

Timothy: A Genuine Heart for Others

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The title of this sermon is Timothy, a genuine heart for others. A genuine heart for others. If you will go ahead and turn with me to Philippians chapter 2, and we'll be in verse 19 this morning. Philippians chapter 2 beginning in verse 19.

When we come to this specific passage, we enter a section of scripture that at first glance may look like simple routine travel plans, but the Holy Spirit never wastes an ink. These verses reveal how God forms servants, servants of God. How God sustains his people as servants of God. And then how he advances the gospel through servants of God. And it's not through human effort by no means. It is through God's own gracious work on us.

We saw in Philippians chapter 1 verses 27 to 30 where God is the one who grants both faith and suffering. Faith and suffering cannot be separated. Christ came here to suffer and where God is the one who enables his people to stand fast, to strive together and not to be terrified in the gospel call which does bring suffering.

Here we're going to see in Philippians 2:19-24 God shaping this man Timothy, a man that is a servant of God. We see him sustaining Paul in prison and caring for the Philippian church through God's sovereign orchestration of this gospel partnership of Paul and Timothy.

Paul's companion, namely Timothy, followed him with such love and gathered around him with such devotion. Even that devotion, as good as it looks like, if you would just look at that of Paul and Timothy and their love for each other, even that is produced by God's formation in Timothy's heart. It is the one God knitting their souls together. It is the one God that sustains their relationship for their time and God advancing the gospel.

This passage is not talking about Paul's leadership. Some people have used this and just taken it out of context and said let's follow Paul's leadership. Or another group, they would take Timothy and his character and say look at Timothy in isolation. These passages must not be used that way where we just take away the truths of Paul's leadership or Timothy's character in isolation. No, we must fit it in the context of this passage.

So let us stand for the reading of God's word and out of respect for his word. Philippians 2:19-24.

But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel. Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me. But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly.

May God bless the reading of his word. You may be seated.

We're going to look at verse 19. And I want to lift up these words: I trust in the Lord Jesus. Here Paul does not say I plan to send Timothy. No, he says I trust in the Lord Jesus. I trust in him to send Timotheus. You see that he does everything through the lens of if it's the Lord's will.

And then we see here in this passage we find Paul in a season of an outward restriction. He is after all in prison. Yet his heart is not bound by his shackles as it were. His heart is free flowing and its message is going across to many people including received by Timotheus.

So as we look at these verses, we must recognize that every moment, every hope of our desires and every provision of fellowship described here is not a result of human planning or willpower. Again, taking out of context Paul's leadership, Paul's desires to send Timothy was not an impulsive act of human emotion. This did not come out of human emotion whatsoever. It was done in the Lord Jesus. It was done in the Lord Jesus. In total submission. That's another way of putting it. He was totally submitted to the Lord Jesus Christ, to his divine will.

And Paul's confidence is not in his strategy. It's not in his leadership or his ability to manage ministry. Albeit he was good at all those things. But we must not take away those things. The main thing is this: that his confidence is in the Lord Jesus. He wants everyone to know my confidence does not come from my abilities. It comes from the Lord Jesus. He wants to always lift him up in everything that he does because he's the one that alone directs the steps of his servants. He is a servant of God and he is totally submitted to Christ.

So we often speak of what we will do for the church or how we will serve one another. But Paul shows us a better way, the best way. He does not say, "I have decided to send Timothy." Like I said, he says his trust is in the Lord Jesus to perform the sending. We must realize the Lord is the one that is the great sender. Ultimately, Matthew 9:38, Jesus

said this, "Pray therefore the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth laborers into his harvest."

It is the Lord who directs the steps of his servants and it is the Lord who provides good comfort to our souls by revealing his work in the lives of our brothers and sisters in Christ.

And Paul's longing for the Philippians again was not motivated by his own emotions or his own desires. It was motivated ultimately by a deep desire to hear from the Philippians. And he describes this kind of love. We're going to see is a longing. He had a deep longing for the Philippians because after all he was separated from them for a long time. He wanted to receive news from them would be as it were like drinking cold water to a thirsty soul. For him, he wanted to make sure that the Philippians received Timothy.

So Paul's longing is not again a mere human emotion. It is God's own love for his people flowing through Paul. That's it. It's God's love. He is not a barrier to God's love flowing freely from him from God to him to the church. And he wants that for Timothy as well. And so Paul writing to the Romans in Romans 5:5 says, "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost."

So Paul says of Timothy verse 20, I have no man likeminded who will naturally care for your state. See, God does a supernatural work in the heart to create likemindedness. That's one of his works, God's work to design us to be likeminded.

So Paul describes Timothy as being like-minded. We saw the same word used in Philippians 2:2. If you will look there, it says, "Fulfill ye my joy that ye be likeminded." Continuing in verse two, "Having the same love, being of one accord and of one mind."

