

Harris Creek Baptist Church
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Series: Philippians
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Ordinary Obedience
Philippians 2:19-30

"I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. I have no one else like him, who will show genuine concern for your welfare. For everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel.

I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how things go with me. And I am confident in the Lord that I myself will come soon. But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, co-worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs. For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill.

Indeed he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow. Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you may be glad and I may have less anxiety. So then, welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor people like him, because he almost died for the work of Christ. He risked his life to make up for the help you yourselves could not give me."

One of the things that helps me do my job best at Harris Creek as the college pastor is simply the fact that I was a college student at one point. Whenever college students are coming up to me and asking for advice or counsel, I'm able to help them because I've been there before. If they're asking for advice about going through a breakup, I can say, "Man, I've been there before." If they're going through roommate issues, I can say, "Hey, I've been there before."

Specifically, I was also a Baylor student, so I can talk about Baylor things. I can talk about being in Pigskin, and I can even talk about specific classes our college students are in that I also took. Recently, as I was talking to one of our college students... He was asking for some advice and some counsel on one of his classes. He said, "Nate, it's just so hard to find the motivation to study for my World Oceans class." Thankfully, I had taken World Oceans as well. He was like, "Man, I just don't see the point of memorizing all of these different sea creatures."

I think I was able to give him some good, quality advice. I said, "Man, I know that right now, where you're at, it feels like a waste of time to be memorizing all of these different crustaceans on the bottom of the sea. I know that's what it feels like right now, but seven years later, you're going to be in my shoes, and you're going to look back, and you're going to think, 'That was an even bigger waste of time than what I thought it was.'" I have never used that once since then. Like, why was I even doing that?

Actually, there are a lot of different things we learn in school that are simply just a waste of time. Now, if there are any educators in the room, we're so grateful for you. You're making a difference. I'm not just saying that. You are doing important things. But there are some things that I just feel like were a waste of time, like *this*. Cursive. I remember spending hours writing cursive. I had teachers... Mrs. Kenably told me I could never get a job unless I learned cursive. Well, Mrs. Kenably, I'm getting a paycheck every other week right now, and I never, ever use cursive. It just feels like a waste of time.

How about *this* one? Man, that just gives me the chills. That kept me up at night. Long division. I spent hours trying to figure out long division in middle school. Do you know when the last time I used long division was? Middle school, because I have this thing in my pocket called a *phone* that does long division for me. That feels like a waste of time.

There's one other one, and this is going to be divisive, so please give me some grace if you disagree with me. I'm going to give *you* some grace, because if you disagree with me, you are wrong. Reading this book was a waste of time. I know. There were some gasps. That was the most meaningless book I've ever read. It's like *The Bachelor* in book form. Why did I have to read it? It affected my life in zero ways other than it just simply wasted my time.

Think about history class. There are all sorts of names and dates that you forget immediately after taking the test, and it just feels like a waste of time. If I'm totally honest with you guys this morning, that's how I felt after reading this text the first time this week. I was like, "Man, why is this thing even in here?" Because as we've been reading through the book of Philippians... Philippians is one of the most majestic books in all of Scripture.

It's filled with quotable verses and deep theological ideas that will help you grow in your love for Jesus. Then we get *this* text. As soon as I read it, I was like, "There's no other reason JP would go on vacation other than he doesn't think he can preach this text." No wonder he'd throw me out here to do this one, because this one is really just a travel log where Paul is talking about his two friends, Timothy and Epaphroditus.

If I were the one who was ordaining Scripture, if I were the one who was writing Scripture, I probably would have kept this section out, because it kind of feels like a waste of time. Why talk about these two guys, Timothy and Epaphroditus, who just aren't interesting? Let's talk about the real heroes of the faith, the Pauls and the Davids and the Abrahams and people like Moses who actually made a difference for the kingdom. Why are we talking about Timothy and Epaphroditus? It just kind of feels like a waste of time.

But as I was sitting there trying to figure out why this passage was in Scripture, I realized my lack of interest in it showed me that something was off within me. I'm not very interested in these two guys because they didn't have an impressive title. They didn't do any miracles. They didn't really do anything interesting with their lives. All they did was live with obedience. I'm not all that interested in obedience, but God is.

