

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

A Priceless Pair Philippians 2:19-30 Part 2

Last week I shared with you how my daughter while picking up blocks and singing the Barney song “clean up, clean up, everybody everywhere clean up clean up everybody do their share.” she not only her children but Lynn and I as well following her positive example.

But she was not the only one that had success with using an example to shape the behavior of the twins. I showed them how they could use blocks to make catapults. It didn’t seem such a problem when they were toddlers they could only launch a block only a few feet. But as they got older they began launching blocks much longer distances and actually became a threat. Examples can be a powerful influence on shaping behavior whether for good or for bad.

I am again sharing all of this with you to set the stage for the passage we are presently studying which is Philippians 2:19-30. In this passage Paul introduces two men who hopefully will serve as positive spiritual examples for our lives.

The first example that we have begun to look at is Timothy, in Philippians 2:19-24. Let us read this section of Scripture, **“But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition. (2) For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare. (21) For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus, (22) But you know of his proven worth that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child serving his father. (23) Therefore I hope to send him immediately, as soon as I see how things go with me; And I trust in the Lord that I myself also shall be coming shortly.** There is much in this passage by way of example that we can learn from.

He begins this passage by saying **“(19) I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly.”** Paul believes that this decision to send Timothy is consistent with what he knows about the person, purpose and plan of Christ and is willing to accept whatever happens as a result of this decision. This is why he says, **“I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly.”**

I would hope that we could say the same thing about our present plans. I hope that we could say like Paul “I hope in the Lord Jesus to do this particular thing or that particular thing.”

After Paul details out for us his plan and how it had taken shape he then provides the Philippians with a stated reason for making the decision to send Timothy when he says **“so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition.”** Paul is expecting that when he hears Timothy’s report concerning the church that he will be encouraged. Paul is expecting that when Timothy returns from his visit with the Philippian church he will report that the Philippian church is in fact walking in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.

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In other words that they are continuing to stand firm in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel even in the midst of opposition and that they are also striving to maintain church unity by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, intent on one purpose in spite of an occasional conflict among certain members.

After introducing his plan and his reason for it Paul begins to give a detailed profile of Timothy. He is not giving this profile in order to introduce Timothy to the Philippians. The Philippians knew Timothy well. But they did not know how close Paul and Timothy had become and this profile helps them to see this closeness clearly.

Paul in this profile outlines for the Philippians a number of different features characteristic of Timothy. Last week we began by considering two of those features which hopefully will serve as an example or model that we can follow.

What is the first feature that Paul highlights? Timothy is similar to Paul (Philippians 1:20). Let us read **verse 20** **“For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare.”** Paul and Timothy were kindred spirits. The word “kindred spirit” (ISOPSUCHOS) literally means “equal souled” or “equal minded.” How close were Paul and Timothy? They were extremely close. They had become kindred spirits. Paul was not sending a person who could not represent him well. Paul was sending someone who could fully, completely, totally represent him. They should therefore receive him in the very same way that they would have received Paul himself.

Hopefully we are spiritually investing ourselves in others in the very same way that Paul had spiritually invested himself in Timothy. And perhaps by the grace of God the Lord might bless us with a kindred spirit, someone who will be able to serve Christ in very much the same way as we serve Christ..... What is the second feature?

Timothy is sympathetic (Philippians 1:20) Let us again go back to **Philippians 2:19,20** **“For I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition, (20) For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for you welfare.”** Timothy had a genuine concern for the Philippians.

The word translated “concern” is a very strong word. The word “concerned” (MERIMNAO) signifies to be anxious about, to have a distracting care. With this understanding we could translate this verse, **“For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will be anxious about your welfare.”** You could think of this as “Godly anxiety.” The burden that Paul felt for the Philippians and that Timothy felt for Philippians was so intense that it would consume their thoughts and energies. Rather than thinking about their needs they would be thinking about the needs of the Philippians.

