

Philippians 2:19-30

Imitation

Image Church // Philippians Week 7

MPS: We need to have/be in-person examples of what it looks like to follow Jesus.

Introduction

Well good morning image family and friends that are tuning in with us...

Hey before we jump in, I just want to remind you again about signing up for our **weekly update** that we just launched. If you haven't done that already please go to **imageatl.com** and click stay connected and put in your name and email so that you can receive our weekly update.

Here's why this is important, we've put together a survey to help us evaluate what gathering again will look like and where you are in the process, and so we want to make sure that everyone who calls Image Church home gets a chance to fill out this survey.

We want to hear from you, and this survey gives us a chance to be able to do that!

So, if you **haven't** signed up for the weekly update go and do that, and then **be looking for that survey in the update** that we're going to be sending out this week... And for those of you **that have received our weekly update**, make sure to fill out the survey!! This is going to be super helpful for us as we evaluate what it looks like to begin gathering in person again!

Well, recently my mom was cleaning out some things at her house and she came across some journals that she had from when I was a baby and she sent me some pictures of some of the things she wrote...

And one of the things that she wrote about was **how I wanted to do everything that my daddy does...**

And I started to think back on how much I learned from following my dad around... My dad would always invite me in on whatever he was doing, every home improvement project, every time he had to fix something that was broke, he even invited me into his job with him...

I am who I am in so many ways because of what I saw in my dad... I know how do so many things because of my dad, and more importantly I am a follower of Jesus because of my dad- my dad actually led me to Christ...

My dad served as a model for me in life and still does...

And I share that because what we're going to see this morning is how Paul's going to be talking about some guys that he's going to send to Philippi to serves as models for them when it comes to living out the very things that he's been challenging them in....

Remember, Paul's concerned with the selfishness and pride of the Philippians that had resulted in a lack of concern for others and had created disunity in the church...

And up to this point Paul's held up Jesus and His servanthood and humility as the foundation for considering the interests of others...

And then after that Paul even holds up his own life as an **example** for how he's living in light of who Jesus is and what He's done by pouring out his life for the sake of others...

And now he's going to take it a step further and point to two guys that he's about to send their way to serve as in person examples... This way they don't just hear about how they should live, but they can see how they're supposed to live that way through these two guys...

Ok, let's jump in and look at who they are and what we can learn from all this...

Philippians 2:19-30

9 Now I hope in the Lord Jesus [you have to notice where Paul's confidence rests] to send Timothy to you soon so that I too may be encouraged by news about you. **20** For I have no one else like-minded who will genuinely care about your interests; **21** all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.

Let me stop here for just a second and ask this **what are the interests of Jesus Christ?** I don't want to jump over this, I want to make sure you see Paul's flow of thought here...

- Because this isn't a new idea here, this is the essence of what Paul's been talking about here in **Chapter 2!**

The interest of Jesus Christ is OTHERS! Jesus gave His life for the sake of the eternal goodness of others! He laid aside His royalty to become a servant for you...

- **Gospel...**

Here's something I don't want you to miss in this: **Do you understand that you were the interest of Christ?!** That's Powerful!

- Someone needs to here that today- That Christ considered you when He took on the scorn, shame, humiliation and suffering of the cross!!
- This takes what seems like a big idea and makes is a very real and intimate truth for those that have trusted in Jesus!

And listen, it gets better, Christ consideration of you mean that you can hold fast to the hope of **Phil. 1:6**- That *He who began a good work on you will be faithful to bring it to carry it on to completion!* That's good news!!

And it's because of all that, because of that fact that Christ gave his life for the sake of **you and me, others, that we're to do the same thing**— That's been Paul's message to the Philippians...

And now he's going to send them someone that actually lives that way!

Timothy's going to be an in-person model for them... Case and point, he's willing to travel all the way to Philippi for the sake of helping encourage the Philippians in their service to one another!!

And they know this to be true because this isn't the first time Timothy would come to Philippi, he was there with Paul when the church in Philippi was planted...

Look at **verse 22**, Paul says:

22 But you know his proven character, because he has served with me in the gospel ministry like a son with a father. **23** Therefore, I hope to send him as soon as I see how things go with me. **24** I am confident in the Lord that I myself will also come soon.

Now, here's something else that we need to see here... If you were around for our 2 Timothy Series- but look at the language that Paul uses here when he talks about Timothy...

Like a son with a father... What do you see in this? You see how Paul served as an in-person example of what it means to follow Jesus for Timothy... There is a spiritual investment happening here...

Listen, I know that when I talked about my father earlier, the reality is that many of you may not have had that... You are not alone, **Timothy didn't have it either, and Paul stepped in...**

Family this is why the church is so important... The church is a family, and in a family, there are those who are Spiritual fathers/mothers and those who are spiritual sons/daughters... Some of yall need to step in as Spiritual fathers and mothers...

- Those that are more seasoned in their faith should be investing in those who are newer in their faith, and those newer in the faith should be hungry for that investment...

But note: The goal isn't always to be a spiritual son or daughter, but to eventually follow by becoming a Spiritual mother or father...

Look at Timothy, ***he's just going to go and live out what he experienced from Paul!***

We'll come back to this a little bit more at the end but I want to get to this next guy... His name is ***Epaphroditus***, look at verse 25...