See that same love, same accord, one mind. And what is that you might think? While Timothy shared this singular devotion again with Paul, united in thought, united in his emotion, united in his spirit by their love for the Philippians. Timothy's love wasn't just ultimately for Paul. It was ultimately what was Paul's love for the Philippians. So, as Paul or rather Timothy's love for Paul, it goes and flows through the love of the Philippians. This is what Paul is saying. He thinks as much of the love that you just heard from me. We spent time, right? We went through Paul's love for the Philippians. He has that same kind of love for you. That's why I'm going to send him to you because I want someone to be there. Not just in words, but also in action.

So God does a supernatural work in the heart to create this like-mindedness in Timothy. And this unity was not based on human compatibility. This was not a harmony produced by human personality. It wasn't that their personalities connected in some way but it was

based on the mind of Christ. Philippians 2:5 they both had the mind of Christ which that is what God formed within them both.

And this is what true spiritual unity is between people by the way. That it is not achieved through even a human ceremony in marriage or in our effort but that it is rather solely God who can bridge the separation of people filling their hearts with the mind of Christ. That is true spiritual unity.

Because Timothy shared Paul's mindset mind of Christ he possessed the mind of Christ as well and that is what brings people together and why you remember that the mind of Christ was defined by humility. We saw him lowering himself and then God exalting him. So Paul is being lowered so that God will be exalted. Timothy is being lowered so that God can be exalted. And isn't that for us as well here that we would lower ourselves that he would be exalted. And this is humility. Humility is part of the unity.

So it's not Timothy's achievement again, not his character. It is God forming Christ's humility in Timothy. So Paul says Timothy will naturally care for your state. Timothy's concern was truly sincere and genuine. It wasn't a matter of obligation to him. It wasn't a duty for duty's sake. It wasn't of self-interest. It was full of sympathy, unselfish disregard of self and consecrated love of Christ and his church. That was Timothy's heart.

Someone like that is unshakable. Someone like that, you can all brothers and sisters can relate. That's the one I'm going to be able to work well with in any situation, in all suffering, in all persecution, in all ups and downs of life, the one that has mind of Christ.

And we see this in Philippians 2:13. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. It is his will and good pleasure that you have this mind.

So now let's look at verse 21. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. This is one of Paul's most serious observations. This is not the observation of the world. This is the observation of the church at Philippi. He's talking about people in the church at Philippi.

You see, it's easy to go look at the world. Of course, they're seeking themselves. Of course, they're going to be self-interested. But what Paul does here, he says, even within the church, we witness the expected consequences of human effort. That there are some amongst this church at Philippi that they're striving after their flesh. They're trying to do things out of their human effort. And he says all are focused on their own interest.

Because left to our own strength, brothers and sisters, we are egocentric. It means we're the center of everything. Look at me. Look at what I do. We all have that. It's there. Paul

recognizes it and he says, "Observe carefully because we're not the ones to be people circling around ourselves." That's the world.

None of that should be in the local church setting. And it's a good reminder for us. Colossians 1:16-17 says this, "For by him were all things created... All things were created by him and for him. And he is before all things, and by him all things consist." He is the center of the universe, not us.

So even within the church at Philippi, there were those who were driven by desire, personal glory. We saw that in Philippians 2:3 using the expression vain glory. That's personal glory. We saw their interest in their own selves in Philippians 1:16. And we're even willing to diminish Paul's standing.

These individuals often treated others with contempt, rooted in pride and arrogance, and ultimately a lack of genuine agape love. This is none of what Christians are supposed to do.

It's a warning against the tongue. James 3:5-6. Even so, the tongue is a little member and boasteth great things... the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity... and is set on fire of hell.

But I want to give encouragement of what the tongue can do. Ephesians 4:29 says this, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying that it may minister grace unto the hearers."

You know what this is talking about? It means you have a heart after God. That your concern is through the lens of God's perspective and how God sees that person, not filtered by your perspective. Because when we do it through our filter, we do what James 3:5-6 warns. We must ask God, God, how do you see this person? God, give me this discernment... It's only by your grace that I can administer grace.

So notice Paul does not shame them. He just calls it out, but he doesn't go into detail. He doesn't shame them after he says this. He does not complain. He does not even despair. You see, a man who walks with Christ can manage without the support of others.

This is what he has learned. Have you learned this? That at the end of the day, your relationship with Christ is the most important relationship you have. Never ever place anyone in between that relationship with Christ. Not even your best of best kin. Not even your own family. Even Jesus said that you should not love your family more than the brethren.

So it's not even Paul's word. It's going directly to what Jesus said. Christ is enough. You don't need to have Christ and someone else. Christ is enough. That's why he can be in prison and be content.

