

## EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

### PASTORAL PLANS, PHILIPPIANS 2:19-30

#### A. Concerning Timothy (19-24)

1. Paul hoped to send Timothy to the Philippians who could report on their spiritual condition (19), ***I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I too may be cheered by news of you.***
  - a. Paul realized that his desires were to be in line with the will of the Lord Jesus.
    - 1) Philippians 2:24, *and I trust in the Lord that shortly I myself will come also.*
    - 2) 1 Corinthians 16:7, *For I do not want to see you now just in passing. I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits.*
    - 3) John Lightfoot, *The Christian is a part of Christ, a member of his body. His every thought and word and deed proceed from Christ, as the center of volition...He has one guiding principle in acting and forbearing to act, 'only in the Lord.'*
  - b. His hope was to send Timothy to them as soon as possible so he could give Paul a report of their condition.
    - 1) Timothy was in Rome with Paul when Paul wrote the letter to the Philippians.
      - a) Philippians 1:1, *Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons:*
      - b) Timothy was ministering to Paul while in prison. Yet, Paul wanted the Philippians to receive ministry even if it meant not having Timothy with him.
    - 2) Paul accepted responsibility for shepherding the Philippians believers.
      - a) He hoped to receive a good report of their spiritual condition.
      - b) I am sure Paul expected Timothy to instruct them when he was with them.
        - 1] Discipleship calls for more than authority - it demands personal investment.
        - 2] D. A. Carson, *...Christian character is as much caught as taught—that is, it is picked up by constant association with mature Christians.*
    - c. Paul's sending Timothy to Philippi pictures his selflessness, R. Lightner, *Timothy was close to Paul and dear to his heart. If Paul ever needed Timothy, it was while he was there in Rome under house arrest. Yet he was willing to sacrifice Timothy's companionship so that others could be helped.*
2. Paul expressed how deep was his love and appreciation for Timothy (20-22), ***For I have no one like him, who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. For they all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But you know Timothy's proven worth, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel.***
  - a. Timothy's background
    - 1) He had a godly upbringing.
      - a) 2 Timothy 1:5, *I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.*
      - b) 2 Timothy 3:14-15, *But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.*
    - 2) He had a godly reputation, Acts 16:1-2, *Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek. He was well spoken of by the brothers at Lystra and Iconium.*
    - 3) He had a godly life, 2 Timothy 3:10-11, *You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me.*
  - b. Timothy's qualifications
    - 1) Paul and Timothy were *like-minded*
      - a) *no one like Him*, one who served others rather than himself.
      - b) Timothy was the one who most closely resembled Jesus' servant heart.
        - 1] Putting others first is seeking the interests of Jesus Christ.
        - 2] Robert Lightner, *Timothy stood out as a rare gem in a world of self-seekers.*
    - c) Paul described such an attitude in Philippians 2:3-4, *Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.*

- d) This like-mindedness is contrasted to other Christians.
    - 1] *they all seek their own interests, literally, their own.*
    - 2] Paul may have had in mind those mentioned in Philippians 1:15, *Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will.*
    - 3] Thomas Constable, *A believer who puts the interests of Christ before his or her own is still a rare individual.*
  - 2) He had a proven track-record of ministry
    - a) He served in ministry with Paul like a son with his father.
      - 1] Paul and Timothy ministered together to the Philippians, note Acts 16.
      - 2] Timothy faithfully served even while Paul was imprisoned.
      - 3] Timothy pictured the humility of Christ as he willingly served under Paul, out of the limelight.
    - b) His ministry centered on the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
      - 1] His doctrine was in order.
      - 2] He lived what he believed.
  3. Paul planned to send Timothy as soon as possible (23), ***I hope therefore to send him just as soon as I see how it will go with me,***
    - a. In the Greek, the first word is *this one*, with emphasis given to Timothy's qualifications. Timothy, the one who is so qualified is the one Paul planned to send to the Philippians.
    - b. Paul expected to send Timothy as soon as he received the results of his trial.
      - 1) He seemed to think he would hear something soon.
      - 2) He had life-threatening issues confronting him but he still took time to consider the needs of others.
      - 3) Max Anders, *Here Paul shows the fine line between total concentration on selfish concerns (v. 21) and legitimate concern for immediate personal needs (v. 23).*
  4. Paul still hoped that he could return to them (24), ***and I trust in the Lord that shortly I myself will come also.***
    - a. His desire was for release so he could again minister to the Philippians in person.
    - b. Regardless of the outcome, Paul was trusting the Lord accomplish His will
    - c. There is evidence that Nero released Paul who resumed his missionary efforts. Paul was imprisoned again in Rome where he wrote 2 Timothy.
- B. Concerning Epaphroditus (25-30)
1. Paul hoped to send Epaphroditus to them (25), ***I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need,***
    - a. Before sending Timothy, Paul sent Epaphroditus to the Philippians with this epistle.
      - 1) The Greek text begins the verse with *but*. It contrasts what was said about Timothy and Paul who would come later in contrast to Paul sending Epaphroditus right away.
      - 2) Paul would highly commend Epaphroditus to show that he was not sending him back because he was of no value but despite the fact of how valuable he was to Paul. M. Anders, *The Philippians had sent him to care for Paul's needs. Now Paul sent him to care for their needs.*
      - 3) The rest of this section gives reasons why Paul sent Epaphroditus first.
    - b. Paul's description of Epaphroditus who only appears in the Epistle to the Philippians.
      - 1) He was Paul's brother in the faith.
        - a) This was the preeminent relationship from which the other relationships flowed.
        - b) Note Philippians 1:5, *because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.*
      - 2) He was Paul's fellow worker.
        - a) They served together in building the church of Jesus Christ.
        - b) Note Philippians 4:3, *Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women, who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.*
      - 3) He was Paul's fellow soldier.