25 But I considered it necessary to send you Epaphroditus—my brother, coworker, and fellow soldier, as well as your messenger and minister to my need—**26** since he has been longing for all of you and was distressed because you heard that he was sick. **27** Indeed, he was so sick that he nearly died. However, God had mercy on him, and not only on him but also on me, so that I would not have sorrow upon sorrow. **28** For this reason, I am very eager to send him so that you may rejoice again when you see him and I may be less anxious. **29** Therefore, welcome him in the Lord with great joy and hold people like him in honor, **30** because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to make up what was lacking in your ministry to me.

Ok, so let me give you the back story here on ***Epaphroditus***...

- Paul was in prison... The church in Philippi sent Him to Paul with gifts and to care for him while he was in prison...
- Get sick almost dies making up for what was lacking in the Philippians ministry to Paul... This is crazy service here...
 - o This is not a put down this is a compliment...
 - o ***Explain...***

And now he's home sick and get this, he's worried because he heard people were concerned about him being sick!

This is an incredibly selfless guy...

But here's something I want you to see... ***this is so important here, Paul's affirmation and honor toward Epaphroditus isn't simply because of what he did, even though it was amazing- Paul's affirmation and honor comes because of why he did it.***

v.30 he came close to death for the work of Christ

He was willing to lower himself like Christ for the sake of Christ...

- ***That is humility***, and oh how we miss this so often- we want to get credit for what we've done more than we want people to see why we've done it!
 - o Selfish reality of our hearts, we want the glory...

Epaphroditus is yet another ***model*** of someone living out the implications of the gospel, adopting the same attitude of Christ Jesus...

And here's the cool part, Paul sends him back and what do you think he has with him? The letter that we're reading right now!!

It was through his selflessness that not only the church in Philippi was encouraged and strengthened, but that we too are reaping the benefit of his service and sacrifice as we study the book of Philippians that he faithfully delivered!

Ok, so there you have it, two guys that were living out the heart of what Paul was calling the church of Philippi to... Now what do we need to take away from this??

Here is it, you ready: ***Imitation in Christian life is just as important as information about the Christian life...***

A friend of mine had a mentor that said to him: *In each season of life you need books you can read, and people who can read you...*

He says this is so important because, a book can give you information but it can't know you,¹ [and it can't demonstrate] ...

- You say well it gives examples:
 - Let me ask you this, *have you ever tried to fix anything by reading an instruction Manuel... It's hard as all get out...*
 - Chances are you haven't- most of you just go to **YouTube** when you need to know how to do something...

Why?!?! Because *there's something to watching someone...*

Not to mention there's just so many things that you can't simply learn from a book... It's why there's ***on the job training*** when you start new job...

There's value in watching someone put things into practice rather than just hearing about how things should be...

Here's what books do,² they give you *principles, but people help you put it into practice...*

See, because the reality is, most things are caught rather than taught...

- Reading books on marriage... *Great but its better to watch a Christian marriage in action...*
- Books on Parenting... "..."
- Reading books on prayer... "..."
- Reading books on dating... "..."
- Reading books on confession of sin... "..."
- Sharing your faith... "..."

Books are great, but it's not enough... *For some of you that's your problem.*

¹ Kyle Mercer

² Ibid.

A friend and Pastor Kyle Mercer says it like this: *We need to be instructed and we need to be inspired...*

And here's the reality, ***that's exactly how God set up the church...***

Think about it, if all the church in Philippi needed was information, then Paul would not have sent either of those guys to Philippi... And He certainly wouldn't have talked about them the way that He did, if their presence and example not been important...

Take the model of Jesus for example: we have to understand that Jesus didn't say, ***here sit down and just listen, He said come follow me...***

- And yes, listening was definitely part of that... But the point is that Jesus served as a model in word and deed, and he brought His disciples into that in everyday life...

I am not saying that to minimize the Word, I am saying that to show you how the Word of God works together with the people of God through the Spirit of God! And this isn't my thoughts, these are God's that He's laid out for us throughout the entire NT!

Obedience is hard, walking in humility, considering the interests of others is hard, we need help, we need examples that we can look out... Not perfect people, but surrendered people...

Conclusion [VAMP]

So, let me close by asking you this:

Who are you doing life with? And who is investing in you??

- I mean really- not superficially
- Who have you given permission to that can really speak into your life?
- Who do you go to for counsel and biblical wisdom?

And then let me ask you this, ***who are you investing in?? Who are you allowing into your life??***

- Legitimately...

Make appeal for the **Legacy initiative**

- *Knowing God and making Him known...*
- *Discipleship is growing toward that end- and for that to happen we need real life examples... We need people we can look to...*

The Christian life wasn't designed to be walked alone... We need the church, and we need to act as the church, the church is a family...

We need to lean into that, some of you are stagnant spiritually or struggling to grow because you won't lean into people...

- I'm not talking about just attending CG, I am talking about opening your life to your CG...

Others of you need to step up and open up your life so that others can grow...

- Let people see the real you, the real life... Walk together...
- Some of you are being selfish with your spiritual journey...

Imitation, is just as important as information- this is the way that God set up the church...

- Are both of these things a reality in your life??

The Christian life is more than just information, who can you imitate, and who is imitating you??

Can you say with Paul, follow me as I follow Christ?

- For some of you that means you need to start following Jesus...
- For others of you it means that you need to start taking your walk with Jesus serious...
 - You need to understand what's at stake here...