

Philippians 2:19-30

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[0 : 01] Please stand for the reading of God's Word. I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I too may be cheered by news of you all, for I have no one like him who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare.

They all seek their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus. But you know Timothy's proven worth, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel.

I hope, therefore, to send him just as soon as I see how it will go with me, and I trust in the Lord that shortly I myself will come also. I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need, for he has been longing for you all and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill.

Indeed, he was ill, near to death, but God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. I am the more eager to send him, therefore, that you may rejoice at seeing him again, and that I may be less anxious.

So receive him in the Lord with all joy, and honor such men, for he nearly died for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was lacking in your service to me.

[1 : 26] This is the word of the Lord. Thank you, God. You may be seated. Good morning, Holy Trinity. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we give thanks for this day. What a beautiful day it is, both on the outside and on the inside. And praise you, Lord God, for the privilege of standing before your people today and to open up your word.

Pray, Lord, that the words of my mouth, meditation of my heart, would be acceptable, would be pleasing in your sight, oh Lord, my strength and my redeemer.

Amen. Friday evening, eight men with weapons for death wreaked havoc on a city and the world.

Once again, we've been stunned and sobered by the news of those bent on death and destruction.

[2 : 42] Friday in Paris, men were on a mission of death. 129 people dead, scores injured and scarred physically, and untold numbers jolted emotionally in a very ugly and sadistic way.

In the minds of some, there is mission accomplished by what happened on Friday. Closer to home, this past Tuesday, nine-year-old Tyshawn Lee was laid to rest.

His death, not a random act of violence. He was not the victim of mistaken identity. His senseless death is to believe to have been one in a string of retaliation.

In the hands of some, someone was on a mission, a mission of death. And that mission has been accomplished.

The ugliness globally and locally of these things, these death missions, stands in contrast with what we see in our text on today.

[4 : 16] two men on mission for the gospel in very life-giving kind of ways.

Timothy and Epaphroditus, men on gospel mission. And gospel mission, both then and now, is a mission of life.

And guess what? If you're a believer today, you may not know that you signed up for it, but you're on a mission. A mission of life because of the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

You're in whether you know it or not. Huh? look at the text. First of all, in verses 19 through 24, we see what could be termed a proposed mission for Timothy.

Did you notice it there? I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon so that I might be cheered by news of you.

[5 : 41] According to the previous verses, Paul expected the Philippians to embrace his instructions to live as citizens of heaven in the city of Philippi.

Huh? Rather than striving with each other, they were to strive together for the gospel and be light in the midst of a dark and crooked world.

In view of these things, Paul then proposes to send Timothy on a mission to check on the Philippians' spiritual progress. His own predicament prevented him from doing so, from getting there.

Therefore, he proposed the next best thing to do was to commission someone to go on his behalf. Timothy got the call.

He got the call to go. Just think about it. If you have a mission that is so important and you want to get there, but for whatever reason you can't get there, who gets the call in your life?

[6 : 54] Do you have a go-to person that you might say, well, I can't get there but there's a sense in which they're either the next best thing or perhaps they are the best thing in going.

The language of the text that we see there in verse 19, it's rooted, Paul's hope, his desire, is rooted in Christian confidence.

I hope in the Lord. Huh? His desire was not something that he was simply wanting to put forth himself.

Paul understood both the sovereignty of God and he understood the sometimes human predicament that doesn't allow us to function the way we would like to.

So, therefore, his is a Christian confidence, desire to dispatch Timothy to Philippi to check on them.

[8 : 00] He's concerned enough to send someone in his stead. Timothy was no stranger to the Philippians. As a matter of fact, he was with Paul, Acts chapter 16, when the church got started.

He is there in Rome, Philippians chapter 1, verse 1, when Paul is writing the letter to them. And it seems like Timothy had been back to Philippi several times.

The time of writing, again, he is there with Paul. And such missions like this, being Paul's go-to person, was not strange to Timothy. As a matter of fact, we read the following in 1 Corinthians chapter 4, verse 17.

This is why I sent you, Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ.

as I teach everywhere in every church. Timothy, go to Corinth. But he was also sent to Thessalonica, 1 Thessalonians 3, verses 1 and 2.

[9 : 01] Therefore, when we could bear it no longer, we were willing to be left behind in Athens alone, and we sent Timothy, our brother and co-worker in the gospel, to establish and exhort you in your faith.