I think that's why this passage is in Scripture. I think this is why the Holy Spirit had Paul write this and why the Holy Spirit preserved this text that we'd be reading it today. This is the lesson God wants to teach us from this text: *God honors ordinary obedience from ordinary people*. It's so easy to idolize people like Daniel in the lions' den or Jonah living in the whale, but those stories don't feel super tangible to us. They feel a little far off.

But *these* stories, Timothy and Epaphroditus... They're just like you and me. As we're going to see today in the text, there's nothing they did that you can't do, because God changes the world through ordinary people in ordinary moments. The reason this is important for us today is that I know we have a lot of people in this church who think they can't be used by God.

You think you don't have the specific giftings to be used by God. You can't speak. You can't sing. You can't write a huge check. You're not impressive enough. You're not educated enough. You don't have what it takes to be used by God. But that is an absolute lie, because as the Scripture will show us today, God does extraordinary things through ordinary acts of obedience. God uses ordinary people to change the world.

I bet you've seen it in your life. I know I've seen it in mine. Three of the most important people who helped me fall in love with Jesus were an insurance salesman, a stay-at-home mom, and a guy who makes wooden wine racks for a living. Now what did they bring to the table? Did they convince me with a magnificent sermon or some wise theological idea? No. All they did was live with ordinary obedience.

As I watched them live with ordinary obedience, I fell in love with Jesus, because God uses ordinary people doing ordinary acts of obedience to do extraordinary things. So, that's what we're going to learn today in this text, looking at these two guys, these rather forgettable friends of Paul, Timothy and Epaphroditus.

We're going to see what they did, how they lived with obedience, and how God used it to change the world. Let's start with Timothy, the first section, beginning in Philippians 2:19. Paul says this about his friend Timothy: **"I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. I have no one else like him, who..."**

If you were Timothy, how would you want Paul to finish that statement? "I have no one else like him who can dazzle a crowd. I have no one else like him who can build an effective business. I have no one else like him who can memorize all of Scripture." What would you want him to say? "I have no one else like him who..." This is how Paul describes his friend Timothy:

"I have no one else like him, who will show genuine concern for your welfare. For everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how things go with me. And I am confident in the Lord that I myself will come soon."

Isn't that such a beautiful descriptor of Timothy? "I have no one else like him who just genuinely cares for people." That's really what Timothy brought to the table. That was his superpower.

That's how he changed the world. He just cared for people. But if you're like me, you read that and you hear that and you go, "Who cares? Anybody can care for people." The point of this passage is that hardly anyone actually does. Paul says Timothy is the only person he has who actually genuinely cares for people. This is what we can learn from the life of Timothy

1. *Genuine care is rare.* This is what Paul is telling the Philippian church. "Genuine care is rare. The only person I know who actually does it is Timothy." While anyone can, few people actually do. It's so easy to have care for someone in the moment. Like, you go to Life Group, and someone confesses a sin or says something is going on in their life. They ask for a prayer request. It's easy to care for them in the moment. You can pray for them in the moment and say something kind in the moment, but it's rare to have someone like Timothy.

I'm sure Timothy was the type of guy who would wake up the next morning early and pray for that friend and then text him a verse of encouragement. I think Timothy would be the type of guy who would follow up a few days later and ask him to go to lunch. I think Timothy would be the type of guy who would follow up weeks later and continue to care about that person because he genuinely cares for them.

I don't know about you. I don't have many people in my life who treat me that way. Not many of us have genuine care and concern for one another. Why is that? I think it's because we're incredibly and overwhelmingly self-centered narcissists. Whether you realize it or not, we are. We're incredibly self-centered people. If you don't believe me, just let me convince you for a moment. Check out this story I recently read.

There was an apartment complex. It was one of those older buildings, but it was one of those old trendy buildings. They had renovated all of the rooms to make it look like a really cool place that you wanted to live. So people started flocking there and signing up to live there, which was great except they hadn't renovated the elevator.

This elevator was one of those elevators where... We've all been on it. You step in it, and you're like, "There's a 50/50 shot I'm not getting out of this thing." It's kind of janky, and it goes really, really slowly up the elevator shaft to the next set of floors. This was the elevator at this apartment complex. All of the residents started to send in complaints. On the daily, they're complaining to management. "You've got to fix the elevator. You've got to fix the elevator. You've got to fix the elevator."

At some point, the management decided, "We have to do something about it. Otherwise, people are going to leave our apartment complex." The only problem was they didn't have the thousands of dollars necessary to actually fix this elevator. To fix it would be a huge cost. So, they started brainstorming different ways to fix it, and finally, they landed on a fix. As soon as they landed on this fix, they implemented it.