So left to ourselves, we do not seek Christ first. We seek our own comfort. We seek our own reputation. We seek our own advancement. Know that any part where you see yourself, I need to be more comfortable. I need to build up my reputation. I need to advance my desires. Wrong. It's of the flesh. Own it. Know it. Confess it. And turn. You must repent. You must turn back to your first love.

God exposes this not to condemn his people but to transform them. We all need to be more and more transformed. If you're in a good place, you know that you still have a lot more transforming to do. There is just so much more. But we need to be emptied of ourselves.

And this is not a weekly thing. This is a minute-by-minute thing. Paul had a lot of time alone... yet he uses his time for his devotion to the Lord and then devotion to the Philippian church. His love for Christ and his love for the brethren. They must go together. Never can they be separated.

God reveals the heart's natural self-seeking desires, but he also exposes your love for Christ. It is him that does this work because we don't seek Christ in our flesh. So God exposes this for our good. And he doesn't leave us there. God alone redirects the heart towards Christ.

So wherever you are right now, God always wants to lead in the direction your heart because he ultimately wants the best end result, your destination. He cares. So, he's going to always make sure your heart's oriented towards what he wants.

We often think because we're Christians, we're going to always just be okay. No. Paul corrects this. We're still susceptible to our own self-seeking desires. And you have to recognize that and humble yourself and realize that that's true of you.

And God redirects our hearts to seek the things which are Jesus Christ. Paul contrasts the self-seekers with Timothy who seeks the things which are Jesus Christ. It is God's grace that causes a soul to naturally care for others. He works at the natural level caring for others. And this care is a maturing grace that God works within his chosen vessels of God.

So it wasn't Timothy even producing this kind of devotion. It was God producing this devotion in him. His interests for the Philippians were equivalent to the interest he had for Jesus Christ. Think about that. His love for Christ was as much for the Philippians.

The things of Jesus Christ. Doesn't Christ love his church that he gave himself for it? Ephesians 5:25.

If we seek after the interest of others, then we seek after the interest of Christ because he loves his people. He always loves his people. That he laid down his life for his people.

So let's look at verse 22. God proves this maturation of grace in his servants. In the life of Timothy, it says this, "But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel."

Timothy's character was not formed overnight. It was proven, tested, refined, matured by God through years of one thing, gospel partnership. The character that Christ formed in Timothy was under testing, under restraint, under strain.

God places the servants in gospel labor. Timothy served with Paul, not under Paul, not for Paul, but with Paul because both were serving Christ. Paul didn't think that he was higher or better than him. As long as we're serving Christ, we're the same.

God sustains his servants through trials in the furtherance of the gospel. Timothy endured hardship in travel with Paul, in persecution with Paul and discouragement alongside Paul. Paul brought Timothy along with him. That's discipleship. Life on life, not just telling him what to do, but here follow me as I follow after Christ. 1 Corinthians 11:1.

Many young people began a work but after a short time, they throw in the towel. But not Timothy. God helped him not throw in the towel. Because Timothy was not strong, but because God is the one that strengthened him in his youth.

We might be tempted to look at Timothy and praise his loyalty to Paul. But here to clarify, Timothy's character was developed and strengthened by God's strength.

Timothy was a man of often infirmities. 1 Timothy 5:23. He had frequent illnesses, ongoing stomach problems. And he also suffered tears. 2 Timothy 1:4. The tears here represent Timothy's sadness, fear, emotional struggle during times of difficult ministry.

And Paul was the one encouraging him through this process. 2 Timothy 1:7, God did not give us a spirit of fear but of power and of love and a sound mind.

2 Timothy 2:1, "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." He's always pointing him to Christ.

So service in the gospel is not about what we do for God. It is about what God does through us. They were both servants alike and the passion and intensity of their work was a gift from God himself.

Timothy's spiritual maturity was so developed that he could do the work independently at this stage. Even at his young age, he was able to go and do what Paul asked him to do.

And because it was him submitting totally to Christ and God is the one who gets us going the gift within us and provides that loving sympathy that we have towards our brethren. And it's necessary to have that kind of love of Christ because it is the heart of Christ that reaches out to others.

Without God's heart beating within us, our work would be like flinging stones. This kind of work of flinging stones is like criticizing someone harshly, judging somebody, casting blame on others and then it leads to ignoring one's own faults.

Here just remember what Jesus said cast the one that cast the first stone. They couldn't because they knew they had their own faults. And so this flinging of stones is not what Timothy is going to do but rather he's going to offer them the gospel.

Approximately four to six years passed between Paul's letter to the Philippians and his final letter 2 Timothy. During this time of four to six years Timothy grew from not only a traveling assistant to Paul but he became a mature leader serving as a pastor at Ephesus.