- a) They served together in spiritual battle against the enemies of Jesus Christ.
  - b) The meaning of *fellow soldier* is *one who serves in arduous tasks or undergoes severe experiences together with someone else* (Louw-Nida).
  - c) It is only used one other time in the New Testament, Philemon 1:2, *and Apphia our sister and Archippus our fellow soldier, and the church in your house:*
- 4) He was the Philippians' messenger to Paul.
    - a) Epaphroditus carried the Philippians' gift to Paul.
    - b) Philippians 4:18-20, *I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.*
  - 5) He was the Philippians' minister to Paul's needs.
    - a) Epaphroditus cared for Paul while imprisoned in Rome.
    - b) He not only took a financial gift but personally served Paul.
2. Epaphroditus longed to see them but had been seriously ill (26-27a), ***for he has been longing for you all and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill. Indeed he was ill, near to death.***
    - a. He *has been longing* to be with his brothers and sisters in Philippi.
      - 1) He had a *great desire* to be with them.
      - 2) Paul used the same term in Philippians 1:8, *For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.*
      - 3) This homesickness was probably intensified by his illness, M. Anders, *Part of the reason for homesickness was worry over the reaction of family and friends to news of his own illness. Their worries provoked deeper worries in him because he cared so deeply for them. He needed to go home. Paul needed him to help his home church.*
    - b. He *has been distressed* because they knew he was deathly ill.
      - 1) He was *deeply troubled*. It was the same word used by Jesus when He was in Gethsemane, Mark 14:33, *And he took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly distressed and troubled.*
      - 2) He possibly became ill on the way to Rome, note Philippians 2:30.
      - 3) It is uncertain as to whether the Philippians knew he had recovered.
  3. God healed Epaphroditus (27b), ***But God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.***
    - a. God *had mercy* on Epaphroditus.
      - 1) He showed *compassion, pity*.
      - 2) God showed not only emotion for Epaphroditus' condition but did something about his condition. God healed him.
      - 3) Paul did not have the ability to heal Epaphroditus, T. Constable, *Divine healing has always been subject to the will of God.*
    - b. God's mercy was on Paul, as well.
      - 1) Losing Epaphroditus would be like *sorrow upon sorrow*, Vincent interprets it as *wave upon wave*.
      - 2) Paul who was imprisoned and facing execution was spared the grief of losing one who had been sent to minister to his needs.
  3. Paul gave reasons for wanting Epaphroditus to visit the Philippians (28-30)
    - a. He wanted them to be encouraged as well as himself (28), ***I am the more eager to send him, therefore, that you may rejoice at seeing him again, and that I may be less anxious.***
      - 1) Paul sent Epaphroditus home as soon as possible so they could rejoice in his recovery.
      - 2) Also, it would be a relief to Paul to know that the Philippians would be able to rejoice at the news of Epaphroditus' recovery.
      - 3) Paul exhibited his concern for others by putting Epaphroditus and the Philippians first. Not only, would the Philippians' fears for Epaphroditus be relieved but they also would have him home to minister to them.
    - b. He wanted the Philippians to honor him because of his faithful ministry (29-30), ***So receive him in the Lord with all joy, and honor such men, for he nearly died for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what***

*was lacking in your service to me.*

- 1) Paul commanded the Philippians to receive Epaphroditus with joy.
  - a) He was not a quitter because he came home early.
  - b) He was sent home by Paul for their benefit.
  
- 2) Paul commanded them to honor Epaphroditus.
  - a) He was fully committed to His Savior.
  - b) He risked his life to fulfill his task.
  - c) In the ancient Church, those who cared for others at the risk of their own lives were called *reckless persons*.
  
- 3) Paul commanded them to know that Epaphroditus' ministry to Paul was put to their account.
  - a) Their obligation to Paul was met by Epaphroditus' faithful service to him.
  - b) What they couldn't do, Epaphroditus did on their behalf.

<b>CONCLUSION</b>
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- A. Paul focused on discipleship. Evangelism is the beginning, not the end of one's responsibility.
- B. Timothy and Epaphroditus were models of Christians who should be followed. Motyer, *What was true of them can be true of us; God has not changed.*
- C. *The mind of Christ is displayed by those who love God by serving others.*