And once again here in our text, Timothy gets the call. And Paul expected to be cheered up by the report. It's sort of like a parent who gets a report card from school.

And hopefully parents, you expect to be cheered up when the report card comes because your child, huh, your son or your daughter is doing what they need to be doing.

Oh, children, you don't want to get a bad report card because you're not doing what you need to be doing in the class, huh? Paul was expecting to be cheered up by reason of the news that would come from Timothy regarding the Philippian believers.

The purpose could be likened to one checking the pulse or the temperature or the situation, how they had responded to the Philippian letter that would be sent to them at the hands of Epaphroditus, huh?

[10 : 21] Had the relational adjustments been made, huh? Were they encouraged to live as citizens, Christian citizens in a Roman world, huh?

The gift that they had sent through Epaphroditus was a clear expression that they were on mission, but were they in fact, like we do at Holy Trinity, living in community together, huh?

Timothy was the person, Paul was the sin to bring them up to speed on the Philippian situation, huh? Oh, and just think of the refreshment that would come back, his knowing that they had taken heed to the word that had been sent through the letter.

I know something about pastoral, ministerial encouragement. Within the last couple of months, I had the occasion with some of our brothers and sisters in Christ to sit down with a family who were experiencing a little bit of marital challenge, yeah?

You know, marital challenge is not new, but sometimes we create barbers and we don't allow people into our marital challenge.

[11:39] These people sort of opened up the door, said, come on in, we need help. And it was such a refreshing situation as I sat there and listened to exhortation and as I listened to prayer and I saw the haze dispel from in the room because the saints were on mission together in the life of a needy couple.

And God was glorified at that. Talking about pastoral refreshment, huh? Now it's one thing to be refreshed in the sanctuary when we are singing worship songs to God and accompanied by wonderful music.

But it's quite another thing to be refreshed in someone's living room or in someone's office and sing the hand of God at work being refreshed because somebody's living out what they've been taught, huh?

Encouraged through that. Timothy, the person, what about him, huh? Oh, we see him, don't we? Verses 20 through 22, huh? Says, I don't have anyone like him.

He's unique, huh? We see his worth and his qualifications for this mission. Paul said, I have no one like him. In other words, no one of like soul.

[13:03] No wonder he got the call. When Paul sent him, he knew he was sending someone with a kindred spirit. He was the real deal, one who sincerely had the good of others in view, huh?

He was not in it for what he could get. He was in it for what he had to give and how he was to serve. The lack of self-interest is contrasted with those with less than the best motives.

Notice verse 21. For all seek their own interests, not those of Christ. And notice Paul did not list any names here, but we've sort of seen shadows of these people, both in chapter 1, and those kinds of people in chapter 1, and in chapter 2.

It was such people that Paul had warned the Philippians about in chapter 2 and verse 4. Those who are so inordinately self-interested and they could only be trusted so far with so much.

They were disqualified for this assignment. They couldn't be trusted. Such were in danger of misrepresenting Paul and our Lord. Oh, friends, how self-interested we can be.

[14:24] Huh? Huh? Huh? And as we look and get reflections, sometimes of the state of our own souls, it's humbling and causes one to repent.

I had a very humbling experience in the airport on Friday afternoon. as I sat there and there were a couple of ladies who came in and they were a little hefty in their build.

and I was, you know, sometimes the thoughts that go through our heads when we see someone who, whether it is something external or something perceived, I watched as another lady entered into their space and I was rebuked because of the things that were sort of warring within me.

And this other lady was a Christian. I mean, various things as we think in our self-interested and very prideful kinds of ways that don't allow us to function in Christian and the best Christian kinds of ways.

And for me it was very shameful. And it should be. As we look at ourselves and sometimes exalt ourselves and we think less of other people in the process.

[16:08] Huh? My situation prevents me from getting to where you are, but I'm hoping in the Lord to send Timothy. Huh? He knows me. I trust him.

And he's concerned about you. Huh? Timothy was not a stranger to the Philippians. He was a man with a reputation among them. Verse 22. He was among them as one who had passed the test.

There was this father-son relationship that was going on there. I'm a father to two biological sons. And one of my favorite terms for younger men these days is TJ son.

Ah. An indication of having a little bit of life experience. It's the language of age and wisdom.

