

Series: Philippians: That We May Know Him VI

Text: Philippians 2:19-30

HI: Emulate those who exemplify Christ.

Title: *The Sniff Test*

Hook: The sniff test

Date: 10.15.23

Purpose: To instruct Christ's people in discerning how to engage the work of the gospel.

FCF: Like the Philippians, we are all tempted to serve our own interests. God's grace is seen in the examples of Timothy and Epaphroditus, selfless gospel workers who engage Christ's mission with the Spirit of Christ.

COR: The examples of Jesus, and even the Apostle Paul, seem like a high bar to clear. Two lesser-known characters show us how to follow Jesus in ways that seem less glamorous but more accessible.

Witness of Christ [WC*]: The selflessness and sacrifice of Timothy and Epaphroditus show us the mindset of Christ. He wholly served the interests of others above himself (v. 21), and for the sake of God's people he didn't simply come close to death (v. 30), but he gave his life as a ransom for many.

Apologetic: When those who don't know Jesus see Jesus exemplified in those Jesus has saved, it is a living, breathing apologetic that is hard to deny.

Text Tone: Instruction, Affirmation

Preaching Voice: Priestly

Form: Deductive

Call to Worship: Philippians 3:8

Benediction: Philippians 3:14: "[Now,] press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

Outline:

I. The gospel of Christ calls for selfless service. (19-24)

A. Genuine selflessness is a rare quality. (19-21)

B. True servanthood is a vital commodity. (22-24)

II. The cause of Christ is worth the risk. (25-30)

A. There is great risk in the death of self-interest. (25-27a)

B. There is real joy beyond the sorrow of the saints. (27b-29a)

C. There is true honor in the service of Christ. (29b-30)

Main Idea:

Subject: What is so unique and honorable about the examples of Timothy and Epaphroditus?

Complement: They genuinely served the interests of others selflessly and sacrificially in the work of the gospel.

Exegetical Idea: Timothy and Epaphroditus are unique and honorable examples to the Philippian Christians because they genuinely served the interests of others, selflessly and sacrificially in the work of the gospel.

Theological Idea: Christians who selflessly and sacrificially engage in the work of the gospel should be honored and emulated.

Homiletical Idea: Emulate those who exemplify Christ.

Introduction:

READ Philippians 2:19-30

¹⁹ I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I too may be cheered by news of you. ²⁰ For I have no one like him, who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. ²¹ For they all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. ²² But you know Timothy's proven worth, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel. ²³ I hope therefore to send him just as soon as I see how it will go with me, ²⁴ and I trust in the Lord that shortly I myself will come also.

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.

(We've seen the mindset of Jesus in this chapter. And throughout the letter to this point we've become familiar with Paul's perspective on living for Christ. These can be intimidating examples. Jesus and Paul seem to be way out front, sure we can see their examples, but living like that feels like a high bar to clear. That's where

our passage today pulls back the curtain. Timothy and Epaphroditus are regular guys, like us. But Paul puts them forward—by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in this letter—as examples for us to follow. This is what a regular life looks like which is lived with the mindset of Christ. This is humility like Jesus in jeans and T-shirt. This is servanthood like Christ driving up in a late 90’s Toyota Corolla. Paul puts our eyes on these two guys, because they had their eyes on Christ. And his point is here is that you and I need to...)

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RE-READ Philippians 2:19-24

I. The gospel of Christ calls for selfless service. (19-24)

RE-READ Philippians 2:25-30

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II. The cause of Christ is worth the risk. (25-30)

Epaphroditus: “devoted to Aphrodite”

v. 30: “Risking” = “Gambling” – Aphrodite was also the goddess in

Meme: dog with everyone on fire “Everything is fine”

“Rejoicing and lament both have a place in the journey of faith.” Sean McDonough

v. 30: “nearly died” → Nearly can mean “up to” or “including” death

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