Him, there is forgiveness of sins; in Him, there is joy and peace. Therefore, let us do our part to share the light of Jesus upon those who need to have dark areas of their lives banished as they pursue the righteous life that Jesus desires for those who believe in Him.

Let us imagine a world with Jesus. Let us, therefore, actively participate in efforts to bring the light of Jesus into the world.✳

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