As soon as they implemented this fix, all of the complaints stopped. In fact, the complaints turned to compliments. The residents started going, "Thank you so much for fixing the elevator. We're so grateful that you finally did something about it." What's interesting is they didn't really

fix the elevator. The elevator still moved at the same speed, but they did one thing with the elevator that turned the complaints to compliments.

Do any of y'all know what it is? They put in mirrors. That's all they did. Now, whenever the residents got on the elevator, they didn't think about how slowly it was going because they were staring at themselves. Have you ever realized why elevators have mirrors? It's because you're incredibly self-centered narcissists. Every time you're on an elevator, I hope you realize that. "Man, I care way too much about myself." It's a true story.

If you still don't believe me, let's talk about your prayer life. JP posted this question on his Instagram story this week, and I think it's so applicable to what we're talking about today. He said, "If all of your prayers from this past week, from last Sunday until right now, were answered, if God just said 'Yes' to each and every one of your prayer requests, how many lives would be impacted?"

If all of your prayer requests from this past week were answered "Yes," how many lives would be impacted? I think, for many of us, three people would be impacted: me, myself, and I, because our prayers sound like, "God, would you help *me* in this? God, would you give *me* more rest? God, would you give *me* a better marriage? God, would you give *me* better kids? God, would you give *me* a better job? God, would you give *me* a raise?" We think God exists for us.

Here's what you need to hear: an inward-focused life will never be a Christ-exalting life, because we cannot exalt Christ when we're busy exalting ourselves. I think this is why Paul raises up Timothy as an example. He's saying, "Be more like him, because he's honoring God by genuinely caring for other people." This is what Paul is trying to show us in this text. He's saying the interests of Christ Jesus are tied so closely with loving other people.

This is what he says in Philippians 2:20-21: **"I have no one else like him, who will show genuine concern for your welfare. For everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ."** He's tying the interests of Jesus Christ with genuinely loving other people. The more you love Jesus, the more you love the things Jesus loves. Have you ever noticed that? And Jesus loves people.

So, whenever you realize you're not really loving people, it's probably because you're not really loving Jesus. That's one of the first things to go. Whenever you pull back in your relationship with Christ, you'll stop loving other people well. Paul actually makes this point in a different letter. He was actually writing to Timothy in a different part of Scripture, 2 Timothy 3:1-2. This is what he says about our self-centeredness. I find this verse so fascinating. He says, **"But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves..."**

Isn't that interesting? Think about that. That's a wild text. If I were going to write about how terrible the end times would be, I would say, "The last days will be terrible because God is going to enact a worldwide pandemic and everything is going to get shut down." Or I'd say, "The last days are going to be terrible because God is going to rain down fire. The last days are going to be terrible because there's going to be a worldwide famine and no one is going to have any food to eat."

But he says, no, the last days are going to be terrible because everyone is going to be walking around just thinking about themselves. It'll create a dark and desperate and broken world. We're seeing that play out right now. The more you think about yourself, the more in despair you'll be, the more stressed you'll be, and the more anxious you'll be, because Paul is exactly right. The more you love yourself and only think about yourself...

A self-centered life is just a terrible life, but on the other hand, a life lived like Timothy, a life lived with selflessness and care for others, is a life of impact. You see, you don't need to move mountains to change the world. You don't need to do miracles to change the world. If you want to change the world, just start by caring for people.

Now, I know that sounds like something you'd find in a fortune cookie, like, "If you want to change the world, just care for people." It sounds nice, but I promise you this: it's so desperately needed. In the seat I sit as a pastor here at Harris Creek, I actually get to know what's going on in the lives of people in this church. Y'all will open up to me and tell me what's actually going on.

I know there are people here in this room today who are on the edge of despair and brokenness simply because of one reason: they don't feel like anyone cares for them. We have people who are watching online right now who are at the lowest point in their life because they don't feel like anyone shows any interest in their life. Any of us can fix that. This is the beauty of Timothy. Any of us can care for people, but few people do.

As believers, this has to be true of us, because we follow the one who laid his life down for us. He left heaven and entered into earth to send us a message of him saying, "My life isn't about me. I'm going to care for others." We follow the Shepherd who laid his life down for the sheep. If we follow him and *his* life wasn't about him, then our lives surely aren't about ourselves. So, if you want to change the world, just start by genuinely caring for people.

