

Sermon Title: Sacrificial Servant

Sermon Series: Philippians – Unbreakable Joy

Scripture: Philippians 2:25-30

Speaker: Pastor Ian Bonthron



How can we have a heart of _____?

1. Care has a _____

Philippians 2:25-27a ESV

25 I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need, 26 for he has been longing for you all and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill. 27 Indeed he was ill, near to death.

Philippians 2:25-27a ESV

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Philippians 2:3-5 ESV

3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. 5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,

When I am in need, who do I think of?

Only myself, or others?

“A “sending” ministry always starts with a heart exam. Sending out people and giving away your resources, you see, will most often compete with your church’s “bottom line,” not benefit it.”

—J.D. Greear – Gaining By Losing

“We live by losing. We gain by giving away. What we achieve by building our personal platform will never be as great as what God achieves through what we give away in faith.”

—J.D. Greear – Gaining By Losing

Matthew 16:24-26 ESV

24 Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 25 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. 26 For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?”

What drives the cost or loss you're willing to pay?

2. Recognize God's _____

Philippians 2:27-28 ESV

27 Indeed he was ill, near to death. But God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. 28 I am the more eager to send him, therefore, that you may rejoice at seeing him again, and that I may be less anxious.

Philippians 1:21 ESV

21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

Philippians 2:27-28 ESV

27 Indeed he was ill, near to death. But God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. 28 I am the more eager to send him, therefore, that you may rejoice at seeing him again, and that I may be less anxious.

Sacrificial servants realize what they have is not theirs

Philippians 1:28 ESV

28 and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God.

God's Mercy leads us to open our hands to others

3. Respond with _____

Philippians 2:29-30 ESV

29 So receive him in the Lord with all joy, and honor such men, 30 for he nearly died for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was lacking in your service to me.

"You guys might think I'm crazy in all this, but I think it's worth it to declare Jesus to these people."

—John Chau

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/feb/03/john-chau-christian-missionary-death-sentinelese>

"I think I could be more useful alive, but to you, God, I give all the glory of whatever happens." He asked God to forgive "any of the people on this island who try to kill me" – especially "if they succeed."

—John Chau

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/feb/03/john-chau-christian-missionary-death-sentinelese>

Hebrews 11:32-40 NIV

32 And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets, 33 who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. 35 Women received back their dead, raised to life again. There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection. 36 Some faced jeers and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. 37 They were put to death by stoning; they were

sawed in two; they were killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated— 38 the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and in holes in the ground. 39 These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, 40 since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.

How can we have a heart of _____?

Because God is merciful, we Gain by Losing

Questions:

Getting to Know You

Have you ever experienced a relationship with someone who truly sacrificed for you? What was that like?

Why are we afraid to “risk” our lives for the sake of the gospel?

What are some ways where serving others and sharing Jesus might be a “risk” to your life?

Into the Bible:

Read Philippians 2:25-30

25 I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need, 26 for he has been longing for you all and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill. 27 Indeed he was ill, near to death. But God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. 28 I am the more eager to send him, therefore, that you may rejoice at seeing him again, and that I may be less anxious. 29 So receive him in the Lord with all joy, and honor such men, 30 for he nearly died for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was lacking in your service to me.

4. Was there something from the passage or sermon that surprised you, helped you, confused you, or bothered you?

5. What does this passage tell us about God? People? Living to please God?

6. Paul and Epaphroditus were both servants. From this passage, what are some qualities that described them?

7. Paul uses the word soldier to describe Epaphroditus (vs. 25). What kind of things pop into your mind when you think of a soldier?

8. How would those characteristics apply to your Christian walk?

9. Paul expresses thanks that Epaphroditus recovered, sparing him from having “sorrow upon sorrow” (v. 27). How do you respond to the idea that Paul would have been stricken with sorrow if Epaphroditus had died?

For Extra Study, Read Hebrews 11:32-40

32 And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets— 33 who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. 35 Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. 36 Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. 37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated— 38 of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

39 And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, 40 since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

10. In this passage, what are some of the things that happened to the people who trusted God?

11. Why should these characteristics encourage us in our daily lives?

12. What do you find challenging about trusting God?

13. What needs to change in your life so that you can live this out?

14. Jot down any insights, questions, or key observations.

Application

In his book *Gaining by Losing*, J.D. Greear wrote, "We live by losing. We gain by giving away. What we achieve by building our personal platform will never be as great as what God achieves through what we give away in faith."

What gets in the way of our church having this attitude?

How do you see us display this attitude as a church?

Where do we need to improve?

Is there an area of your life that you are unwilling to "risk" or sacrifice for the sake of the gospel? Why or why not?

How can we better show Honor to those who risk their lives for the gospel?

How can we encourage each other to sacrificially serve?