

Philippians 2:19-30 Good Friends

Quiz:- **No smart phones**

- Name the last 5 Heisman trophy winners?
- Name the last 5 Nobel peace prize winners?
- Name the last 5 winners of Best Actor or Best Actress
- Name the last 5 MVP of the Super bowl

I don't know about you but I could only name one person in each one of those categories.

Quiz #2

- Name a few teachers who were instrumental in your life
- Name 5 people who taught you something worthwhile
- Name 3 people who helped you through a difficult time

Here's MY point.

A)The people who matter to us are not the ones with the most trophies or wealth or beauty,

B)but those who make the most impact in our lives are those who **have cared the most for us** in our lives.

It has been said that a good friend is someone who runs toward you when all of the rest of the world is running away!

We all need good friends – and so did the apostle Paul.

A)Writing from Prison – Because Paul was in Prison – and under the scrutiny of Rome

B)Some people were running away from Paul – it was too dangerous to be his friend.

C)But in the passage before us today – Paul mentions two men who were great friends – fellow workers

1)Guys who came to Paul's aid in his time of need

Guys who exemplified the mind of Christ – Paul was writing about Ch.2

A)V.5 **Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus**

B)Heart of servant and self sacrificing that put the needs and interest of others above our own!

C)Timothy and Epaphroditus were two men who modeled that Kind of heart!

Consider today – 3 Marks of a good friend

19 But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state. 20 For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. 21 For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus. 22 But you know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel. 23 Therefore I hope to send him at once, as soon as I see how it goes with me. 24 But I trust in the Lord that I myself shall also come shortly. 25 Yet I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier, but your messenger and the one who ministered to my need; 26 since he was longing for you all, and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. 27 For indeed he was sick almost unto death; but God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. 28 Therefore I sent him the more eagerly, that when you see him again you may rejoice, and I may be less sorrowful. 29 Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such men in esteem; 30 because for the work of Christ he came close to death, not regarding his life, to supply what was lacking in your service toward me.

Meet these men? Start with Timothy

A)Timothy was from the city of Lystra – Paul visited on his 1-2 Missionary Journey's

B)His mom was Jewish and Devout – as was his grand mother

1)His Dad was Greek – and presumably pagan

C)One day Paul the Apostle came through town, and he preached the good news, the gospel

D)Some were saved – **but The people in Lystra revolted against Paul – Acts 14 amazing –**
10Paul was stoned in Lystra – rocks –

E)Imagine that –Drag his outside of town Men are pelting you with rocks – until you die -

1)Paul is left for dead

D) Everyone is crying – Paul is dead – God brings him back to life –

1) rather than high tail it out of town – Paul goes back in – CRAZY AMAZING

The Result: Timothy becomes a follower of Christ – not only that but he wants to join Paul on his mission / HIS SON in the FAITH

A) note this out of one of the most tragic and painful events in Paul's life out of that comes **A SON – HIS SON IN THE FAITH**

B) Timothy would eventually become the Pastor of the Church of Ephesus –

1) **The Longest place where Paul – served – 3 yrs –** He turned it over to Timothy!

C) THAT was Timothy – Question: **Do you have any sons in the faith?**

1) Daughters in the faith? – All of us who have been walking with the Lord a while should.

D) So that is Timothy – what about Epaphroditus

Epaphroditus was from a Pagan background

A) His name means beloved of Aphrodite
He was saved in Philippi

B) Epaphroditus was a layman – meaning – he didn't have an official capacity in the church.

C) But like many of you here: He was faithful to serve for the sheer Joy of serving Jesus!

D) As we consider these two men – note 3 marks of a good friend

1) We all want friend like this:- Challenge to be a friend like this

3 Marks of a good friend:

#1 Reliable

A) These men were willing to travel long distances to come to the aid of the apostle Paul. – **Willing to go the extra mile.**

B) The Journey from Rome to Philippi was over 800 miles

1) Walking and boats – rough terrain – took approximately 6 weeks to get their destination

C) Timothy was one that Paul often sent to various places to represent him.

It was Timothy that was sent by Paul from Athens to Thessalonica , 1 Thessalonians 3.

A) He was also sent from Ephesus to Corinth, 1 Corinthians 4.

B) He was sent from Ephesus to Macedonia, Acts 19.

C) Now he's sending him again on an errand to go all the way from Rome to Philippi,

1) which is about 800 miles. - **It takes somebody reliable to pull that off.**

D) Mentioned earlier - **Eventually Paul would commission Tim to Pastor the Church in Ephesus**

1) Paul's longest stint as pastor 3 yrs – Need someone faithful and reliable to pull this off

Principle:

A) The principle is the more reliable you are, the more valuable you become.

➤ **And faithfulness will lead to fruitfulness.**

B) **Faithfulness is what will open the door to more fruitfulness.**

1) The more faithful you are, you just stay at it, stay at it, stay at it, that will open the door to more fruitfulness.

C) Really that is a servant's reward by the way. A servant's reward is getting to serve more.

If you're not a servant, that is not a reward.

D) People who are not servant-hearted, when they get asked to serve, they go oh, again?

1) You want me to-- I've already done stuff. **Do I have to volunteer? Can't Get somebody else.**

2) But for **servant hearted people** – the opportunity to bear more fruit is their reward! **Sign me up**

So Timothy's life teaches us this principle:

“the more reliable you are, the more valuable you become and faithfulness will lead to fruitfulness.”

Epaphroditus is also reliable

A) Notice the titles that Paul gives him here V.25
Brother – fellow worker- fellow soldier – **but your messenger**

B) Messenger = ambassador –

C) Now, I want you to turn to Chapter 4 for just a moment, and look at the only other verse that has Epaphroditus's name in it

1) because we're trying to construct a profile of what this guy was like.

