

Paul's care for the Philippians

Phil 2:19-3:1

Jan 10, 2021

He hopes to send Timothy soon 2:19-24

Phil 2:19 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. 20 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; 24 and I trust in the Lord that I myself also will be coming shortly.

Timothy's background:

He was either a native of Derby or of Lystra.

His mother Eunice and Grandmother Lois were Jewish.

His father was a Greek,

he was not circumcised indicates that he was educated in Greek ways (Ac 16:1; 2Tim 1:5).

Paul speaks of him as his child in the Lord (1Cor 4:17)

He served Paul as a child would serve his father (v. 22)

He was with Paul in Philippi (Ac 16:1); Thessalonica and Berea (Ac 17:1-14); Corinth (Ac 18:1-5); Ephesus (Ac 19:21-22); in prison in Rome (Col 1:1; Phil 1:1).

Timothy was involved in one way or another with seven of the writings of Paul:

1Thes; 2Thes; 2Cor; Rom; Col; Phil; 1Tim; 2Tim

Timothy was closely connected to Paul in ministering to the churches:

Thessalonica (1Thes 3:6); Corinth (1Cor 4:17; 16:10-11); Philippi (Phil 2:19)

Timothy is willing to serve in second place (v. 19).

He represents Paul in his ministry to the Philippians.

When Paul sent Timothy, he sent himself

Timothy had a "kindred spirit" = being of the same mind or attitude (v. 20)

Timothy was genuinely concerned about the welfare of the Philippians (v. 20).

"genuinely concerned" = sincerely care for

Timothy was willing to deny himself

He was concerned about the things of Christ [unlike the others] above his self-interests (v.21).

Many ministers seek their own things first, seeking to protect their:

livelihood, comfort, acceptance, security, recognition, position, authority,

friendship, support, following, possessions, etc.

rather than the things of Christ! (1Cor 10:24; Gal 5:24; Mt 19:21)

Timothy was willing to be a disciple of Paul

Their relationship was similar to a father/son relationship (v. 22).

Timothy was a tried and proven minister, willing to serve the Lord in the position of second place
1Cor 4:1 Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the
mysteries of God. (1Cor 15:58; 2Tim 2:3-4)

“Timothy’s great value was that he was always willing to go anywhere; and in his hands a message was as safe as if Paul had delivered it himself. Others might be consumed with selfish ambition; but Timothy’s one desire was to serve Paul and Jesus Christ. He is the patron saint of all those who are quite content with the second place, so long as they can serve.” [Letters to the Philippians, by William Barclay, pg. 48]

He is now sending Epaphroditus 2:25-30

Phil 2:25-30 But I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger and minister to my need; 26 because he was longing for you all and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. 27 For indeed he was sick to the point of death, but God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, so that I would not have sorrow upon sorrow. 28 Therefore I have sent him all the more eagerly so that when you see him again you may rejoice and I may be less concerned about you. 29 Receive him then in the Lord with all joy, and hold men like him in high regard; 30 because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was deficient in your service to me.

Background:

There is a dramatic story behind this [Phil 2:25-30]. When the Philippians heard that Paul was in prison, their warm hearts were moved to action. They sent a gift to him by the hand of Epaphroditus. What they could not personally do, because distance prevented them, they delegated to Epaphroditus to do for them. Not only did they intend him to be the bearer of their gift; they also intended him to stay in Rome and be Paul’s personal servant and attendant. Clearly Epaphroditus was a brave man, for anyone who propose to offer himself as the personal attendant of a man awaiting trial on a capital charge was laying himself open to the very considerable risk of becoming involved in the same charge. In truth, Epaphroditus risked his life to serve Paul.

While in Rome Epaphroditus fell seriously ill and came close to death. News of his illness reached Philippi. And in turn, news returned to Epaphroditus that his own church was worried over his welfare. He in turn began to worry over them. But God spared him, and after gaining his strength, Paul felt for some reason, that Epaphroditus should return Philippi. But the possibility of other problems existed. If he returned before Paul fate was known, some would call him a quitter, a coward, a failure. The answer to this criticism is the very reason for this passage. (From: The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians and Thessalonians; by William Barclay; pages 48-49)

Paul’s affirmation of Epaphroditus

1. He identifies him as his brother.
Through faith in Christ, he was born of God, and part of God’s family (2Cor 5:17; Eph 4:24; Col 3:10).
2. He was a companion with Paul and the work of the Lord.
A true companion is by the side of his friend; he is with him in understanding, feeling, support, counsel, comfort, encouragement and helping whenever needed (Jn 15:13-14; Prov 18:24).
3. He was a fellow soldier.
By sticking closely to Paul, he ran the risk of being identified as an insurrectionist. This danger was probably the reason so many believers forsook Paul (2Tim 4:16). Epaphroditus stood fast - as a fellow soldier with Paul, despite the danger and ill health (2Tim 2:3-4).
4. He was a messenger of the Philippian church.
“Messenger” = [Apostolos] a messenger, an ambassador sent on very special mission.

5. He was a minister to the needs of Paul.

“Minister” = [leitourgon] in secular Greek this word was used for man who because they loved their city so much, at their own expense, undertook certain great civic duties. It might be to defray the expenses of the embassy, or the cost of putting on one of the dramas of the great poets, or training the athletes who will represent the city in the games, or of fitting out a warship and paying a crew to serve in the navy of the state. These men were the supreme benefactors of the state and they were known as leitourgoi. (Mt 20:28; Mk 10:43-44; Jn 13:4-5, 14).

6. He came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life ...

“risking his life” = [paraboleusamenos] this is a gambling word which means to gamble one's life; to stake everything; to chance everything, to recklessly gamble. Epaphroditus staked his life for the ministry of Christ. He courageously risked his life. (Word Pictures in the New Testaments, Vol. 4, p. 449)

Epaphroditus did not quit Lord nor forsake the church.

Because he was deathly sick, he could have gone back to Philippi, but as a true soldier of Jesus Christ, he did not return home. He chose to remain with Paul, he was not concerned over his own welfare.

Paul was sending Epaphroditus back to the Philippian church.

He was returning wasn't because of quitting or forsaking his duties. Rather, it was because Paul sent him home out of concern for the Philippian church.

References Used:

The Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible
Letters to the Philippians, by William Barclay
Word Pictures in the New Testaments

NOTE: Listen to audio to hear conclusion of five things the Lord wants to say regarding teamwork. These final points are not included in this outline.