

Philippians 2:19-30

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 23 March 2025

Preacher: Zameer De Cunha

[0 : 00] Alright, as most of you know, I think all of you know, we're going through Philippians. I have the privilege of preaching through verses 19 to 30.

! So I'm just going to read that for us really quickly and then jump into it. So Philippians chapter 2 verse 19. I give you guys a second in your Bibles to get there.

Alright. Now, I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon so that I too may be encouraged by news about you.

For I have no one else like-minded who will genuinely care about your interests. All seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But you know his proven character because he has served with me in the gospel ministry like a son with a father.

Therefore, I hope to send him as soon as I see how things go with me. I am confident in the Lord that I myself will also come soon. We'll stop there.

[1 : 16] And then pick up on the rest once we finish the section. So, so far in chapter 2, Chris went through Philippians verse 1 to 11.

Talking of humility, not being selfish, and this wonderful hymn of Christ's humility. And then Sam went through Philippians verses 2 to 18.

And he had a great focus on verse 13, which is, For it is God who is working in you both to will and to work according to his good purpose.

God is the one who is working in us and through us by his spirit, by his son, by the Father himself. So in this section, it's laid out clearly.

We're going to focus on Timothy and Epaphroditus. Great name, by the way. We're going to go verse by verse, just through this first section on Timothy.

[2 : 24] Hit a brief interlude, and then we're going to keep going on Epaphroditus, then hit home on some application points. There's your runway and there's your mainland.

So, verse 19. I hope in the Lord to send Timothy to you soon, so that I too may be cheered by news of you.

Pretty straightforward. When he sends Epaphroditus back, they're going to be encouraged because of news about Paul with this letter.

But Paul also wants news of them, right? So, Epaphroditus is with Paul now. Paul is encouraged by news about the Philippians.

Whenever Paul sends Epaphroditus back, Epaphroditus is taking news about Paul. They're going to rejoice because of this news about Paul. But Paul wants to send Timothy so that he can get news, again, about the Philippians, because they don't have phones.

[3 : 31] And the postal service didn't exist then. Yeah. So, a note on the word hope here. Usually, whenever we use hope in modern English, it follows some sort of uncertainty, right?

Like, if you're working like Michael, you're like, man, I hope I get that bid. It's like, I might not get it. Or, I hope that Trump doesn't get assassinated.

He might. But there's a higher degree of certainty that Paul uses here in the hope, right? It's optimistic that he's going to send Timothy.

So, it's not like, I hope to send Timothy. It's more like, I'm, he's coming, right? But, another note of Paul's hope is that he's hoping in the Lord Jesus, right?

I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you. He makes his travel plans under the direction of the Lord Jesus. He submits them to the Lord Jesus for approval.

[4 : 40] Not only that, he depends upon the Lord Jesus for the fulfillment of his plans. So, he makes them under the direction of the Lord. He submits them to the Lord for approval.

And it's by the Lord that his travel plans are fulfilled. So, Paul's hope in the Lord is unwavering for these simple travel plans, right? Christchurch, we're not like those that just, when chaos in our lives ensues, we don't have hope, right?

There's so many out there who, there's chaos. Like, my own family. Like, all of my sisters just have babies outside of wedlock. Brother who's addicted to drugs.

Who's now on dialysis because of that. My father, who's, like, by himself, an alcoholic. Like, chaos in their life. But there's no hope.

Paul's hope here in simple travel plans is the Lord Jesus. Right? These aren't anything major or big or any chaos is happening.

[5 : 59] He's submitting a high degree of certainty in the Lord Jesus in a simple travel plan. And here we are in a church plan. Let's talk about hope.

Certainty of that hope. Do we have hope for this church plan? Right? If Paul is hoping in just this travel plan, how's our hope in this church plan?

In the foundations of it? In the fulfillment of it? Are we encouraged? Are we discouraged? Renew? Or baby? Right? We need to hope in the Lord Jesus like Paul is hoping in the Lord Jesus.

