

Models FOR Ministry ~ Philippians 2:19-30

→Scripture Reading Phil. 2:3-8

INTRODUCTION Until I was around 10 my Parents served as church planters in southern Mexico. I remember that one of the things I used to love was listening to the stories that other missionaries would tell when they stayed with us. I never got over that - so when I had the chance to be with other missionaries as a college student once again I loved listening to stories of the things that happened. I had the privilege of serving for short time in the Jungle of Ecuador. And the missionary I was staying with could keep me spell bound with his stories of the things that he had been through. At one point an older British Missionary came through. And I remember thinking that he was a bit strange and as he spoke and I kept thinking that this guys was out of touch with the way younger missionaries were working. I never said anything about him but my heart attitude was negative towards this man. Then as I was reading in Philippians I came to the section about Epaphroditus and the Lord convicted me about my attitude towards this older missionary. Later on I learned that he had translated the whole Bible into the language of the people he was working with, he had also save many lives with the medical work he did. He had been very close to death numerous times himself and all for the gospel of Christ. Taking Paul's advice **I realized that I needed to honor this man and respect him because he had almost died for the sake of the cross numerous times.**

In Philp. 2 Paul teaches us that we should have the same **Attitude as Christ**, who **humbled Himself** and became **obedient to death** (vs 1-18).

Timothy and Epaphroditus are examples - they show or modeling HOW we should live

Timothy PROVED Himself ~ Philippians 2:19-24

¹⁹ I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. ²⁰ I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare. ²¹ For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. ²² But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel.

19- I hope IN the Lord Jesus- another way of saying **I Hope IF it is God's Will...**

(^{1st} Hope IN Jesus means... **No Condemnation** for those who are **IN Christ** JESUS Rm. 8:1)

(^{2nd} My **Hope** of being set free **is IN God's hands** - His plan is the one we are waiting for)

to send Timothy to you soon- Paul's desire was to send Timothy to Philippi to encourage build up **that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you-** Paul wanted to know how they were holding up under the difficulties and hard things they were facing

Vs. 20-21 Paul compares Timothy to other teachers in Rome

20- I have no one else LIKE HIM- no one of equal soul (of like mind with me - one spirit with me) **who takes a genuine interest in your WELFARE-** Timothy is concerned for you and your wellbeing (Timothy would give Active Practical CARE the kind Paul himself would give if he was there)

21- For everyone looks out for his own interests- most people look out for themselves

NOT those of Jesus Christ- not the needs of others (preachers in Rome were looking out for themselves trying to make a name for themselves while making things harder for Paul Phil 1:15)

^{1:15} ...some preach Christ out of **ENVY and RIVALRY...** **They** ^{1:17} ...preach Christ out of **selfish ambition...** supposing that they can **stir up trouble for me** while I am in chains. (NIV)

22- But you know that Timothy has PROVED himself- proven Character, Proven Worth **because as a son with his father-** spiritual father

he has served with me in the work of the gospel- with Paul **10yrs** since the 2nd Miss. journey

²³ I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how things go with me. ²⁴ And I am confident in the Lord that I myself will come soon.

23- I hope therefore to send him as soon as I see how things go with me- As soon as we know how my trial turns out I will send Timothy to you

24- And I am confident IN the Lord that I MYSELF will come soon- IF the Lord is willing and I am released I will come soon myself

IMPLICATION

Paul said this about Timothy and his current situation in Rome

²⁰ I have **NO ONE else like him**, who takes a **GENUINE interest in Your welfare**.

Timothy's great value was that he was always **willing to go anywhere**; and in his hands the message was as safe as if Paul had delivered it himself. Barclay

Ex Think about what happened in our own area when we first heard about the Covid. How did we as a culture react? Many people became hoarders of Toilet paper - really? I get it we were all scared - nobody really knew what would happen... So for a couple of months there though an awful lot about ourselves... **Remember Y2K** something that was going to be the end of the world as we know it. As a pastor I had people tell me that I needed to warn people to start stocking up. There was a lot of fear of what might happen. At the time I remember hearing about churches that had stockpiled food and water and let their communities know that they would be open and share what they had with anyone in need. Others that I personally knew made preparations that included stockpiling gas generators food and making sure no one could find them. They were not interested in sharing with anyone else they were taking care of themselves. They had **no Interest in the Welfare of others**.

How different is that from **Timothy's Genuine interest** in the **wellbeing** of others
How different was that from the **attitude of Jesus** when he **saw the crowds**...

Matthew 9:36 (NIV) ...He had **compassion** on them, because they were **Harassed** and **Helpless**, like **sheep without a Shepherd**. (HCS) ...**WEARY** and **WORN** out, like sheep without a Shepherd.

During Paul's second time that he was in prison in Rome he wrote Timothy said come...

2 Timothy 4:10 (ESV) Demas in love with this present world has deserted me...

We have a huge contrast between Timothy and Demas

Demas made a choice - he did not want to associate with Paul

Demas was Not interested in **anyone's welfare** but **His own**...

Timothy - cared about the church in Philippi and all the other places they had served

That is why Paul said very clearly...

²⁰ I have **NO ONE else like him**, who takes a **GENUINE interest in Your welfare**.

Can others see that **we CARE for them** - that we are **on their side**?

Do others **know how much we Long** for them to **do well IN the Lord**?

Do our brothers and sisters **KNOW we care Deeply** for what they are **going through**?