That's the first point, the lesson we can learn from Timothy: if we want to live an obedient life, we have to start by caring for other people, because genuine care is rare. Now, the next person in this passage is actually less well known than Timothy, and I think it's because he has a weird name. His name is Epaphroditus. Let's see what Paul has to say about his friend Epaphroditus in this next chunk of verses in this passage.

"But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, co-worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs. For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill. Indeed he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow.

Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you may be glad and I may have less anxiety. So then, welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor people like him, because he almost died for the work of Christ. He risked his life to make up for the help you yourselves could not give me."

In order to understand what Epaphroditus did here, we have to understand what's actually going on in the text. Paul was actually the one who started the church in Philippi. He went there on a missionary journey, shared the gospel with a few people, and a church sprung forth because of that. Out of their gratitude, they became financial partners with Paul. Every so often, they would gather up money, and then they would send it to Paul.

The only problem was that in this moment, Paul was in jail in Rome, and jail was a nine-day journey one way from Philippi to Rome. So, 18 days in total, not even counting the amount of time you would spend in Rome. That's a major inconvenience. They had gathered up all this money, and I believe this was before Venmo. They couldn't just send it electronically. I believe it was before the postal service, so they couldn't just put a check in the mail.

What they had to do was have someone take the money and just start walking to Rome. Think of how inconvenient that would be. At least 18 days you'd be gone from your family. At least 18 days you'd be gone from your work. What a major inconvenience. This is the lesson we can learn from Epaphroditus. When the church gathered up all this money and said, "Who will go?" he just raised his hand and said, "Here am I. Send me. I'm willing to do it."

2. Our willingness is worship. I so believe that. Our willingness to say yes to the job God puts in front of us is worship, and it honors him. This is what we can learn from Epaphroditus. Paul doesn't raise him up as someone who converted 3,000 people in a day because he preached an amazing sermon. In fact, Paul doesn't really raise him up as a superhero at all. He almost died on the journey. We don't know exactly what happened. Some scholars think he got pneumonia on the way. This isn't some superhero.

The only reason Paul raised him up was because he was willing to say yes to the job in front of him. The church needed someone to go, so he went. God used Epaphroditus simply because he was willing. You know, what I've noticed about life is you actually don't have to create ministry opportunities. You don't have to think that hard about different ministry opportunities because they're going to show up all the time in your life, just like it happened to Epaphroditus.

The problem is most of us miss these ministry opportunities in our lives that happen all throughout our weeks simply because we say no to them. They're disguised as an inconvenience rather than an opportunity. All too often, people say no to the opportunity to honor God. Unfortunately, I've had this happen in my own life as well. I've watched this happen. People say no to the opportunity to honor God.

It's a story that brings me back to my junior year of college. It was a Friday night. We had just eaten dinner, and we had nothing going on, so one of my roommates said, "We should go to WinStar." We said, "Yeah! We should go to WinStar. What a great idea." For those of you people who are actually Christians, WinStar is this casino on the border of Texas and Oklahoma. You shouldn't know about it if you're here. If you do, get out.

We said yes to going, and we started driving three hours north to the Oklahoma/Texas border. We had a great time driving until we were about to cross the Red River. At that point, my friend... We were driving my friend's truck. His wheel dislocated from the rest of his truck. I

don't really know how cars work, but his axle snapped off from the rest of the car. We were going like 75 miles an hour. It is a miracle we didn't flip over. But we got on the side of the road. We realized this wouldn't be a quick fix, so we called a tow truck.

The tow truck comes and pulls our truck away, and we're on the side of the road going, "Well, now what?" It's like 10:00 p.m. It's the middle of nowhere. The only sign of hope was this neon sign a few yards up ahead. It was a ways up ahead, so we couldn't see what it was, so we start walking to this neon sign. The closer we get, we realize it's an adult video store, so we quickly turn around. We're in the middle of nowhere. We have nowhere to go.

This was before Uber, so we were like, "What are we going to do?" Thankfully, two of our roommates didn't come with us, so we called them. We were like, "Man, this is crazy. You won't believe it. We're on the Oklahoma/Texas border. Could you come pick us up?" They said, "No. Your problem. You've got to figure it out." I tell you what. I have never seen a roommate situation become that tense in those next few weeks. It was just awkward tension.

