

Introduction

How would you complete this statement: "Life for me is..."? Would your answer be one of the following?

- > Water (I was just in Cape Town, South Africa, and water is scarce due to the drought they are experiencing)
- > Work (popular choice—do it over and over)
- > Wonder (all there is to see and do)
- > War (areas where people live in conflict)
- > Weariness (I am tired, struggling)
- > Wealth (getting, gaining, having)
- > Worthless ("vanity of vanities" ... empty)
- > Worry (anxious, on edge, stressed)
- > Words (for me, so much is based on what I say)

The Apostle Paul said, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21 ESV).

This was not a death wish, but a life perspective. This was how Paul viewed life between two worlds.

Paraphrase: "Life for me is worship!"

What is worship? Most people think of music when they think of worship. Yes, music is included in worship, but it not exclusively music.

Worship involves two essential matters: attitude and activity.

The activity of worship is what we do when we gather together, but the attitude of worship is something we carry daily in life.

"Worship is the believers' response of all that they are—mind, emotions, will, body—to what God is and says and does." —Warren Wiersbe

"Worship of the living and true God is essentially an engagement with Him on the terms that He proposes and in the way that He alone makes possible." —David Peterson

“Biblical worship is God’s covenant people recognizing, reveling in, and responding rightly to the glory of God in Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.” —Bob Kauflin

Here’s my own definition:

“Worship is not limited to a time, a place or a set of religious activities or rituals. Worship is the total energy of my life focused in the glory of God above all else.”

The Apostle Paul made it clear his life-goal was to honor Christ. This is where it all begins. For me, I am not a “professional” preacher; I strive to be a faithful follower of Christ.



“For me to live is Christ” means:

1. Total Awareness of His Worth

Have you ever eaten something that wasn’t worth it? ... calories were high, taste was just fair, and at the end, you were disappointed and to some degree, unsatisfied? Have you ever made a purchase that wasn’t worth it?...

dreamed of an experience?... met a person?

Paul experienced this with religion:

“But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and may share His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead” (Philippians 3:7-11 ESV).

Religion without Christ is worthless, no matter how hard you try. Paul tried to live a worthy life and found the pursuit of self-righteousness empty. Paul tried to be a worthy man, but it left him empty.

Knowing Christ makes life worth living.

In John 4, Jesus met a woman with a “worthless” life. She found how easy it was for sources to leave her empty and quickly run dry.

“Jesus said to her, ‘Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life’” (John 4:13-14 ESV).

Jesus was living water.

Only Christ will satisfy. Living for Christ is worth it.

2. Total Assurance of His Work

In the opening verses of Philippians, Paul describes God as working on behalf of the church—the believers in Philippi:

“And I am sure of this, that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6 ESV).

I am confident. There is a courageous assurance that God works in the lives of those who come to Him.

God's Three-Fold Work:

• The Work He Does For Us

... "but God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8 ESV).

In our sin, we cannot find release and reconciliation with God, but Christ has done this for us—a gift (righteousness).

• The Work He Does in Us

"And I am sure of this, that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6 ESV).

Sanctification. To this end, Paul saw all the circumstances and experiences of his life to be the way in which God would be glorified in him. It did not make sense to him (or to us), but God works through hardship and pain to bring glory to His name.

Prayer of friends, presence of the Holy Spirit and perseverance in hardship:

... "for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance" (Philippians 1:19 ESV).

Circumstances do not equal my control:

... "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" (Philippians 1:20 ESV).

Perspective:

"I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear" (Philippians 1:12-14 ESV).

There is no situation where Christ is not sufficient. We can have great confidence in the worst moments.

• **The Work He Does Through Us**

“But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account... so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again” (Philippians 1:24, 26 ESV).

God has put me here to be side by side with you.

“Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel” (Philippians 1:27 ESV).

It’s all about us living to honor Christ because of our total assurance of His work in our lives.

3. Total Access to My Life

“All Access” passes are the new subscription services in our day. I used to get a brochure

where I could choose my five favorite albums and then have one sent every month—pay one price for all, etc. In our digital world, access codes can do the same for music, books, a variety of things.

This was a bold, public statement about Paul's agenda—Christ! Paul's view was shaped around total devotion to Christ.

"I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect" (Romans 12:1-2 ESV).

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" (Colossians 3:16-17 ESV).

... “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... so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again. Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel” (Philippians 1:20, 26-27 ESV).

Paul said he lived between two worlds: “Kill me, and I’ll be with Christ. Let me live, and I’ll live for Christ.” (paraphrased)

It was a win-win! Paul’s total life pivoted on Christ-centered passion and trust.

The Wilkins family (from our church) is serving in Knysna, South Africa, and living between two worlds. During a conversation, Chris reminded me of the impact of preaching God’s Word in the lives of hearers. What happens in worship when we gather and as we go is intended to impact our lives. He also

told me about a training they attended. They were warned that they could be forgotten by their home church. But Chris and Rebecca said, "This is not true of Warren. We have never felt forgotten—emails, cards, gifts, etc." Last Sunday evening, I was blessed to personally deliver with our team a check for \$15,000 to pay off the mortgage on their home and needs.

Side by side we strive for the faith of the gospel. This is a life of worship to God who alone is worthy. Who has worked for us, in us and through us. Who deserves the total access of our lives for His glorious purpose and will.

Not all need to be missionaries, but some do. Not all need to be preachers, but some do. Doctors, teachers, builders, lawyers, brick layers, soldiers, computer programmers, childcare workers, fathers, mothers, etc., all serve Christ to say, "For me to live is Christ."

Chris Wilkins has never been happier in the will of God and yet, still far from home. It's hard to live between two worlds. We are pulled in two directions and struggle to find

the balance of living here and living there.
How will you fill in the blanks?

For to me to live is _____, and to die is
_____.

Only Jesus!

“Only one life will soon be passed; only
what’s done for Christ will last.” —C.T. Studd