That's what happens in discipleship. Faithful men leading faithful men. There's something that happens in discipleship that cannot be done through what today is called digital discipleship. It means you're listening to preachers on YouTube. No accountability. It means peer-to-peer mentorship. That's not what we see here in Paul and Timothy.

Within four to six years, he becomes this man that's timid, afraid of everything, crying his eyes out when he falls into some difficult ministry to this man becoming a pastor at Ephesus.

So God forms Christlike relationships beautifully. This father-son relationship, he uses this expression father. He's like my spiritual son as I am to his spiritual father. And the nature of a father child relationship molds the child into like the father. And God empowers that relationship like no other relationship on this earth.

It's not human chemistry. It is formed of the mind of Christ.

Let's see how God orchestrates every moment of his servants in verse 23 to 24. Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me. But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly.

Take notice that he says at this juncture the same wording we saw in verse 19. I trust in the Lord Jesus. Beginning to end this relationship.

Paul does not know whether he will live or die at this time. He does not know whether he will be released or executed. In our human frailty, we often struggle with anxiety over the unknown. Paul is expressing that anxiety.

Paul shows us though a way worth noticing and seeing in his life. With that anxiety that is pressing on him, see how he deals with it. He does not rely on his own abilities to figure things out. He leaves the future to him who will shape not only the beginning of his life, but the end.

Paul's hope was not in human imagination but was rooted and conditioned in the Lord Jesus. Whether the outcome was life or death, Paul spoke and lived Philippians 1:6, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

So he recognizes his uncertainty. But he still trusts that he will be liberated. This is the confidence that we should all have.

Paul's plan here literally means, I am submitting my life to God's sovereignty. Beginning to end. Control from beginning to end.

Job 42:2, I know that thou canst do every thing and that no thought can be withholden from thee.

Genesis 50:20. Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good...

Isaiah 30:18. And therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you... Blessed are all they that wait for him.

God is a sovereign ruler of all of our circumstances. Paul says he will send Timothy as soon as I shall see how it will go with me. He's not sure, but he recognized that his life was subject to God's sovereignty. Whatever he will do, I will receive it.

So God comforts his people through his servants. Paul wants Timothy to go so that I also may be of good comfort. The comfort is not from Timothy. It is from God through Timothy. 2 Corinthians 7:6, God that comforteth those that are cast down comforted us by the coming of Titus.

So he did this with Titus and he's doing it with Timothy. He knew that they were cast down to some degree. God comforts his people through the presence ministry of faithful servants.

So concluding here, God is the one that forms his servants. God is the one that sustains his servants and God is ultimately the one that sends his servants.

This passage is not about Paul's leadership or Timothy's character. It is about God who forms servants for his church. Let's look away from our own efforts and look to the maturing grace of God. Let's want more maturing in our lives by his grace because it is God who sends the right people at the right time. It is God who kills the selfishness within our hearts and gives us the mind of Christ. It is God who sustains us through infirmity and fear making us fit for his cause. It is God who holds our future. Whether in life or in death, we can all calmly trust in him.

And this is all of God, God's sovereignty, depending on God's sovereignty to shape us from beginning to end.

So may we like Timothy recognize that as every faithful servant, as me as a pastor, as our missionaries. Pray for this for our missionaries, for every encourager in this room, for every helper in this room. Be found not seeking our own, but be moved by the spirit of God to care for the things of Jesus Christ. For as with Christ and as we are his companion in this gospel call, a person needs no other. For Christ himself assures the heart in which he resides as found in Matthew 28:20. Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

May God be glorified. Let's pray.

Father, thank you for sending your son dying for us on the cross. All that led up to that, Lord, was an example for us in his humility and ultimately exaltation in your perfect timing that was done according to your sovereign will.

And just like our Lord Jesus Christ and how he came into this world and he died for us and for our sins bearing the weight of your wrath and ultimately saying it is finished.

Help us to rest in that. Rest in what he has done for us, not what we can do for him. Not only in our salvation but continually in our sanctification...

Help us Lord to take these words as serious as it was received with Timothy and as it was received by the Philippian church. I pray, Father, that we would continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. That we be further matured by your grace.

Grant to us the heart and mind of Christ. And then I pray for again the lost here that are amongst us, Lord, that they've been trying in their own efforts and some have almost given up, but there are some here that have not. They're still here. They're still sitting under your word.

Today is the day of salvation. I pray, Father, that your Holy Spirit will convince them that they must trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation of their sin. That they can be

blood-bought, no longer living in the course of this world, but living according to your will and to your pleasure.

Bless to this end, Father. Do a work that only you can do because we can only plant the seed. We can only water, but you must give the increase.