At that point, we're just going through our phone numbers and calling anyone. I'm calling people, like, "Hey, Joey, I know we took chemistry two years ago together. I'm on the Oklahoma/Texas border. Could you come pick me up?" Everyone we called said, "No." Except one guy. You see, we called our friend Abhisek, and as soon as we called Abhisek and described the situation to him, he said, "I'll be there. I'm getting in my car right now, and I'm headed that way." I've never felt so much relief as when Abhisek said he was coming to help us.

Now why did he say yes? Why did everyone else say no but Abhisek was willing to say yes? I have a theory about Abhisek. When we met Abhisek freshman year, he came into Baylor Hindu, and we quickly became close friends. He's just one of those guys everybody likes. We became close friends, and he started coming to Harris Creek. The more he came, the more he fell in love with Jesus and eventually got baptized second semester of that year.

From that moment on, there was a change in his life. It was wild. He was willing to do anything to serve God. He was willing to say yes to whatever. So, in that moment when we called him and said, "Hey, we need help," he said, "Man, I'm going to be there." He was willing to come when no one else did because he understood the gospel.

The beautiful thing about Abhisek is that he keeps saying yes to being willing to share the gospel and doing whatever it possibly takes to serve God. He's back there right now taking pictures today, because that's who Abhisek is. He says yes because he's willing to serve others and serve God.

I love that story about him. It reminds me so much of Epaphroditus, not just because they're willing to go a long distance to help a friend but because they had a similar life change. While this passage doesn't say a whole lot about Epaphroditus, we can understand his willingness to go and serve others because of his name. His name *Epaphroditus* is the most pagan, least Christian name you could ever think of. It means belonging to Aphrodite. Aphrodite is the goddess of sex.

Talk about a weird name for a guy to have. "I belong to Aphrodite." His name tells us that he was not raised in a good Christian home. He was exposed to everything this world had to offer until one day he stumbled into the church in Philippi. Someone shared the gospel with him, and he went from belonging to Aphrodite to belonging to Jesus.

See, in that moment, everything changed. His life was changed. He went from belonging to Aphrodite to belonging to Jesus. Now, why was that life change possible? It was only possible because of one thing: the willingness of Jesus to save Epaphroditus. Paul wrote this just a few verses earlier in Philippians, chapter 2. Paul says this about Jesus Christ:

"...Christ Jesus: who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!"

There is not a single thing in this world that Jesus wasn't willing to do in order to save you. He was willing to leave heaven and enter into earth. He was willing to be born as a human in a lowly manger. He was willing to be born to two confused teenagers. He was willing to go without a home. He was willing to wash others' feet. He was willing to be beaten and bruised and mocked and crucified, and he was willing to die for you. Why? Because there wasn't a single thing in this world Jesus wasn't willing to do to save you.

The question is...*Is there anything you're not willing to do to worship him?* If we get that, if we get the willingness of Jesus, we have to be willing to do whatever God places in front of us. "God, do you want me to go walk to Rome? I'm already walking. God, do you want me to help my friends move from their house? I'm there. God, do you want me to give sacrificially? Absolutely." If we understand the willingness of Jesus, it will turn us into a willing person.

Since Jesus said yes to the job in front of him, we can say yes to the job in front of us as well, and that's what we can learn from Epaphroditus. He was just used because he was willing. The lesson we can learn from him today is that your willingness will determine your ability to be used by God. Your willingness will determine how much you're used by him. Not your bank account, not your gifts...it's your willingness. Your willingness to say yes to the job in front of you will determine how much you're used by God.

So, we can't skip over this lesson today from these two followers of Jesus. Even though they're unremarkable, even though they didn't do anything crazy, they just lived with a simple obedience, and we can learn these two things from them. First, genuine care is rare. Secondly, willingness is worship. But we also learn a third thing from them as well.

3. *Ordinary obedience from ordinary people produces extraordinary results.* This is one of my favorite things to take away from this passage. It teaches us that God can and will use anyone, anywhere, at any time. Timothy and Epaphroditus didn't do anything crazy with their lives other than live with an ordinary obedience, and God used them to change the world.

Here at Harris Creek, we have a lot of Timothys and Epaphrodituses. We have a lot of people who aren't doing anything crazy. They're just being obedient, and God is using them. They might seem unheralded, they might seem unseen, but God is using their ordinary obedience to do extraordinary things. Just as Paul raised up Timothy and Epaphroditus as examples to the church in Philippi, I want to raise up some of our own Timothys and Epaphrodituses to us as examples to live up to.

