

1. The Joy of Martyrs is in the Offering

- a. To be poured out for the sake of others is Christ-like
 - i. Emphasizes the extremity of the case
 1. 'if I am *even* poured out'
 2. Paul apostolic ministry and service boils down to the fact that he would give anything for the sake of his fellow believers
 3. He sees his death in sight as a possibility, an extreme case of love
 - ii. Contrasted with his admonition, he now reveals the depth of his loving commitment both to Christ and to the Philippians
 1. In fact, he calls the Philippians his "joy and crown" in 4:1
 2. See also 1 Thess 2:19
 - a. At the return of Jesus, their salvation through faith in Christ is the reward that Paul seeks
 - b. Their faith, here pictured as an offering to God, is the apostle's great joy and crown for which he hopes not to labor in vain (v16)
- b. word used of libation offerings
 - i. Hebraic – wine poured out next to the altar, but never on it (Ex 30:9)
 - ii. Greek - wine poured upon a burnt offering that would steam immediately up
 - iii. The idea is that the drink offering was the final topper of the sacrifice, the finishing of it as pleasing to the Lord
 1. Wine was vital in ancient times
 2. The alcohol of natural fermentation killed bacteria
 3. Plus, it tastes good (see Cana, John 2)
- c. Paul views himself as being offered up to the Lord
 - i. sacrifice that pleases the Lord
 1. given freely in gratitude
 2. spent - He may give his life in Rome
 - ii. Not merely in his death as a martyr, but also in his service as an apostle to the Church
 1. His purpose is to be spent in such a way that pleases the Lord
 2. Spent in a way that "tops off" the sacrifice of faith that others place in Jesus
 - iii. How many of us view ourselves this way?
 1. This is brave humility, confident inadequacy in his own calling
- d. Who is doing the "pouring out"?
 - i. Martyrdom is not taking your own life (suicide), or taking others' lives in an act of violence (suicide bombers), but rather having your life poured out by another
 - ii. Functionally, the one threatening Paul's life is the Roman authorities, Caesar
 - iii. Ultimately, Paul sees his life as an offering to the Lord, a sacrifice of gratitude made for God and by Christ through the Holy Spirit
 1. I believe that Paul sees Jesus as the High Priest who is pouring out his life for the sake of the Philippians' faith
 2. He entrusts himself to such a self-sacrificial High Priest
 - a. Note also that Paul does not see his "being poured out" as atoning for sins in any way
 - b. Rather, he sees it as the extreme case of giving everything so as to please the Lord
 - c. This sacrifice is for the sake of others

3. He is following in the footsteps of Jesus, who gave up Heavenly unhindered communion with the Father to be poured out upon the Cross in our place, for our sake

2. The Martyr's Goal is Others' Faith in Jesus Christ

- a. "Upon the sacrifice and offering of your faith"
- b. Paul sees his own life as the smaller offering and the Philippians faith in Christ as the larger offering
 - i. sacrifice – the object given up to God in dependence
 1. The lamb, ram, bull, etc. that was offered up in dependence upon the Lord
 2. Paul is still picturing the Exodus story here, emphasizing the sacrificial system now in his word pictures
 - ii. offering - word meaning offering of worship, service, sacrifice – service to God for God on behalf of others
 1. it is that ministry of offering up sacrifices
 - a. Luke 1:23 – Zechariah's service in the temple
 - b. Heb 8:6; 9:21 – Jesus' priestly service through His own blood
 2. It also used of general service to others for the sake of God
 - a. Phil 2:30 – their service to Paul through Epaphroditus
 - b. The idea being an offering to God on behalf of another
- c. It is their faith that is offered up to God as pleasing
 - i. Much to say about faith/dependence as the means by which God is pleased
 1. Hebrews 11:6 – “without faith it is impossible to please God...”
 2. Romans 14:23 – “...whatever is not from faith is sin”
 - ii. What pleases God is not our strength, wisdom, power, or other such gifts
 - iii. What pleases God is our faith, that is our humble dependence upon Him
 1. What a strange thing to place on an altar, but that is what God ultimately desires
 2. This faith, of course, also acts in obedience, right? It is not empty faith, nor dead faith (see James 2:17,26), but rather living faith (Gal 2:20; 1 Tim 6:12) that produces heartfelt and fearless obedience without complaint
 - iv. The Lord desires faith that is dependent upon Him and active toward others
 1. He is a giver, one who has poured Himself out to bring us near to Himself by faith in Christ
 2. In this way, Paul imitates Christ for the sake of the Philippians
 3. All believers are called to the same type of “being poured out” for the sake of the faith of others
- d. This “other-centeredness” comes from the Lord Himself
 - i. Jesus, the ultimate “other-centered” One, did all things for the sake of His Father and for the sake of His people
 - ii. See the Incarnation, Cross, Resurrection, Ascension, and Pentecost

