

## What's the Meaning of *Your* life?

Ricardo Campos, Pastor Grace Chapel, Orange, CA February 18, 2015

Jesus wants us to have an abundant life, John 10:10, so why don't we have one? What are the obstacles keeping us from the abundant life Jesus promised? Why are we one moment confident and hopeful and the next down and depressed?

**Why do Christians get discouraged, depressed, and hopeless?** A conversation with a Bible-reading, church-going, spending-time-in-the-Word-every-morning Christian who feels hopeless as they look at their future.....why is this person so discouraged? If you're reading the Bible or something related to it, are you reading *about* God or actually spending time *with* God? Is He real to you, as real as your problems? And as you look at your past, do you just see the mistakes you made or do you also see the times God helped you? If God helped you before, why doesn't that have any impact on your current troubles?.....why do Christians get so stuck in hopelessness over and over and over?

**How did Paul face the question, "What's the meaning of *your* life?"** When Paul wrote Philippians, he was in prison in Rome. But before he got there, he went through quite an ordeal which began with him being beaten by a mob so bad that he couldn't walk, Acts 21:26-36. When he finally got to the ship that took him to Rome, the ship wrecked. He survived the shipwreck, made it to an island, and promptly got bitten by a deadly viper, Acts 28:3. And when he finally gets to prison, Paul is chained to a guard 24/7.

So, here's Paul, he's been falsely accused, beaten, taken to Rome as a prisoner, he's lost his ministry, his privacy, his freedom, and in that state notice what Paul says: "All those things that happened to me, were actually a good thing because it lead to something great!" Philippians 1:12. "I am convinced that my situation will become my salvation.....whether I live or die," Philippians 1:19-20. And "To me living means Christ and dying is gain.....because if I die I'll go to be with Him," Philippians 1:21-23.

What?! How can Paul say these things after his life is practically over: his freedom's been taken away. His career—his reason for living—has been taken away. He has nothing. So why is he so cheerful and hopeful?.....by the way notice what Jesus told him before his journey began, Acts 23:11. If you were beaten and thrown in jail, how would you respond if someone said, "Be cheerful"?

**How does Paul define life?** If you take away Paul's career, will he fall apart? If you take away his freedom, will he go to pieces? If you take his life, will even that phase him? No! Why not, what's the meaning of Paul's life? "For to me, to live = Christ." Paul's life was not in his career, his freedom, not even in whether he lived or died. None of these things were Paul's reason for living. His reason for living was Jesus Christ. Anything and everything he did was connected to that. This is why he was not only able to withstand but be joyful about everything that happened to him in life.