Such relationships exist on our pastoral tape. I don't call Dave son. And he doesn't call me dad. We're brothers.

[17:16] But on the other hand there are younger guys among us. Think of Oscar Lava. And you know Oscar has three adopted sons.

The last was twins. When they were searching for names to give to their twins. Dave and John got the call.

Ezra John and Judah David. Why? Because Dave and John are like spiritual fathers to Oscar and Megan.

That spiritual kind of relationship is right and proper in the body of Christ. So Paul said Timothy's like a son to me.

It's not a biological son. Somebody is a spiritual son. And I would hope that there would be for those who are not only I am getting older as we are reminded of often in our congregation.

[18 : 26] There are others who are sprouting gray and getting thin among us.

And I would trust that not only as you look externally but I would pray that there was something internally that people would want to call you in a sense about spiritual. I respect that person.

I'm looking up to them. I want to follow in their steps. such as the profile of the person who would be on mission in Philippi.

Timothy was going back or going there proposed to go there as Paul's representative.

So I wonder are there any Timothys or Timotheas if you will in the house? God honoring people people loving people people who are not so self interested that we cannot share our lives in gospel kind of ways both in speaking the truth and in living the truth in our congregation who's in your home?

[19 : 48] Who do you have coffee with? Who might you be mentoring in ways that are life giving and encouraging when will Timothy come?

As soon as Paul had a better sense of what would be going on with him. Because of the concern for spiritual warfare and the progress of the Philippians Paul's proposal I'm going to send Timothy as the Lord would have it.

He wanted them to know that Paul that is that he had them on his heart and his mind so much so couldn't go himself but I'm going to send someone who's going to care for you who's concerned about you he's coming huh but there were more immediate things that were in view that needed attention and thus the shift from the proposal to send Timothy to the plan to send Epaphroditus huh but we're in we're tempted to chop off Epaphroditus his name and just make him EP or Epaph well we won't chop off his name he's Epaphroditus and up to this point in the letter the only names that have been mentioned other than Christ Paul and Timothy but he comes into the picture now

Timothy was an apostolic envoy that went to various places various cities there's a sense in which though Epaphroditus was committed and very much a servant of God his scope of ministry was more narrow and he just was sort of a one path kind of guy from Philippi to Rome and then back to Philippi Timothy's name mentioned in 11 of the 27 books and his name is mentioned 24 times in those books Epaphroditus guess what he gets two mentions of his name and both of them here in Philippians but here he was look at verse 25 relationally!

Huh? He is his relationship to Paul is noted there the first part I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus he is my brother he is my fellow worker he is my fellow soldier huh?

[22 : 31] You see that relation he's a brother we are in the same spiritual family he's a worker we're together in gospel labor! Huh? Huh? He's a soldier we're engaged in the same spiritual battle same spiritual warfare!

But notice this relationship to the! Philippians he was their envoy their messenger who had been commissioned by the church the one sent by them to minister to Paul's needs he came to do that but he also brought something in his hand in the process he was sent by them with helping hand chapter 4 verse 18 but also to give a helping hand to the apostle in this situation I love the word that's translated ministered there it's a word worth noting see it again in verse 30 where it's translated service but the idea here is both a person who is assigned a special kind of task could have been in government could also been this sacred kind of task here that a priest would perform paphraditus had been sent to minister on to Paul on behalf of the church in

Philippi they were willing to share with Paul in his time in both in a financial kind of way but also with other kinds of resources and that's the way that partnerships work there is this giving there's this receiving I think about the partnerships within Holy Trinity Church if you don't know there are four congregations among us and I think of the ministry of Donna Dartsbach she is kid city director here at Holy Trinity Hyde Park but she is shared congregation wide because they need they need what Donna Dartsbach has brought to this congregation other congregations need that and one Sunday I missed Donna Donna where are you didn't find out till Monday at staff and she had been going around others why because that's what you do with gospel resources partnerships work that way verse 25 looks at

Epaphroditus his hands verse 26 looks at his heart his disposition look at that for he has been longing for you all and has been distressed because he heard that he was ill indeed he was ill near to death and I just want to stop right there because again his heart his longing for them we get an angle a look at this gospel service from another angle his hands and his duties came into view in

verse 25 but his disposition comes in view in verse 26 he's your worker but more than that his connection is deeper he represents you on the one hand but he's been longing for you there's a heart that he has he's concerned about you same word is used in chapter 1 verse 8 where Paul is longing for the Philippians with the very affection for Christ an intense strong longing it's what's here in view furthermore he's disturbed because y'all heard that he was sick and he knows he really didn't want y'all to be upset so but he's concerned about you huh but then looking for those great words where I stop but