3. Martyrs Rejoice at Being Spent for the Faith of Others

- a. "I am glad and rejoice with you all"
 - i. This is his major point
 - ii. “if I am poured out even unto death, I rejoice at your faith for I have not labored in vain!”
- b. It pleased Paul to be able to offer himself up for them and next to them
 - i. Usually we think of martyrdom as sad and somewhat somber

- ii. Paul uses the word “rejoice with” or “congratulate” referring to his possible death for them
 - 1. The joy is not in the death itself, but rather in the fulfillment of the Philippians’ faith
 - 2. His eyes are on the prize, the eternal goal, the upward call of Jesus
 - 3. He sees Christ and has a transformed view of this world and even of his own life and importance: it is for Christ and others
- c. amazing amount of humble love for the Philippians
 - i. the master-teacher sees himself as the smaller-lesser
 - 1. He is the drink offering
 - 2. Their faith is the bulk of the offering
 - 3. Romans 15:15-16
 - ii. His joy is wrapped up in their joy (this is love)
 - 1. He knows that their faith produces hope, love, and joy (Rom 15:13)
 - 2. His joy is not wrapped up in his own life, nor even his own blessings at this point, but rather in their faith “even if” his own life is spent for it
 - iii. mutual joy and celebration of their faith in the Lord
- d. "Likewise, you also should be glad and rejoice with me"
 - i. He implores them to rejoice at his "good fortune" to be able to be poured out as an offering with them
 - ii. Concept of "congratulations" for his martyrdom
- e. Do we find joy in giving up for Christ?

4. Martyrs Rejoice When Spent Because Their Eyes Are Fixed Upon Jesus

- a. Acts 7:55-60
 - i. Stephen fixed his eyes upon Jesus as he preached his fateful sermon
 - ii. Seeing Jesus, he forgave his murderers and implored the Lord to forgive them as well
 - iii. Would I die like that?
 - 1. Me, the one who complains about the great oppressions toward me like gold rims on minivans?
 - 2. The one who, in my faithless days, holes up in self-pity and self-centeredness and avoids people all together
 - 3. Oh, how I so quickly remove my eyes from Jesus and place them upon myself and my circumstances!!
 - a. Praise be to God who has promised to transform me as I gaze into His glory in the face of Jesus (2 Cor 3:18)
- b. Hebrews 12:2-3
 - i. The One who, “for the joy set before Him endured the Cross, despising its shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God”
 - ii. Only as we keep our eyes upon Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, are we able to joyfully be spent for the sake of others’ faith.
 - 1. Not growing weary
 - 2. Bearing up hostility towards us
 - 3. Never giving up hope
- c. To the martyr, the power of God and the glory of God are not about living this life in comfort, ease, or earthly pleasure, but rather about the glory of God in the Cross of Christ.
 - i. That’s where the power of God is revealed

- ii. That's where our hope springs from: God loves you enough to die for you, so that we can die for Him fearlessly and with great joy

Conclusion:

God pours out other things beside our lives for the sake of others. He poured out the blood of His Son upon the altar for you and me, though we were undeserving, in His perfect love (Matt 26:28). He pours out His Holy Spirit, the Spirit of adoption, into our hearts by which we cry out to Him with the name, "Daddy!" (Rom 5:5; He pours out His love into our hearts through His Holy Spirit. He richly pours out His mercy upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior from sins, the righteous one dying for the ungodly (Titus 3:5-7), renewing us and regenerating our souls to desire Him with new life. And in John's Revelation of Jesus Christ He is said to pour out His wrath upon the sons of unbelief (Rev 16, see OT).

Are you and I willing to be spent, all the way to the point of daily death or the giving our final breath, for the sake of others' faith? Do we consider it the most heroic things to preach the gospel so that many believe, receive the pouring out of God's mercy in their faith in Jesus, and avoid the pouring out of His wrath on that final day? You and I have a mission: tell of the goodness and grandeur of God in a hostile and foreign world, so that many believe and brought from death into life through the blood of Jesus Christ. May we bear up this sacrifice with joy, for look around you and see the community of saints, those who believe...isn't it worth it for them to believe?

Fix your eyes upon Jesus and invest your life's blood in the faith of others. Help them to see Jesus, trust Jesus, run to Jesus, worship Jesus in all seasons. Here you find your greatest joy: glorifying Christ and seeing the joy of the redeemed as they find their Savior to be awesomely trustworthy and fully sufficient for their hearts' desires.