Verse 20. For I have no one like him who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. As most of us know, Timothy is Paul's son in the faith.

I mean, we go down to verse 22. It says, But you know, Timothy's proven worth. How is a son with a father? He has served with me in the gospel. Paul and him are alike in mind and heart and gospel-centeredness.

[7 : 13] They're kindred spirits. Sending Timothy is like sending Paul, right? Same beliefs, same doctrines, same teachings.

For Paul to send Timothy is to send himself. Timothy genuinely cares for the Philippians.

It's not just someone he like, someone like Titus or something. Timothy was there at the foundation of the Philippians church.

It's the first church that Timothy lands with Paul, right? Timothy is taken from his mother and grandmother. Paul takes them. And Philippi, this church, is the first church they plant together.

So there's genuine concern there. He knows them. Verse 21. For they all seek their own interests, not those of Christ.

[8 : 14] And here we get to see a glimpse of what Paul gets to experience in his son Timothy. That Timothy doesn't seek after his own interests, but those of Christ, right?

We get these letters to Timothy, but who's the man Timothy, right? We get to learn here. Timothy is someone who doesn't seek after his own interests.

He seeks after others. He's a very humble man. Very humble servant. Timothy is doing what Paul says earlier in the chapter in Philippians 2.4.

It says, Philippians 2.4, sorry. Everyone should look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. That's what Timothy is doing.

And then that contrasts what Paul said also. Some indeed preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others from goodwill.

[9 : 21] The latter do it out of love, knowing I am put here for the defense of the gospel. The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment.

Timothy isn't like that. Timothy is one who is seeking Christ's own interests, genuinely caring for the Philippian church. And those who are preaching out of rivalry, they are those who look out for their own interests, not those of Christ.

How about us? How about us? Are we doing in that? Are we also in a church plant preaching Christ out of rivalry?

Are we with God or are we going against his will? Even more so with our husbands, wives, kids, roommates, brothers and sisters, moms and dads.

Let's further the scope even more. Are we seeking their own interests? Not those of ourselves, right? Like, do I love my wife? Like, how much more better would my marriage be if I didn't think about myself?

[10 : 47] How much more better would my relationship with my family be if I didn't think about myself all the time? Right? We continue.

Verse 22. But you know, Timothy's proven worth, how as a son to a father, he has served with me in the gospel. His proven worth, right?

Says in the CSB, verse 22. But you know, his proven character, because he has served with me in the gospel ministry like a son with the father. Elsewhere in Romans 5, 3 and 4, Paul talks about character in this way.

Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance. And endurance produces character. And character produces hope.

This is the character of Timothy. He seasoned in suffering and afflictions. Right? Acts 16, going back there. His first church planting experience with the Philippians.

[11:56] Paul and Silas are stripped of their clothing. Beaten with rods. And then severely flogged. And then finally, thrown into prison.

With their feet in stocks. Right? This is like, these are the experiences Timothy has in his proven character. Right?

Right? One of the words this year that we have is character. Right? If it's true that we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character.

And I think that means, for the most part, we should expect suffering. As a church. Either as a church or individually.

If that is one of our words, and it's lacking in our church, then that means that in some way, affliction will come upon this church. So that we may grow in character.

[13:01] Are you ready for that? Where's your hope when that comes? Right? If Christ puts his finger on Christ's church and says, they are lacking in character.

That's not just a promise of, it'll come. It's a process. God is a patient father. He disciplines. We are lacking in character.

That means he'll bring it into us by suffering. By way of suffering. And when it comes, remember Philippians 2.13.

For it is God who is working in you, both to will and to work according to his good purpose. It'll be good when affliction comes, don't we?

Then onward. Verse 23 to 24. I hope, therefore, to send him just as soon as I see how it will go with me.

[14:07] And trust in the Lord that shortly I myself will also come. Paul states that he wants to send Timothy soon, but after he sees how things goes with him.

Most likely referring to being in prison. But he's confident that he's going to see the Philippians, right? He doesn't just say hope, like I hope.