Chapter 4 of Philippians, Verse 14. **Nevertheless you have done well that you shared in my distress.** ¹⁵ Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me **concerning giving and receiving but you only.** **{Financial support}** ¹⁶ For even in Thessalonica you sent *aid* once and again for my necessities. ¹⁷ Not that I seek the gift, **but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account.** **{Giving results in fruitfulness}** ¹⁸ Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus **the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.** {How God sees our giving from the right heart – a sweet smelling aroma – acceptable sacrifice that is well pleasing to God }

¹⁹ And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. ²⁰ Now to our God and Father *be* glory forever and ever. Amen.

But notice v.18 – You get the picture?

A) Epaphroditus was sent on behalf of the Philippian church with money and supplies to help Paul while he was in prison in Rome,

B) Dangerous – possibility of getting robbed – a long journey – but when they needed a reliable person to carry out the mission

1) Epaphroditus was the man chosen

C) And he was sent to serve him personally, and to serve alongside of him.

1) He fulfilled his calling: the one who ministered to my need;

SO #1 A good friend is reliable

#2 Compatible:

A) V.20 Paul says this about Timothy - ²⁰ For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. ²¹ For **all seek their own**, not the things which are of Christ Jesus.

B) One of the best compliments that Paul could give about Timothy was that Timothy was like minded!

1) Paul was saying that if I can't come – **Timothy is the next best thing.**

C) It is interesting that this is the only time this phrase appears in the NT

1) The Greek for like minded literally means – equal souled or like souled.

D) Paul defines what made Timothy like minded when he says – everyone else is seeking their own – not the things of Christ.

C.S. Lewis once wrote “true friends don't spend time just gazing into each other's eyes, but they face the same direction toward common projects, interests, goals, and above all toward a common Lord.”

E) You need friends that are going to be running in the same direction toward Jesus as you –

1) SAME PACE

You don't want people that you are having to drag behind!

A) Same direction – Same pace – meaning if you are charging – you want to be running with People that are charging as well.

B) Now we also see that Epaphroditus was Compatible to Paul as well.

C) He shared Paul's heart and burden for the people of God.

In 2 Corinthians 11 Paul gives a testimony of the degree to which he suffered in his service to Jesus

A) He writes about his beatings, his imprisonments, his shipwrecks, the many times he went without food or shelter

B) Then he caps it all off with this statement: **besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.**

C) Paul carried in his heart this burden for the Churches that he had started. – **Praying for them – concern for them**

1) Paul had a true pastors heart

D) Here in our text – we see **that Epaphroditus had that same heart as well.** ²⁶ since he was longing for you all, and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick.

Paul mentioned something else in V.30 that revealed that Epaphroditus had a similar heart to Paul 30 because for the work of Christ he came close to death, not regarding his life, to supply what was lacking in your service toward me.

A) Paul used in similar expression in Acts 20 when he was meeting with the Elders of the Church in Ephesus.

B) Acts 20:24 – **I do not count my life dear to myself!**

C) These men were compatible in the sense that they were sold out in their service to Christ!

1) Willing to risk it all in fulfilling the work that God had called them to

So 3 Marks of a good friend

#1 Reliable

#2 Compatible

#3 Durable

When Henry III, one of the great Bavarian kings, first came into power, he was burdened by the responsibilities and demands of being king.

Feeling pressure on all sides, he finally walked away from the throne and went to a monastery.

“I want to contemplate God and worship the Lord,” he said upon arrival at the monastery

The Monk who greeted him replied in this way:

“Understand this, Henry,” “The first requirement of a monk is that he be in total submission. A monk’s life is not his own. Can you submit yourself to the Lord by trusting me?” “Yes,” said Henry.

“Then go back to the throne. I am instructing you to rule and serve where God planted you.”

Henry did, indeed, return to the throne, becoming one of the greatest German kings of history.

The inscription on his tombstone gives the reason:

Henry III, the king learned to rule by being obedient.

Such a man was Timothy

A) We learn from Paul’s other writings that Timothy was timid

B) He struggled with his age – being younger –

1) But he overcame all of that to become a man that was used mightily of the Lord!

When I was young I wore a brand of jeans called toughskins -

A) They weren’t as cool as Levi’s but they were cheaper and more durable

B) The reinforced knees were a blend of Dacron Type 59 polyester and DuPont 420 nylon

1) Those jeans came with a money back guarantee that kids would outgrow them before they outwore them

C) Definitely the case in my case – those things were Durable.

1) One of the things I loved doing in Elementary school is running down the hallway full speed –

2) Sliding on the concrete hallway – Knees or sides in my tough skins – they never ripped

D) Great name – Tough skins - those things were tough

Epaphroditus was also durable – He overcame sickness unto death

A) Paul refers to him as soldier;

B) This is key:

You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. ⁴No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of *this* life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. 2 Timothy 2:3,4

C) This verse is key to why Epaphroditus and Timothy were so durable

1) They were serving to please the one who enlisted them JESUS!

That is key: Not serving – men – not serving for a pay check – or public recognition

A) Serving Jesus – the Ultimate picture of Durability

And toughness – Tough as Nails

B) Our culture: Tough guys – MMF fighters

1) But being a tough guy doesn’t mean – beat people up – sticking up for yourself when offended

C)A true tough guy sacrifices himself for the sake of others

1)Jesus carried the cross – 200lbs up the Via Delarosa no less than 650 yards – 6.5 football fields

D)But more than carrying the cross he was carrying the weight of all the sins of the World

E)Your sin and my sin!

For the Joy that was set before Him he endured the cross – despising the shame!

His Joy – You his child

He is the friend that sticks closer than a brother!