God had what mercy on him not only on him but also on me lest I should have sorrow upon so what great words the merciful intervention of God two prong kind of mercy the Lord stepped in and arrested the sickness but also the grief and the sorrow that resulted in had it been any worse God had mercy mercy the presence of mercy meant that there could also be a season of joy that was there Paul's proposal to send Timothy verses 19 through 24 Paul's plan to send Epaphroditus verses 25 and 30 and finally look at verses 29 through 30 Paul's encouragement for the Philippians and us you see that encouragement there so receive him in the

[27 : 21] Lord with all joy and honor such men he goes from explanation to exhortation on the basis of what had been explained in verses 25 through 27 here's what you are to do receive him what kind of reception would be right in this situation a warm Christian welcome if you will joyful reception that recognizes gospel servants like this one are worthy of respect throwing a party wouldn't have been out of order he's the kind of person who would be worthy of gospel honor he's honor worthy he's an honorable man but guess what else he is he's a risk-taking man honor those who give of themselves who make sacrifice for gospel efforts we are so risk averse so self protective of ourselves

I have some ways in which I'm self protective I don't particularly like the water but I mean just think about it in those ways think about ways in which yeah there are certainly ways but some of us are averse the gospel risk where we don't take risk for God and the gospel huh when's the last time that you put yourself out there the Lord's been nudging you to say something to somebody about Christ and you're a little reluctant to put your toe in that water huh and maybe somebody just needs to give you a push and you're out there and you're in huh it's risk-taking huh that's just a small example but think about it are you okay with risking your reputation for Christ are you okay with risking your career for Christ okay with risking your status for

Christ it is so humbling I think think about those eight men on mission they risked it all for their cause whatever that cause may have been huh what what was the work of Christ Paul's engagements that the Philippians were partners in what a reminder the work of Christ includes supporting the servants of Christ who are doing Christ's work friends and we must not forget this our responsibility ability to engage in gospel partnerships and the various aspects of that huh in Paul's estimation

Epaphroditus was a candidate for the Philippian hall of fame if you will not for some exploit on an athletic field or battlefield but it's worked for on the gospel mission field here were men following in the footprints of their master whose footprints are ever worthy of following honor those who honor people and sacrifice for them honor those who are willing to take risk for the well-being of others honor those who follow Christ and sacrifice and serving and giving selfless men and women on mission to advance the calls of the gospel the work of the gospel in the world huh here we remind it yet again the gospel mission is a mission friends of life that needs godly selfless risk-taking men and women who embody the selfless attitude of Jesus honorable risk-taking men and women who walk in the footsteps of our savior such people are worthy of recognition eight men armed with weapons of destruction where it went on a mission of death our lord has called us to participate in a mission of life life that is ours through the death and the resurrection of Jesus

Christ our lord and may friends it be said of us that there are men and women who for the cause of Christ would give themselves freely huh I don't have a pierce on my body that you can see but we're going to talk we're going to sing it a little bit about having a pierced ear huh pierced ear pierce my ear oh lord my god take me to your door again this speaks of what we see in the old testament where a servant who wanted in essence to remain in that status and this would be the indication the piercing of the ear within all a w I huh for I serve no other god oh lord

[33 : 15] I am here to stay huh as a selfless god honoring people honoring gospel advancing servant of christ in this world pierce my heart oh lamb of god like you were at calvary love so great you died for me but risen we've gained victory is that your desire huh exemplary men but they're

exemplary men because they follow the one who has led the way and giving himself in his life for the world shall we pray father we love you and we give thanks to you lord that we can get a glimpse in scripture of men who took calling their calling seriously selfless men on mission for the advance of the gospel in this world may we follow in their train even as they have followed the lord jesus christ our great god and savior in whose name we pray amen let's stand we're going to sing two songs but think let your heart ponder the words particularly the song that we sing now

Ž Ž Amen. For I shall serve no other God, O Lord, I'm here to stay.
Here's my heart, O Lamb of God, my pure and glory.
Love so great who died for me, but risen came victory.