He says, I'm confident. It's confidence that he's going to see them as if it's like a special revelation from the Lord. There's speculation as to when the visit could have occurred.

But there's no concrete official date. But it seems like he did do another visit. Now a brief interlude before we continue. On Hebrew poetry.

I know. Stuff to do with Hebrew poetry. If anyone here is into poetry at all, there's different rhyming schemes that you could do. There's haikus.

[15:13] There's rhyming couplets. So forth. There's a poetry called chiasm in Hebrew poetry. Follows a pattern like this. A, B, C, B, A.

So kind of like brackets. A, A, B, B, C. Haiku is 5, 7, 5. Different patterns. The middle is usually the point that they're focusing on.

I think that this follows a similar structure of chiasm. Where you have verse 19, verse 23 and 24 talking about travel plans.

That's your A, A. Verse 20 and 22 talking about Timothy's care for the Philippians and his proven character. And then verse 21, what Paul is getting at.

Critique of those who seek their own interests. Not the interests of Christ Jesus. I mean, there's many reasons why I think Paul is focusing on this.

[16:24] I think one, because he's going to send Timothy. Because it's like Timothy's character sending him like this. Like, I want you to know this man seeks after Christ.

I say this because even in ministry, as Paul says to Timothy in, I think, 1 Timothy 3, 5. Some hold to a form of godliness, but denying its power.

Paul says to avoid these type of people, right? But they're holding to a form of power, but deny, or holding to a form of godliness, but deny the power. They deny the work of Jesus Christ and who he is as God, right?

You see, there's power in this. Like those who try to cast out demons and say, we cast you out by the God that Paul preaches. The demons respond. We know who Paul is. We know who Jesus is, but for you, right? Because they're really seeking after their own interests. But Timothy isn't.

[17 : 32] And really, that's who Timothy is. He's almost a man after God's own heart. He's a man who seeks after the Lord Jesus' interests, not his own.

Onto Epaphroditus. Another man after God's own heart. Verse 25.

But I consider it necessary to send you Epaphroditus. Great name also. Say it again. Babe. My brother, co-worker, and fellow soldier, as well as your messenger and minister to my needs. Since he has been longing for all of you and was distressed because you heard that he was sick. Indeed, he was so sick that he nearly died. However, God had mercy on him, and not only on him, but also on me, so that I would not have sorrow on sorrow.

For this reason, I am very eager to send him, so that you may rejoice again when you see him, and I may be less anxious. Therefore, welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and hold people like him in honor.

[18 : 47] Because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his own life to make up what was lacking in your ministry to me. Starting in 25 to 26.

No. Straightforward. This is a very straightforward text, I think. Paul wants to send Epaphroditus back. Now, immediately, probably more immediate than Timothy.

He says about Timothy that he wants to send Timothy back after he sees how everything goes with him in the imprisonment. But he wants to send Epaphroditus back more immediately.

Epaphroditus misses them, right? It's just people. Like, I mean, it's almost like when we first left Belk, like, missing Belkos.

Belkos missing us, right? Or even more, if someone moves away. Like, those of you who have moved from Wisconsin and Minnesota, I'm sure that you have people there that you long to see, and people there who long to see you.

[20 : 01] But we wish that you'd stay here. Don't go back. But then Paul gives him five titles.

Brother, coworker, fellow soldier, your messenger, and minister to my needs. Sorry, brother. He calls him his brother.

And in the family of God, our father is God. Right? They're connected by the blood of Jesus. So he calls him his father.

One of our words this year, along with character, is family. Right? Christ putting his finger on this church and saying, they need to be more familiar.

Right? Paul calls him his brother. Right? His father. We need to have that also.

[21 : 07] Right? If that is our words, we need to grow in that. How do we grow in that? Right? By striving alongside one another. By knowing one another.

Not just by it happening in osmosis. Relationships take work. Right? And coworker. Right? So God is father in this family.