Hopefully one of the features that we will cultivate in our own lives and seek to pass to others is the Godly anxiety for others particularly our Christian brothers and sisters in Christ. Hopefully the Lord would be gracious to us here in our fellowship and this would be a distinguishing feature of our church as it was in Paul and Timothy’s life.

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We will now consider a third feature that Paul introduces in Timothy's profile. Timothy is single minded (Philippians 1:21) Let us read **Philippians 2:21**, "**For they all seek after their own personal interests, not those of Christ Jesus.**" Paul in this verse is explaining to the Philippians why there was no one other than Timothy who had a genuine concern for their welfare. They were not genuinely concerned because they were seeking after their own personal interests. Of course this meant that this was not true of Timothy. In contrast to other professing Christians at Rome, Timothy was single minded.

Timothy by his life is setting before us an example of what it means to be a true disciple of Christ. Timothy's personal interests did not super cede the interests of Christ (Luke 9:57-62). We see the importance of single mindedness spelled out for us very clearly in **Luke 9:57-62**. In this passage there are three different men who failed to become disciples of Christ because they were not single minded. Each of these men put their own personal interests over those of Christ.

Let us consider the first man in **Luke 9:57-58**, "**And as they were going along the road, someone said to him, 'I will follow You wherever you go.'**" The first man volunteered to go with Christ wherever Christ went. This man apparently had failed to count the cost of that statement. Perhaps he saw himself going from town to town proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom together with Christ while staying in 5 star hotels. Christ apparently countered this lack of thoughtful reflection on the cost of being a disciple of Christ in **verse 58**, **And Jesus said to him, 'The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man has nowhere to lay His head.'** It is impossible to be a faithful disciple of Christ if we put our personal comfort before the interest of Christ...

Let us consider the second man in **Luke 9:59**, "**And He said to another, 'Follow Me.' But he said, 'Permit me first to go and bury my father.'**" The second man was called to be a disciple by Jesus Himself but he was rejected because he was more worried about his father's funeral than responding to Christ's call. Jesus therefore responds in **verse 60** "**But He said to him, 'Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God.'**" Jesus is not suggesting that we dishonor our parents, but only that we do not permit our love for family to weaken our love for the Lord. When push comes to shove our love for the Lord must prevail. This is the point that Jesus was making in **Luke 14:25-26**. "**Now great multitudes were going along with Him; and He turned and said to them, (26) 'If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father, and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.'**" Putting family above Christ certainly can be a problem .

And finally let's consider the third man in **Luke 9:61** "**And another also said, 'I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home.'**" This third man volunteered, but he could not follow Christ because he was looking back instead of ahead. There is nothing wrong with a loving farewell we see that in **1 Kings 19:19-21** when Elisha went back to say goodbye to his family before following Elijah. There is nothing wrong with reflecting on present memories from the past but if our past gets in the way of obedience to Christ, it becomes sin. Jesus saw that this man's heart was not wholly committed to Him. No wonder the laborers are few! There are so few people who are single minded. Who are able to submit their interests to the interest of Christ?

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You might ask and need to ask, “What are the interests of Christ?” The interests of Christ are spelled out to us in the Scripture. There are many. Christ is interested in us begin involved with His word. Christ is interested in us being involved in prayer. Christ is interested in us being involved in meaningful fellowship with the church. Christ is interested in us ministering our gifts within the context of the church. Christ is interested in all these things and many others things.

But there is one thing Christ is interested in which is particularly stressed in this epistle and it is an interest that we must not overlook if we are going to follow in the footsteps of Timothy. We must put Christ’s interest in the furtherance of the gospel ahead of our interest (Philippians 1:5,7,12,16, 27; 2:23).

