

Sunday, September 24, 2023

## Scripture Reading: Philippians 1:21-30

*We all die. The goal isn't to live forever. The goal is to create something that will.*  
—Chuck Palahniuk

Imagine that you were offered a chance to go on a Mars mission! Would you jump at it? After all, actor William Shatner flew into space at the age of 90 on Blue Origin NS-18, and astronaut John Glenn took his last space flight when he was 77.

When a trip to Mars was proposed by Mars One, a Dutch nonprofit organization, people were excited. But they soon learned that there was a huge catch: If you boarded the flight and set off for the red planet, *you would not be coming back!*

To the surprise of everyone, more than 200,000 applicants completed the paperwork — willing to go to a planet where they would spend the rest of their days living (and surely dying) in a hostile environment and no scenery but red rocks and dust everywhere. Mars One thought that they could put four people on Mars as an initial colony in the year 2030, followed by new crews every two years. Mars would be their permanent home, where they would live, work and study the planet for the benefit of science, exploration and the human race.

However, the only death in this misadventure was the death of the Mars One corporation itself. From 2012 when it announced the Mars program to its bankruptcy in early 2019, the company attracted tens of millions of dollars from investors. Many critics believed the whole setup was a scam from the get-go. Maybe they are right.

But in today's Bible reading, we encounter a man who clearly was ready to take a trip from which there was no return. "For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain," he wrote. "I do not know which I prefer. I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart, and to be with Christ, for that is far better" (Philippians 1:21-23). The apostle Paul was completely ready to take a one-way trip to glory — a trip from which he would never return.

Of course, the day came when he did exactly that. Before he died, he wrote these famous words, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7). Death did not frighten Paul in the least. He looked forward to it.

We, too, face that time in life when we will say goodbye to loved ones, and set off on a one way trip to heaven, which, after all, has been our final destination all these years. In a sense, it will be for us, as it was for the apostle, a "going home." Like he said, "[I] would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:8, ESV).

—Timothy Merrill

*Prayer: Lord Jesus, be with me in that hour when I shed this creaking body and exchange it for a glorified one. In your name. Amen.*

*Blessings,  
Liz & Peter & Ben Metz*

**Daily Bible Readings**

**Sunday:** 1 Corinthians 1-4

**Monday:** Ezekiel 22-24

**Tuesday:** Ezekiel 25-27

**Wednesday:** Ezekiel 28-30

**Thursday:** Ezekiel 31-33

**Friday:** Ezekiel 34-36

**Saturday:** Psalms 109-111

## VERSE TO REMEMBER

*For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.*

—1 Corinthians 1:25

### TWO DEFINITIONS — SAME WORD

Directions: A homonym is a word that sounds the same and is spelled the same, but has two meanings. Find the pair of meanings and write the homonym in the center box and draw lines from each meaning to the box. We have provided one example.

He got up	<b>ROSE</b>	The amount of butter you might buy
A direction one might turn		Olive oil is created when subjected to this
To attempt to hit a ball		A sightless, nocturnal mammal that flies
An incendiary stick		The blossom of a flower with thorns
A financial institution		Amount of celery you might buy
Queen Elizabeth was one		Your pillow might be filled with this
A hammer is used to do this		For example, a tennis contest
Repeatedly follow someone		You might use one as a straight-edge
A tasty treat from some palm trees		A special evening with your inamorata
Direction a stone falls when dropped		To be correct
Journalists might also be known as this		An otter might slide down one

**ANSWERS:** The homonyms for left column top to bottom: rose, right, bat, match, bank, ruler, pound, stalk, date, down, press.