They're brothers. Coworker. God is overseer in this work. They are laboring together. The labor looks different. Paul is on the front lines.

Epaphroditus brings money to Paul to further the mission. It's different work. But they're still called coworkers. Why? Because it's a service of God.

Are we laboring together? Can I call you my brother and also call you my coworker? As Paul calls Epaphroditus. Fellow soldier.

[22 : 06] In the Lord's army, God is commander. So God is father, their brother. God is overseer as their coworker. And God is their commander. His fellow soldier.

As Philippians is a Roman colony. We're heavy military influence. It would make sense for them to hear this and think like we are fighting in the Lord's army together.

Right? We're against cosmic powers. We're not against flesh and blood. We're against the powers of the air. Cosmic. Means universe. I'm like a microscope in the end.

In the universe. Sorry. Tiny in the universe. Are we fighting together? Right?

If we're not brothers. Like if one of our words is family. Like even in the army. They call one another brothers in the service. Right? There's a family connection.

[23 : 07] Right? This is how the family of God ought to be. Where we are connected together by the blood of Jesus. God is our father. Laboring together.

Fighting for one another. And for the labor of Jesus Christ. The commands that he's given us. And then your messenger and minister to my needs.

Which is the work that Aphrodite is doing. Continue on to verse 27. Indeed, he was ill, near to death.

But God had mercy on him. And not only on him, but me also. Lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. I mean, this verse just leads me to think of the problem of pain.

Right? Epaphroditus. He's doing this work of the Lord. Right? My co-worker with Paul. I mean, he's trying to get this money so that Paul can keep the gospel going.

[24 : 12] Can like keep proclaiming. Keep living. And then he gets sick so that he might die. In the service of the Lord. God, are you in control here?

God, Epaphroditus is doing your work. Why is he getting so sick? Why is he getting so sick that he might die? Right?

Why are you causing him so much suffering? Why is he getting so sick? Why is he getting so sick? But as Job says, Naked I came from my womb. Naked I will leave this life.

The Lord gives and the Lord takes away. Blessed be the name of the Lord. Affliction and suffering produces proven character.

And so it did with Epaphroditus. There's no suffering or affliction like that that doesn't produce character. Walking from Philippi or horseback all the way to Rome or wherever Paul was.

[25 : 18] It's a long journey. And getting sick on the way as you're doing it. Do I want to keep being in the ministry? Is this what it's like?

Doing the Lord's work? I get sick, I almost die. Is it worth it? Is it worth it? Character. Suffering is coming.

It also reminds me of how the Lord works in growing us together. Grows us together through suffering.

Through bondage, affliction. But God had mercy on them. God's mercy is shown through this. Paul most likely took care of Epaphroditus when he received him.

Tending to him, trying to get him better. But it's almost like Paul is saying, everything I did. Like, there's nothing I can do.

[26 : 20] It was God that had mercy on Epaphroditus. Like, God is the one who saved him. Paul takes no credit for that. Like Paul could have said, I tended him.

I tended his wounds. And then he recovered. But he says, God had mercy on him. God is the one who protected Epaphroditus and saved him. And then a note really quickly on joy.

Paul mentioned saying sorrow, right? I thought he was the joy guy. I was just talking about sorrow, right? He says, not only on him, but also on me, so that I would not have sorrow upon sorrow.

Paul, you're the guy who says rejoice. Rejoice always. What are you talking about? Sorrow. Right? I think that it's wrong for us to compartmentalize in the face of sorrow.

And when I think Paul talks about rejoice, again, rejoice always. It's not to compartmentalize, to like shut down the sorrow and rejoice, right?

[27 : 27] That's not what Paul says. That's not what he's doing. It's okay to be sorrowful and sad. Right? It's okay.

That's okay. I think sometimes it's worse to say to a person who's in the time of mourning and sadness, like, brother, you need the gospel.

Like, here's the gospel. When you just need to sit with them and be sad. Mourn with those who mourn. You don't need to just try to fix them.

