

Wednesday Evening Bible Study

June 12, 2024

Series - The Life and Writings of the Apostle Paul

The Prison Epistles

The Letter to the Philippians – The Joy of Faith

Text - Philippians 2: 19 - 30 – *“Enjoying the Journey”*

Congregational Reading – Philippians 2:19 - 21

Introduction

For the past several weeks, we have been studying Paul’s Letter to the Philippians. We have chosen to examine this portion of Scripture because it has the theme of joy. The words *joy* and *rejoice* appear throughout the letter.

Here in chapter two, we have already seen in the first eleven verses that God wants us to have the mind of Christ, which is a mind of humility, a mind that can work in harmony with others, and a mind that has a love and compassion and concern for all of humanity.

We also saw from vs. 12 – 18 that God wants to work in us and shine the light of His word through us without any murmuring and disputing on our part.

In the concluding verses of chapter two, Paul will recommend two men to the Church at Philippi - Timothy and Epaphroditus. These men were examples or illustrations of ordinary people who demonstrated the mind of Christ and brightly shined the light of God’s word to the world around them.

There are basically two broad types of Christians in this world:

There are men like Paul, Timothy, and Epaphroditus who were Philippians 1:21 Christians:

“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” (Philippians 1:21)

Unfortunately, most of us fall into the category of Philippians 2:21:

“For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ’s.” (Philippians 2:21)

As we examine this portion of Scripture, including some of the characteristics of these two Christ-minded men, why not ask yourself which category you fall into. Are you Christ-minded or Self-minded?

I. Timothy

Timothy is a very familiar New Testament character. More is written about this young man than some of the apostles of the Lord. What do we know about Timothy?

Timothy's name means "honouring God"

Turn to Acts 16:1 – 5:

"Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek: Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek. And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily." (Acts 16:1-5)

1 Timothy 1:2

"Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord." (1 Timothy 1:2)

2 Timothy 1:3 - 5

"I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day; Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy; When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also." (2 Timothy 1:3-5)

2 Timothy 3:14 - 15

"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Timothy 3:14-15)

He joined up with Paul at Lystra and accompanied him into Macedonia, but he and Silas stayed behind at Berea. They joined Paul at Athens, and Timothy was sent back to Thessalonica, and reported back to Paul at Corinth. (Acts 17: 14; 1 Thess. 3: 1, 2)

During Paul's stay at Ephesus, Timothy was with him, and was sent to Corinth, but was again with Paul in Macedonia when the 2 Corinthians was written. He was also with Paul when Romans was written from Corinth. When Paul returned to Asia through Macedonia, Timothy waited for him at Troas. (Acts 20:3 - 5) He was with Paul at Rome when he wrote his letters to the church at Colosse, Philemon, the church at Ephesus, and to the Philippians. Somewhere along Timothy's journey he went to prison, because the Bible records his release (Heb. 13: 23). Paul wanted him to remain at Ephesus to warn the brethren against false teachers (1 Tim. 1: 3); and in the 2 Timothy he desires that Timothy come to him and to bring with him Mark, and the cloak he had left at Troas, the books and the parchments.

Timothy was a faithful help and comfort to Paul. He referred to Timothy as the only one who was like-minded with himself (Phil. 2:20). Paul loved Timothy and mentored him as a father would.

Now let's see what this passage has to say about this remarkable young man.

"But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel. Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me. But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly."

(Philippians 2:19 - 24)

From this passage we can clearly see that Timothy was:

A. Faithful (trustworthy) – Paul couldn't think of anybody else that he could trust to minister to the Philippians while he was incarcerated at Rome.

"Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." (1 Corinthians 4:2)

"...a faithful man who can find?" (Proverbs 20:6)

Faithful men, dependable men are hard to find. A faithful man is someone that you can depend on "in season and out of season." He is always where he is supposed to be, doing what he is supposed to be doing.

B. Sacrificial – Timothy naturally (genuinely and faithfully) loved and cared for the people at Philippi.

Ministry means that you put the needs of others before your own needs. Paul stated in v. 21 that most men seek their own, but Timothy was different. He sought to be a blessing to others. He put the cause of the Lord Jesus Christ before everything else in his life. Timothy had the mind of Christ.

II. Epaphroditus

Nothing is known about this man except for what is recorded here in this passage and in 4:18:

"But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God." (Philippians 4:18)

Apparently, Epaphroditus was the man sent by the Church at Philippi to deliver some things to be a blessing to the apostle while he was in prison.

"Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants." For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick. For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful. Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation: Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me." (Philippians 2:25 - 30)

What can we glean from this passage about Epaphroditus?

A. He was a Laborer and Soldier

This description tells me that Epaphroditus was a man that was willing to get his hands dirty, and to do whatever was necessary to get the job done.

Illustrate – Brother Bowen

Brother Bowen is the kind of man that will do whatever he is called upon to do. He will offer no excuses as to why he can't do something. He will find a way to get it done.

Illustrate - Brother Kaiser

Same thing. He does whatever has to be done to get the job done.

I Am a Soldier

I am a soldier in the army of my God. The Lord Jesus Christ is my Commanding Officer. The Holy Scripture is my code of conduct. Faith, prayer and the Word are my weapons of warfare.

I have been taught by the Holy Spirit, trained by experience, tried by adversity and tested by fire.

I am a volunteer in this army, and I am enlisted for eternity. I will not get out, sell out, be talked out or pushed out. I am faithful, reliable, capable and dependable. If my God needs me, I am there. I am a soldier.

I am not a baby. I do not need to be pampered, petted, primed up, pumped up, picked up, or pepped up. I am a soldier. No one has to call me, remind me, write me, visit me, entice me or lure me. I am a soldier. I am not a wimp. I am in place, saluting my King, obeying His orders, praising His name and building His kingdom! No one has to send me flowers, gifts, food, cards or candy, or give me handouts. I do not need to be cuddled, cradled, cared for, or catered to. I am committed. I cannot have my feelings hurt bad enough to turn me around. I cannot be discouraged enough to turn me aside. I cannot lose enough to cause me to quit.

When Jesus called me into this army, I had nothing. If I end up with nothing, I will still come out ahead. I will win. My God has and will continue to supply all of my need. I am more than a conqueror. I will always triumph. I can do all things through Christ. The devil cannot defeat me. People cannot disillusion me. Weather cannot weary me. Sickness cannot stop me. Battles cannot beat me. Money cannot buy me. Governments cannot silence me, and hell cannot handle me. I am a soldier.

Even death cannot destroy me. For when my Commander calls me from His battlefield, He will promote me to captain and then allow me to rule with Him. I am a soldier in the army, and I'm marching claiming victory. I will not give up. I will not turn around.

I am a soldier, marching heaven-bound. Here I Stand! Will you stand with me?

B. He Was a Lover of People

His love and concern for the people of Philippi is evident from this passage. He had been sick – almost died. The people were worried about him, and it upset him that the people were concerned about him.

Illustration – Jesus wept because the people were grieving.

Conclusion

We have discussed some of the characteristics that these two men, Timothy and Epaphroditus possessed which demonstrated that they had the mind of Christ?

Do you possess these qualities?

Are you faithful and sacrificial like Timothy?

Are you a soldier and a lover of people like Epaphroditus?

Christ had all these characteristics and more, and as we are conformed to the image of Christ and filled with His Spirit, we may possess these as well.