If there is any doubt about that the furtherance of the gospel being the focal point of Philippians let us consider just a few of the verses that we have already considered: in **Philippians 1:5**, Paul is thanking the Lord for the Philippians participation in the gospel. In **Philippians 1:7**, we see Paul explaining his deep feelings for the Philippians based on their participation with him in the defense and proclamation of the gospel. In **Philippians 1:12**, we see Paul explaining his present joy in the midst of terrible circumstances in light of the progress of the gospel. In **Philippians 1:16**, Paul speaks of being appointed for the defense of the gospel. In **Philippians 1:27**, Paul is exhorting the Philippian church to walk in a manner worthy of the gospel and then goes on to explain it all the way down to **verse 18**. We are now looking at Paul’s profile of Timothy and even in this profile we see the importance of the furtherance of the gospel highlighted in **verse 23**. What does it say, **“But you know of his proven worth that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel.”**

Let us go back to the original question. Do your present interests take precedent over the interests of Christ? If they do then I would encourage you to confess your sin and follow in the footsteps of Timothy. If your present interests do not take precedent over the interests of Christ rejoice and follow in the footsteps of Timothy.

What are the features has Paul presented in Timothy’s profile so far? Timothy is similar to Paul, Timothy is sympathetic and Timothy is single minded. What is the fourth feature that Paul presents.

Timothy was seasoned (Philippians 1:22). Let us look at **Philippians 1:22 “But you know of his proven worth**” Paul had asked Timothy to join him on his second missionary journey. Paul’s trust in Timothy was not misplaced. Timothy had proven himself to be a valuable member of Paul’s missionary team by possessing a Godly character and impressive work ethic (Philippians 1:22).

Paul wanted very badly to send someone to Philippi for a number of different reasons that are stated directly or alluded to in this epistle. But he could not send just anybody he needed to send someone that he could count on and Paul is reminding the Philippians that Timothy was such a man. Paul knew and the Philippians should have known that Timothy would not fail to represent Paul well.

When important tasks need to be done it is very important for a church to have people of proven worth. The importance of this feature I believe is seen in the qualifications for elders and deacons given to us in **1 Timothy 3**.

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One of the many qualifications for elder is “**not a new convert, lest he become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil.**” And then later amongst the many qualifications for a deacon we find these words, “**and let them first be tested.**” I believe that these particular qualifications are linked to the concept of “**proven worth.**”

Some people who have been at Valley Bible for a while have observed how slow we are in presenting elder and deacon candidates. Why? Because we believe that those who lead our church must be proven. The last candidate that we presented to you was Lance Richards. We put him before you as a candidate because over the 20 years that he has fellowshiped with us he like Timothy has proven to us his worth.

What about yourself? Has your life and ministry been proven? Have you placed yourself in a position by the way you have lived your life and carried out your ministries in our church fellowship that the leaders of Valley Bible Church could confidently approach you for help and be able to count on you to represent them well. What is the fifth and final feature in Paul’s profile of Timothy?

Timothy was submissive (Philippians 2:22-23). Let us read **Philippians 2:22-23, “But you know of his proven worth that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child serving his father. (23) Therefore I hope to send him immediately, as soon as I see how things go with me.”** Notice what Paul says, “**But you know of his proven worth that he served with me.....**” Paul viewed Timothy as a fellow servant or slave. He saw Timothy and himself both giving themselves to the word of furthering the gospel. But in serving the purpose of furthering the gospel Paul goes on to say, “**like a child serving his father.**” They were serving together, but in order for them to serve effectively together in the cause of furthering the gospel someone needed to submit. And it is very clear from this passage that it was Timothy who chose to submit himself to Paul. He chose to submit himself to Paul out of respect hopefully as a child would submit to his own father.

This is not an easy thing for some people to do, but it is a necessary thing. It makes for a much smoother operation and a more effective operation. Whenever a new group of people come together in order to accomplish a task though they are hopefully all co-laborers a leader needs to emerge and in order for that leader to emerge others need to willingly submit themselves.

If Timothy willingly submitted himself to Paul who do we willingly submit ourselves too? We are to willingly submit ourselves to the elders (Hebrews 13:17). What does Hebrews 13:17 tell us “**Obey your leaders, and submit to them; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.**”

CONCLUSION

This is not a very deep passage theologically but I would hope that God is using the example of Timothy to challenge us and to perfect us.