We have people here like Jennie Munn. She is changing the world, because she has been in our kids' ministry for 20 years. Most of us couldn't serve there for 20 minutes. She has been there for 20 years, and she has impacted the lives of hundreds, if not thousands, of kids simply because she keeps showing up.

Byron and Carla Weathersbee said yes to shepherding a few college Life Groups, and specifically, I've gotten the chance to see Byron change the trajectory of some college students' lives simply by meeting with them every other week. That's all he's doing, and it's changing lives.

Or how about Clinton and Josephine Watson? They're both doctors, yet they find time to serve in our kids' ministry and our youth ministry. Our youth are over at their house all the time. They're just simply willing to do whatever they possibly can to serve God, and God is using their obedience to do extraordinary things.

A college student named Neha Batawala. She's the one who came up with that QR code on the back of the seats in front of you. That was just a college student's idea, because she cares about getting new people connected to our church. Because of her ordinary obedience, God is doing extraordinary things.

Or how about Garret Jackson and Mimi Harrison? They are amazing. They both serve in our kids' ministry. They make me want to be kids again. They're two of the funnest people in our church, and God is using their ordinary obedience to do extraordinary things. Or Derek and Kellie Davidson, my heroes. They're currently fostering not one, not two, not three, but four kids simply because they want to be obedient to what God has called them to do.

Lindsay Judy frequently blesses the staff with her baking ability. Jason Raddin is one of those people who makes sure we're able to livestream to thousands of people every single week. Or Rachel Hopkins and Kate Swanner. We had a huge need for more college girls Life Groups, because we just have college students showing up week in and week out.

Since we had a need, they said, "I'm there. I'll be there." That was about a month ago. A few weeks later, I get an email in my inbox saying, "Hey, we just led a girl to Christ in our Life Group." God is doing extraordinary things through their ordinary acts of obedience. Mark and Carol Welstead have served all over this church, but Carol has taken on the title of official encourager of Harris Creek.

Or Dillon Smith. He's a college student who has blessed my life tremendously this semester. He serves at the 9:00 a.m., the 11:00 a.m., and the 7:00 p.m. We're going to start having a cot back

here for him just so he can take a nap after. We can't kick him out of this place. He just keeps showing up.

There are so many more people. I could go on and on and on and on. These are the heroes of Harris Creek. These are the Timothys and Epaphrodituses, and they're doing ministry. They're changing the world through their ordinary acts of obedience. So, don't you think for a second that the ministry of Harris Creek is either me or JP up here preaching a sermon or Drew and Rebecca leading worship. The ministry of Harris Creek is happening out *here* with *you* guys.

You're doing ordinary things, and God is doing extraordinary things with you. The question is... *Where are you at?* Are you in the game? Are you living with an ordinary obedience or are you sitting on the sidelines because you don't think you have what it takes to be used by God? You don't think you're gifted enough, you don't have a specific set of skills, you don't have enough money, so you're just waiting.

I hope you can learn from Timothy and Epaphroditus that God can and will use anyone, at any time, anywhere. All he needs from you is some ordinary obedience. Timothy and Epaphroditus didn't do anything crazy with their lives. They were just obedient to the job in front of them, and God used their obedience to do extraordinary things.

This is my takeaway from Timothy and Epaphroditus. It's a portion of Scripture we cannot and must not skip over, because Paul is showing us that anyone can be used by God. God can take ordinary acts of obedience from ordinary people to do extraordinary things. My hope for you, Harris Creek, is that you simply wouldn't miss out on all that God has for you. Let me pray that it would be true.

God, thank you so much for your Word, that you don't just tell us what we *want* to hear but you tell us what we *need* to hear. This morning, we needed to hear about Timothy and Epaphroditus, that they were just simple men living with a simple faithfulness, and you changed the world through their acts of obedience.

God, I pray that we would be absolutely convinced that there's nothing we do, either too small or too big, that you cannot use. You've given us all the ability to change the world. I pray that right now we'd just start with genuinely caring for the people around us and having a willingness to say yes to the job in front of us.

Father, during this time, as we worship you, I pray the Holy Spirit would be at work in our hearts and that you'd remind us of your genuine care for us, of your willingness to save us. I pray that would change the way we live and that you'd go out and you'd mobilize your church to change our city. Father, we love you. We're grateful that your Word doesn't return void. Change us now. We pray all this in the name of Jesus, the one who's alive and with us and for us, amen.