

Philippians 2:19-30

The Examples of Timothy and Epaphroditus

The larger context is the “*mind of Christ*” introduced in 2:5.

Paul was *Jewish* – “*Hebrew of Hebrews*”

Timothy was *half Jew - half Gentile*

Epaphroditus was a *Gentile*

The “*mind of Christ*” is a must for all believers!

Timothy

Paul may have met Timothy in Acts 14 on his first missionary journey. On his second missionary journey (Acts 16:1-3) Paul takes Timothy with him and begins his relationship as a mentor to Timothy. At the end of his life Paul passes the spiritual torch to Timothy. See 2 Timothy 4:1-7

Verses 19-24

A servant’s heart:

-*Kindred spirit with Paul*

-*Genuinely concerned for their welfare*

-*Served Paul*

-*Partner in the gospel*

2 Timothy 1:5, “For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and I am sure that is in you as well.”

A servant’s training:

-*He is mentioned 24 times in the New Testament, six times in Acts, once in Hebrews, and seventeen times in Paul’s letters*

-*He served Paul in some of his most difficult times*

“The submissive mind is not the product of an hour’s sermon, or a week’s seminar, or even a year’s service. The submissive mind grows in us as, like Timothy, we yield to the Lord and seek to serve others.”¹ Warren Wiersbe

Verse 19

Paul’s purpose in sending Timothy was to learn the “*condition*” of the Philippian believers.

I hope in the Lord Jesus – Paul’s plans were always subject to the will of the Lord.

Verse 20

No one else of kindred spirit – Paul wanted them to be assured of Timothy’s genuine concern for them. He had no other fellow workers at the time that could do a better job.

Verse 21

For they all seek after their own interests not those of Christ Jesus –

This is a general statement as there were others who served faithfully with Paul. He may be thinking of the group he mentioned in 1:15-17. The believer who puts the interests of Christ above his or hers is a rare individual.

Verse 22

But you know of his proven worth - They knew Timothy personally as he had been with Paul when he founded the church in Acts 16.

He served:

-*In the furtherance of the gospel -Like a child serving his father*

Verses 23-24

As I see how things go with me – Paul expected a decision in his case to be coming soon and was confident that he would be released and would be able to continue his missionary work. It appears that Nero did release Paul in A.D. 62 and he continued his missionary labors. He was arrested again and imprisoned in Rome a second time.

Epaphroditus– Verses 25-30

Epaphroditus was from Philippi and had been sent from the church to minister to Paul (4:18). After his illness Paul had sent him back to Philippi with this letter.

Paul describes Epaphroditus in five key relationships (Verse 25).

- 1 *My brother* (in the faith).
- 2 *My fellow worker* – He was a partner in the gospel ministry.
- 3 *My fellow soldier* – He had entered into the spiritual warfare.
- 4 *Your messenger* – He brought Paul their gift.
- 5 *Your minister to my need* – Epaphroditus was their means of ministry to Paul. He was their way of sending support and encouragement to Paul in his imprisonment.

Verses 26-27

Sick to the point of death – Perhaps because of his selfless sacrifice in serving Paul (verse 30).

God had mercy on him – Paul did not have the ability to heal at *his own will*.

Sorrow upon sorrow – Intense grief or unbearable sorrow.

Verse 28

I have sent him all the more eagerly – Because of their concern for his health and because Paul wanted to encourage them with his letter.

You may rejoice – Good news about fellow believers in ministry is always a source of joy!

Verses 29-30

Paul wanted the Philippians to understand the service and sacrifice of Epaphroditus and to joyfully hold him in *high regard*

¹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Php 2:23–24). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.