

Text: Philippians 2:19-24

Title: Sincerely Caring for Others

Truth: Christ-likeness is to care for others.

Date/Location: February 20, 2022 at FBC

Introduction: The Text

Philippians 2:19-24 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.

I. Paul's Circumstances: verses 19, 23-24

- A. Paul is stuck where he is at the time of writing—in prison! Therefore, he cannot go back to Philippi to see his beloved friends. In fact, there is a possibility that he may never be able to go back if he is poured out as a drink offering—by dying as a martyr.
- B. While he is in prison, Paul would love to know how the church is getting on in its love for the Lord and service to him. If all is well at the church, this would be a very encouraging thing for him as he sits in jail awaiting the final disposition of his case.
- C. The apostle plans to send Timothy to Philippi to hear their news, and then Timothy will bring that word back to Paul in jail. This way, Paul would be encouraged when he hears that they are doing well. Perhaps Paul would even be *out* of jail by the time Timothy returned. Nevertheless, Paul is like all of us: he is helped by uplifting words, testimonies of praise to God from others, and such things to buoy his spirits. It is not a matter of covetousness to hear the good things God is doing for other. It is a blessing and a cause of rejoicing and thanksgiving to God!

- D. But before sending Timothy, Paul hopes to learn more about his legal fate and then pass that report to Timothy who will bring it to the Philippians so they can know about Paul's situation. They will have the information "hot off the press" as soon as the information is available (v. 23).
- E. Still, he does hope to come to Philippi himself, and trusts that God will permit that soon (v. 24). This connects to his earlier statement that "being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you..." (1:25) and "I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit..." (1:19). Why? Paul believed that it was more necessary for him to continue to have some spiritual fruit among the Philippians (1:24). The plan boils down to this: Paul is sending Epaphroditus with the letter to the Philippian church (v. 25). Timothy will follow shortly after as soon as he gets word of Paul's legal status. Last of all, Paul will hopefully come as well. This part of the letter explains this so that the church understands what is happening.
- F. When Paul says, "**I trust in the Lord** that I myself shall also come..." and "**I hope in the Lord Jesus** to send Timothy to you..." these are not "name it claim it" guarantees in his mind. Rather, he believes that God will permit these things. Regardless of whether He does, God will do the right and the best thing. If God does not permit Paul or Timothy to go, Paul is not going to be heart-broken or fall into a slew of despond, because it is God who is making the ultimate calls. He knows the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10). God is *sovereign* and we cannot second-guess Him.
- G. Maybe you have some "I want to do ____" in your life. Can you convert each one to an "I trust God that I will be able to do ____"? First, is it something that you think fit with *trust* and *God*? Second, are you willing to let God carry out His plan about that, even if it does not match your plan? Third, if you are in a waiting-room type of situation, are you willing to joyfully wait, like Paul, "to see how it goes with me"? Fourth, if you are in an activity-required type of situation, are you energetically pursuing what God wants you to do while you wait for His disposition of the matter, pressing forward despite some difficulties that may arise?

H. Finally, note the “in the Lord” phrase again. If you are a Christian, you are “in” the Lord—in Christ. This impacts everything you do and how you think. Your hopes, trusts, desires, actions, everything are influenced by this fact. What does “in Christ” mean? Think of the opposites—in Adam, in the world, in the flesh, in sin.

II. Timothy’s Character, v. 20-22

Sandwiched between Paul’s circumstances is an important note about the apostle’s protégé, Timothy and how he was a suitable messenger for the mission of going to Philippi and back.

A. Timothy’s care (v. 20). Timothy is like-minded (same-souled, kindred spirit) to Paul. Paul has no one else who is committed like Timothy to the care of others. Timothy **genuinely cared and concerned himself with the well-being of others**. The definition of care is a genuine concern, sincere attention, not in the sense of worry or anxiety but of watchfulness, attention, and prayer. For examples, see 1 Cor. 12:25, 1 Cor. 7:32, and Mat 6:34b (in a slightly different sense than the first use of the *worry* in the verse). Timothy’s care was a *pastoral concern* for the church people (see Acts 20:28).

My burden in the second part of this sermon is simply this: God wants you to be more like Timothy and less like what you used to be. Christian teaching is that you sincerely care about other people. Do you?

And how can you do that—in your marriage, toward your children, co-workers, friends, fellow church members, etc.? We will give some thoughts on that in a minute. If nothing else, reminding you of the importance of a good others-centered character will help you to do a self-checkup to see if you are pleasing God in this area of your walk as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

B. Others’ self-seeking (v. 21). Some people were exactly the opposite of Timothy (for instance, Demas, 2 Timothy 4:10). Broadly speaking, Paul said “all seek their own” interests. By *all* Paul obviously means “many” because at least Timothy and himself are excluded, as well as Epaphroditus, and hopefully others who come to a better walk with Christ. The self-seekers’ habit is to focus

attention on their own lives, concerns, desires, goals, greed, etc. Philippians 1:15-16 tells us about some who even preached Christ out of selfish ambition and envy. They had sinful personal motives.

The things of Christ Jesus are different than those things. They include holiness, and loving God, and loving others, and keeping the commands of God, and hunger to know God's Word, etc.—and watching out for the spiritual needs of others.

Paradoxically, the self-seeking of our former lives teaches us how to care for others. Think of how you were focused on yourself before, and even still are today. Then turn that into an energetic pursuit of help to others. Ephesians 5:28-29 reminds us that husbands are to love their wives as they love themselves. No man in his right mind hates his own body, but feeds it and cleans it and cares for it appropriately. This teaches us that we are to care for others like we care for ourselves.

The natural state is to care for one's own things. The spiritual state is to sincerely care for the things of others as well as our own.

- C. Timothy's proven character (v. 22). Timothy is no flash in the pan. He served in the gospel alongside Paul as a son to a father. He was a serious co-worker. Paul is reminding the church of this, perhaps because they would prefer to see Paul himself. But Paul was unable to come. His exactly-like-minded-son-in-the-faith would do well as a substitute!

III. Concluding Applications

- A. I am deciding whether to go to church today. In making this decision, do I think about only myself, or do I think about all the other people at the church and how I might be a blessing to them? Do I focus on how they will be a potential detriment to me, or do I overcome that by faith in Christ and consider if I genuinely care for them in how I am making my decision?
- B. I am deciding how to spend the family's finances. Do I think of others in the family, and outside of it, or just myself?
- C. I am going to partake in some entertainment. Am I thinking of others around me and their things, or just my own pleasure?

- D. As I think of others, am I concerned for their spiritual well-being, or are my thoughts stuck in the earthly realm?
- E. As I consider testifying about Jesus, am I paralyzed with fear, or do I overcome that hesitancy because of the deep need of others?
- F. How are you going to do this? Like everything else in the Christian life, you cannot do it by sheer force of will. It must be accomplished in the power of God by His indwelling Spirit. You can enable this trait by asking God for help to seek the things of Christ and the care of others in addition to keeping track of your own things. Remember Philippians 2:4 and how we are to put aside selfish ambition?

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