

Philippians 2:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

Analysis

Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain (λόγον ζωῆς ἐπέχοντες, εἰς καύχημα ἔμοὶ εἰς ἡμέραν Χριστοῦ, ὅτι οὐκ εἰς κενὸν ἔδραμον οὐδὲ εἰς κενὸν ἐκοπίασα, logon zōēs epechontes, eis kauchēma emoi eis hēmeran Christou, hoti ouk eis kenon edramon oude eis kenon ekopiasa)—Epechontes ("holding forth, holding fast") can mean holding out (offering) or holding onto (maintaining). Likely both: guarding gospel truth while proclaiming it. Logon zōēs ("word of life") is the gospel—life-giving message.

Eis kauchēma emoi ("for a boast to me") means ground of rejoicing. Eis hēmeran Christou ("in/for the day of Christ")—eschatological accountability (1:6, 10). Paul's labor finds validation in Philippians' perseverance. Ouk eis kenon edramon ("I did not run in vain")—edramon ("I ran") is athletic metaphor. Ekopiasa ("I labored") suggests exhausting toil. Eis kenon ("in vain, for nothing") is Paul's fear—wasted ministry. Philippians' faithfulness proves his ministry fruitful.

Historical Context

Paul frequently uses athletic imagery (1 Cor 9:24-27; Gal 2:2; 2 Tim 4:7). Greco-Roman games (Olympics, Isthmian) were culturally prominent. 'Day of Christ' (eschatological judgment) will reveal ministry authenticity. Paul's validation isn't earthly acclaim but eschatological vindication—disciples who persevere. Itinerant

teachers in antiquity sought followers for personal glory; Paul sought converts for Christ's glory.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How are you 'holding forth the word of life' (logon zōēs) in your sphere of influence?
2. What would it mean for your ministry or witness to be 'in vain' (eis kenon)?
3. How does living toward 'the day of Christ' reshape your priorities and validate faithful labor?

Interlinear Text

λόγον ζωῆς ἐπέχοντες εἰς καύχημα ἐμοὶ εἰς ἡμέραν

the word of life Holding forth in may rejoice I in the day

G3056 G2222 G1907 G1519 G2745 G1698 G1519 G2250

Χριστοῦ ὅτι οὐκ εἰς κενὸν ἔδραμον οὐδὲ εἰς κενὸν

of Christ that not in vain I have neither in vain

G5547 G3754 G3756 G1519 G2756 G5143 G3761 G1519 G2756

ἐκοπίασα

laboured

G2872

Additional Cross-References

1 Corinthians 9:26 (Parallel theme): I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:

Galatians 2:2 (Parallel theme): And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.

1 John 1:1 (Word): That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;

John 6:68 (Word): Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

2 Corinthians 1:14 (Parallel theme): As also ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are our's in the day of the Lord Jesus.

John 6:63 (Word): It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

1 Thessalonians 3:5 (Parallel theme): For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain.

Luke 12:8 (Parallel theme): Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God:

Hebrews 4:12 (Word): For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Isaiah 49:4 (Parallel theme): Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain: yet surely my judgment is with the LORD, and my work with my God.