

MEN OF CHARACTER

Men, What Characters!

Php 2.19-30

In Php 2; Timothy and Epaphroditus.

Chapter 2 begins with "if therefore": which means Paul is drawing a conclusion.

We see consolation, comfort and fellowship that occurs when we are:

Like-minded; lowly (not haughty); do things without complaining.

Two examples of individuals...

-who brought comfort, consolation, fellowship

-defied the pull of the world

-chose to exemplify Godly character

-who stayed IN the trenches-

-Men of strong character who labored on in spite of odds

God is interested in the heroes who labor DAY in, day out,
father their children, love their wives, support the church, witness for Jesus.

Latimer and Ridley, burned at the stake in 1555. (stupid Prot/Cath war, Jane Grey/Bloody Mary)

Ridley went to the pyre in a black gown, Latimer chose to wear a shabby old garment.

Ridley kissed the stake and both men knelt and prayed. *After a fifteen-minute sermon urging them to repent,* they were chained to the stake, bag of gunpowder was hung round...necks.

Ridley was the first to strengthen his friend.

"Be of good heart, brother, for God will either assuage the fury of the flame, or else strengthen us to abide it."

As the bundle of sticks caught fire beneath them, Latimer raised his voice:

"Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and PLAY THE MAN; *by God's grace*

we shall this day light such a candle in England, ***as I trust shall never be put out.***"

Consider Caleb, he kept the same faith, perseverance and positivity for 40 years!

The Caleb who stood at Egypt's door was the same Caleb 40 years later...

Stronger! Wiser! More patient!

Consider Simeon and Anna

Patiently and Faithfully for filling Duty in the temple day after day, year after year.

Driven by Godly desire to see the Messiah.

Cold and rain did not matter; aching bones; DELAY...

So, MEN, to our opening question? Like Timothy and Epaphroditus...

What desire drives us? Motivates us? Godly desires? To see the manifestation of Christ?

We're going to see what drove these three people, Paul and Timothy.

These men were ready to go, ready to help, and ready to sacrifice

Use unfallen Adam as an example in the Garden...Men, here is what we need:

NEED THE PRESENCE OF GOD

In Gen 3, after they fell, Adam said,

"I heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the breeze of the day."

Evidently God would meet with them periodically and fellowship,

but sin interrupted that fellowship, and the presence was lost...

How we need his presence!

What is His presence? Really, I do not know!

NOT a feeling, but you can feel Him NOT a sensation, but you can sense Him

According to Jn 4.24, God is not a spirit, Jesus said: God is Spirit...

So in the garden WHEN Adam and Eve would walk with God in the cool breezes, they were walking with spirit. Most likely could not see him, they were walking w/ him, knew him and heard his voice.

Does Spirit have an audible voice? Physical touch?

NOW, as human beings, with at least a small vestige of the creative spirit in us, I BELIEVE we sense his spirit speaking to us. That's his presence! And boy do we need that!

To be honest, I think as human beings we all know what his presence is.

We all know those times when we hear a still small voice behind us,

Because it is listening to his inner spirit voice that brings us to the next point.

NEED TO WORK (Do something, anything!)

Each of us has to be ready to go! Timothy and Epaphroditus were ready to go.

Unprepared, unknowing, not fully knowing direction, or what they would encounter!

In the case of Epaphroditus it was sickness near unto death. But they heard and they went!

Ready to go anywhere... Phillipi... Ephesus... prison... ready to do anything

But here is the unique difference in our work. Some works seem to be big for God:

Billy Graham, K Kuhlman, Reinhard Bonnke, John Calvin, Wesley, Martin Luther, big deals!

Epaphroditus, bring my personal effects. Timothy carry this letter for me.

What? Comparing that to Billy Graham??

Aren't Calvin and Wesley and Billy Graham the bigshots?

Nope not in the Kingdom! We are in a kingdom *where all members are priests and Kings*

All members are hand selected

Members are one in Christ

All members are seated in the heavenlies with him

Have been raised from death into life

There is neither Jew nor Greek barbarian...

The least is the greatest...

Paul calls a Epaphroditus a companion, a fellow soldier, a messenger

and he said hold these men in high regard

NEED TO CULTIVATE

Like Adam cultivating the garden under the direction of God, we need to cultivate the life around us.

God told adam: *Here is your garden, cultivate it! Grow it! Name it! Replenish it! SPREAD IT!*

Paul told Timothy: Here is your work, DO NOT neglect it! STIR it up!

The word minister in verse 25 is the same as used in the temple.

Nothing in the life of a believer is secular, everything we do is spiritual!

And PAUL uses this word to describe Tim and Epa as them helping **him** with helping **Christ**

Gentlemen, regardless of your age...***what are you cultivating, WHO ARE you cultivating?***

Wait, isn't Jesus coming back soon? *Do we wait and do nothing or do we WATCH AND PREPARE?*

We need to Hear, Work and Cultivate the Garden that God has given us till He returns!