

Philippians 2:16-18

Those who get close to the goal line, close enough to see it, hear what mattered most in that believer's life. No reserves . . . no retreats . . . no regrets in following after Christ.

The only way to live a life without lasting regret is to:

- Surrender to the gospel of Christ
- To live within sight of the empty tomb of Christ
- To daily reflect the cross of Christ
- To anticipate the glorious return of Christ.

1. First, Paul refers to his life and service as a runner.

Here he uses a Greek verb (*trecho*) of which his Philippian audience would have been well aware – to run. Paul often used sports metaphors; he would refer to them in his letters.

He will write to the Galatians (Chapter 2) and to the Philippians metaphorically referencing an athlete who has given his life and his efforts to prepare to run a race, who hoped it would not be in vain.

2. He refers to a laborer toiling in vain.

The Greek word (*kopian*) Paul uses for labor / toiling refers to working hard: intense, difficult, painfully and strenuously working to exhaustion. It refers to someone becoming weary from exerting oneself physically, mentally, and spiritually.

Paul effectively writes, it isn't in vain, if you get along in unity and display the light of the gospel to your culture which is lost in the dark.

Pride:

- A proud parent wants praise for raising children who are civilized and successful
- A proud businessman wants all the credit for the increase in stock value
- A proud teacher wants accolades from every graduate for his efforts

Humility:

- A humble parent is simply thrilled to see their children walking with Christ
- A humble businessman wants to share the credit with his entire team
- A humble teacher is thrilled to know his students graduated and are better prepared for life

Application:

Has there ever been a time in my life when I worked strenuously for the Lord? __Yes, __ No?

What we do for the Lord is the most important work in this world, so what do I need to remove from my life that is keeping me from intensely working for Christ?

“The day of Christ” is not the same event as the Day of the Lord, which focuses on the punishment of the unrepentant during the days of the Tribulation, “² For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. ³ While they are saying, “Peace and safety!” then destruction will come upon them suddenly (1 Thessalonians 5:2-3). The day of the Lord will be that period of time following the rapture where the wrath of God will be poured out on the earth.

The Day of Christ – is a reference to the judgment seat of Christ at the end of human history as we know it, when believers will be rewarded for the manner in which they lived their lives in service for the Lord. “... but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor.” (1 Corinthians 3:8)

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.” (2 Corinthians 5:10)

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In verse 17 Paul is saying that he plans to glory in the fact that his effort will bear fruit that glorifies God when the Philippian believers demonstrate the humility of Christ and live in a manner worthy of the gospel.

3. No regrets as a sacrifice (Vs. 17-18)

The Old Testament sacrificial system could be divided into two categories; the non-sweet savor sacrifices and the sweet-savor sacrifices. The non-sweet sacrifices had to do with guilt and defilement and uncleanness of sin.

The sacrifices that were sweet-savor sacrifices pointed to the loveliness of Christ's sacrifice. It was an offering of praise and worship for the forgiveness that was symbolized by the blood-sacrificed animal. These sacrifices would include the pouring out of a measure of wine over the sacrifice upon the altar. We're told to do the same thing through our lips and words the writer of Hebrews said "*Let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name*" (**Hebrews 13:15**).

Paul is saying in verse 17 that the sacrifice and service of the Philippians is the major part of the offering of their faith to God that's the main sacrifice on the altar. He adds, "My life is just an added libation upon your sacrifice. Even if I lose my life, it won't be wasted and there will be no regrets because I will be just a little wine upon your offering to burst into flame and then drift up in sweet smelling smoke unto God. Rejoice with me and let's share our joy together." This is the way to live with no reserves . . . no retreats . . . no regrets.

1. First, living without regret means enabling the accomplishments of others

For Paul, one of the greatest prizes in life was to know his efforts were used by God to bring others to know, love, and serve Jesus Christ.

Application:

What specific efforts in my life have been used by God to bring others to know, love, and serve Jesus Christ?

To enhance my efforts to bring others to know, love, and serve Christ, what do I need to stop doing? What do I need to start doing? And what do I need to continue to do?

2. Secondly, living without regret means longing for the applause of Christ

Since the angels in heaven rejoice over the salvation of one sinner (**Luke 15:10**) can you imagine the rejoicing and the celebration for a saint entering heaven that has poured out his life in service to the cause of Christ? For some saints there will be thunderous praise.

Sacrificing our lives, everything as it were, for the commendation of Christ, which is ultimately for God's glory, should be the goal of every Christian (**Romans 12:1-2**).

Paul effectively says to these Philippian believers, I'm going to be thrilled to find such glory in Christ that has been glorified in you.

Paul has described in these few verses, a life committed to integrity and purity; a life that holds onto and holds out to others the word of life. Not a life without failure; not without confession; not without difficulty; but a life with no reserves, no retreats, and no regrets.

Application:

What in my life must change so there are no reserves, no retreats, and no regrets?