

Summer Sabbath Resources for Adults

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"For Me To Live Is Christ"

Bible Text: Please read Philippians 1:19-30 aloud from your favorite translation.

Devotional Thought

Are you like me when we read this passage? Because of our relative freedoms and significant prosperity, it is hard to place ourselves in this picture. We understand rejoicing and giving thanks in all things, even if we don't do it particularly well. We understand being living examples, even if we are a little fuzzy on just exactly how. But when Paul says that either remaining on earth or going on to a heavenly reward now are both acceptable alternatives,

we may struggle with this. We probably accept that premise in theory, but we have a strong "will to live." And, what is our understanding of "standing firm?"

I was a guest of the Hungarian military in the mid-1990's and was assigned a college-age translator who stuck to me like glue. On Sunday morning I saw a church steeple nearby and decided to attend services. I told the translator he did not have to go with me, but he replied, sadly, "No, if you go I

have to go." I understood nothing of the service except "amen," but it was still worshipful. Later I told the translator I believed that where faith is not challenged it tends to grow weaker, but where it must struggle to exist it grows stronger. He said, "That's interesting! The minister was saying that very thing in his sermon!" I believe that church service was intended for the translator, not for me. Hungarian Christians have had far more experience than I at "standing firm" in their faith in a place where it was discouraged.

An Invitation to Prayer

Pray for courage to be unashamed of Christ, to speak to others about Him, and ask for the ability to be content with our circumstances.

An Invitation to Service

Consider volunteering for one of the many ministries of our church, such as the Circle of Hope, or working with young people. Or recognize that at certain stages of our lives the best we can do is care for our families and teach our children God's truths.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

Do we do what we can to promote unity within our church family, provide prayer support, and share our resources?

Are we able to say that whether God leaves us here longer or chooses to take us home, either is OK?

Are we able to view suffering for our faith in God as a privilege?

OK! Last question: "Did anyone else flunk the Paul test as badly as I?"