***May we learn to show Genuine compassion that flows from a heart Captivated by Jesus**

May we serve out of **concern and Love for people** not - to make a name for ourselves

May we **humbly seek Good for others** - in light of how **Jesus has poured out His life for us**. CCE

Epaphroditus Faced DEATH ~ Philippians 2:25-30

²⁵ But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs. ²⁶ For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill. ²⁷ Indeed he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow.

²⁸ Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you may be glad and I may have less anxiety. ²⁹ Welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor men like him, ³⁰ **because he almost died for the work of Christ**, risking his life to make up for the help you could not give me.

25- But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus- not the original plan
(It is possible that Epaphroditus was sent to STAY with Paul until his case was resolved)
my BROTHER- brother in Christ shows Paul's affection for Epaph.

fellow WORKER- coworker working side by side with Paul not afraid of Hard Work
and fellow SOLDIER- faced opposition, difficulties, and dangers right along with Paul
who is also your MESSENGER- he brought financial gift and news from church in Philippi
whom you sent to TAKE CARE OF my needs- Minister to Paul spiritually (encourage build up)

26- For he longs for all of you and is DISTRESSED because you heard he was ill- Gk strong word same word as Jesus in **Anguish** and **Troubled** in Gethsemane)
(they heard about the serious illness Epaphroditus had did not know if he was ok)

27- Indeed he was ill and almost died- his illness was very serious he was close to dying
(Might have been the Roman FEVER which would sweep through the city and kill many)
But God had MERCY on him- God raised him back to full health
and not on him only but also on me to spare me Sorrow upon Sorrow- God had mercy on Paul by sparing Epaphroditus which spared Paul Sorrow

1st Sorrow of being in prison and then - adding to that Sorrow over the death of Epaphroditus
2nd Sorrow of Epaphroditus dying and the - Sorrow of Paul having to inform the church in Philippi

28- Therefore I am all the more eager to send him- send him quickly Sooner than Expected
so that when you see him again you may be glad- you will have joy when you see that he is ok
and I may have less ANXIETY- I will have less to be anxious about

>In case some thought that Epaphroditus had **Not FINISHED the Mission...**

29- Welcome him IN the Lord with great joy- Welcome him he served the Lord WELL
and honor men like him- honor him and other like him

30- because he almost died for the work of Christ- he put life on the line,
(he **gambled** his life, FOR the gospel - he was willing to loose his life)
risking his life to make up for the help you could not give me- was Paul complaining?
(it was 700 miles to Philippi they could not do much from there so they sent Epaphroditus)

CuHi Epaphroditus was ...at the point of death while doing for me what you couldn't do from far away NLT

OBSERVATIONS MacDonald

- Sickness is Not ALWAYS a result of sin
- It is Not Always God's Will to heal INSTANTLY or Miraculously
- Healing is an act of MERCY from God (we have no right to Demand to be healed)

IMPLICATION

²⁵ But I think it is **necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus**, my brother, fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs.

What we learn about Epaphroditus is in these verses he is not found in any other part of N.T.

Epaphroditus...

- had a **SERVANTS heart** (willing to take on the task of serving Paul)
- was a man of **INTEGRITY** (the church trusted him to take a large gift)
- was willing to go through **HARDSHIP** (not an easy simple trip 700 miles many dangers)
- he **RISKED his own LIFE** (became very ill in Rome almost died)

Paul did not want them to think that Epaphroditus had failed in his mission.

²⁹ Welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and **HONOR** men like him, ³⁰ **because he almost died for the work of Christ...**

Like Paul - Timothy and Epaphroditus both knew that suffering was part of serving the Lord

Right from the beginning followers of Jesus Christ knew suffering was part of following Him

John 16:33 (NIV) I have told you these things, so that **IN ME** you may have **peace**. In this world you **will have trouble**. But take heart! **I have overcome the world**.

Jesus said in this world you will have **TROUBLES** - but **IN ME** you can have **peace**

Followers of Christ became known in the Roman Empire as people who cared for others
They were the ones who helped the sick and the dying - they care for the Poor

Ex In the days of the Early Church there was an association of men and women called the gamblers. It was their goal to visit prisoners and the sick, especially those who were ill with dangerous and infectious diseases. In **A. D. 252** plague broke out in **Carthage**; the unsaved simply threw out the bodies of their dead and fled in terror. Cyprian, the Christian bishop, gathered his congregation together and set them to burying the dead and nursing the sick in that plague-stricken city; by so doing they saved the city, at the risk of their lives, from destruction and desolation. Barclay
That was the kind of Testimony Christians had -

They were people who cared for the welfare of others even when meant suffering for them

The challenge for us is are we willing to Serve - even in hard times?

Will we think of others and their needs before our own?

TAKE AWAY ??

Philippians 2:4-5 (NIV) Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵ Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

Paul was telling the church in Philippi to have the attitude of Christ
He challenged them to humbly serve each other making Christ the center and focus of their lives

In keeping with that whole attitude Paul is going to send back Epaphroditus to his home church
WHY?

Epaphroditus would have made his time under house arrest easier...

But Paul was thinking NOT of what was good for him but what was good for OTHERS

²⁵ But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus...

²⁶ For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill

²⁸ ...I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you may be glad

Thinking of others First - thinking of Epaphroditus first Paul decides he will send him back

But he writes all this about Epaphroditus so they will understand he had served well.

Again thinking of the church in Philippi and thinking of Epaphroditus putting their needs first.