

Honor the Servants of the Word

Sermon Text: Philippians 2:19-30

¹⁹ I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. ²⁰ I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare. ²¹ For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. ²² 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. ²³ I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how things go with me. ²⁴ And I am confident in the Lord that I myself will come soon.

²⁵ But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs. ²⁶ For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill. ²⁷ 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. ²⁸ 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. ²⁹ Welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor men like him, ³⁰ because he almost died for the work of Christ, risking his life to make up for the help you could not give me.

1.) Timothy was a pastor (perhaps still in training). What qualities (themselves gifts of the Holy Spirit) made him a good fit for ministering to the Philippians on Paul's behalf? (v. 20-22)

2.) We don't know much about Epaphroditus beyond these verses, but he was another "minister," this time from the Philippians to Paul. His mission was to find Paul, give him the gift their congregation had collected, and care for his needs. What happened afterwards? How does this episode show Paul's willingness to take into account the "human" side of gospel ministry?

First Lesson: Leviticus 9:1-8, 12, 15-18, 22-24

On the eighth day [after the ordination of Aaron and his sons] Moses summoned Aaron and his sons and the elders of Israel. ² He said to Aaron, "Take a bull calf for your sin offering and a ram for your burnt offering, both without defect, and present them before the LORD. ³ Then say to the Israelites: 'Take a male goat for a sin offering, a calf and a lamb—both a year old and without defect—for a burnt offering, ⁴ and an ox and a ram for a fellowship offering to sacrifice before the LORD, together with a grain offering mixed with oil. For today the LORD will appear to you.' "

⁵ They took the things Moses commanded to the front of the Tent of Meeting, and the entire assembly came near and stood before the LORD. ⁶ Then Moses said, "This is what the LORD has commanded you to do, so that the glory of the LORD may appear to you."

⁷ Moses said to Aaron, "Come to the altar and sacrifice your sin offering and your burnt offering and make atonement for yourself and the people; sacrifice the offering that is for the people and make atonement for them, as the LORD has commanded."

⁸ So Aaron came to the altar and slaughtered the calf as a sin offering for himself. ...¹² Then he slaughtered the burnt offering. His sons handed him the blood, and he sprinkled it against the altar on all sides. ...¹⁵ Aaron then brought the offering that was for the people. He took the goat for the people's sin offering and slaughtered it and offered it for a sin offering as he did with the first one. ¹⁶ He brought the burnt offering and offered it in the prescribed way. ¹⁷ He also brought the grain offering, took a handful of it and burned it on the altar in addition to the morning's burnt offering. ¹⁸ He slaughtered the ox and the ram as the fellowship offering for the people. His sons handed him the blood, and he sprinkled it

against the altar on all sides. ...²² Then Aaron lifted his hands toward the people and blessed them. And having sacrificed the sin offering, the burnt offering and the fellowship offering, he stepped down. ²³ Moses and Aaron then went into the Tent of Meeting. When they came out, they blessed the people; and the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people. ²⁴ Fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the fat portions on the altar. And when all the people saw it, they shouted for joy and fell facedown.

1.) With these sacrifices the Old Testament sacrificial system was officially begun. The writer to the Hebrews says that no one should take the honor of being a priest in service to God upon himself, instead he must be called as Aaron was (5:1-4). How did this ceremony communicate that the priesthood was not a matter of their own worthiness? (v. 7-8)

2.) Aaron offered the three principal offerings before the Lord: the sin offering (for guilt), the burnt offering (signifying dedication to God), and the fellowship offering (proclaiming peace with God). How would this succession of sacrifices prepare them to worship the God of holiness and grace? How did God show his approval? How did the people respond?

Gospel: Luke 10:16-22

¹⁶ "He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me."

¹⁷ The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name."

¹⁸ He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. ¹⁹ I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. ²⁰ However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

²¹ At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure."

²² "All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

1.) Why is it so important for every Christian and especially called servants of the Word to remember verse 16? What two temptations does this truth defend against? How ought this impact the honor we show God's messengers?

2.) There is real spiritual power bestowed as we minister in Jesus' name (v. 17-20), but rather than being wowed by this capability, what should be our source of constant amazement and joy? (v. 20-22)