Sit with them. Job's friends had a lot wrong, right? But they sat with him for a week before they said anything.

In his sadness, in his mourning, in his sorrow. It's good to mourn with those who mourn. Um, and then, like, in this regard, sometimes being quick to speak can sometimes just show immaturity.

[28 : 37] Right? Instead of just sitting with people who are mourning. Um, like, the wise are slow to speak and quick to listen. The wise control their tongues.

Right? All right, onwards. Verse 28. I am the more eager to send him. Uh, therefore, that you may rejoice at seeing him again, that I may be less anxious.

Pretty straightforward. Again, I keep saying that. Uh, less anxious or less sorrowful. Uh, I mean, Paul, Paul feels that, um, for Epaphroditus.

The sense of wanting to send him back, uh, home to be with his own people. Uh, that he's feeling the anxiousness that Epaphroditus is, is feeling. Um, and as, as Epaphroditus wants to go, Paul's eager to send him.

Mm-hmm. That the Philippians may rejoice. Um, verse 29 to 30. Um, so receive him in the Lord with all joy and honor such men, uh, for he nearly died for the work of Christ, risking his own life to complete what was lacking in your service to me.

[29 : 47] Um, I think Timothy and Epaphroditus are such great images, uh, following Jesus' example of taking up one's cross, denying yourself, and following after Jesus.

Uh, of Epaphroditus, there's an echo I hear, um, of the verse, uh, from, from the hymn that Paul just gave. He humbled himself by becoming obedient, uh, to the point of death.

Um, Epaphroditus was sick so that he might've died himself, right? In the, in the work of the Lord.

Um, yeah, that's, that's the text.

Um, give just three straightforward application points from this. First, trust and hope in God.

Do not put your hope in leaders. Don't put your hope in God. Uh, don't put your hope in politicians.

Don't put your hope in gifts, uh, in a ministry, but in God, in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

[31 : 05] Paul hoped in the Lord to send Timothy. That's where his hope was. And not just for salvation, but for everyday life, right?

His hope in the Lord was not just for salvation, everyday life, right? When your kids are super disobedient, you're hoping the Lord Jesus.

Praying to him, praying, asking him. Along with discipline. This one's important. Uh, is your work, your business, your finances, your family, everything you are and everything you ever will be.

Is that subjected to the Lord? Right? Not, not only in hoping for salvation, but giving all of these troubles, right?

All of these wants and desires. Um, Satan will tempt you to hope in other things. So I give all of these examples. Satan will.

[32 : 09] Shilin says he's got temptation for every season, kid. And it's true. Every season. Uh, along with that, along with Satan, uh, tempting you to hope in other things.

Jeremiah 7, 9, 17, 9. The heart is deceitfully wicked above all things and desperately sick. Who can understand? Right?

Your hope, uh, is, is to be drawn away from the Lord Jesus by your own heart. And, and also temptations of Satan. So hope in the Lord.

Trust in God. Psalm 62. I will hope in the Lord. He's my rock and my salvation. Second application. Fight against conceitedness and seek the interests of others.

Uh, conceitedness, uh, is almost, it's excessively proud of oneself. Oh, almost like self-love or pugnaciousness.

[33 : 12] Uh, it's like a house cat looking into the mirror and seeing a lion. Right? Right? Uh, why do I say this?

Uh, because we aren't anything. He's done everything. Right? We're lower than a house cat. Uh, because we're depraved.

We're sinful. And especially in conceitedness, men, especially men who aspire, uh, to be an elder, if you consider yourself something.

When you're nothing apart from Christ. In your conceitedness, there will be strife. There will be dissensions and power struggles.

And I've seen it. I've heard of it. That's how churches fail. We must not think that highly of ourself, uh, when we're nothing apart from Christ.

[34 : 14] Conceitedness, especially in leadership, um, just leads to failure. In the brotherhood, in the sisterhood, you're not better than anyone here because we're all saved by grace.

Final application. I'll conclude with it. Divine priority in humility. Right? Character, family, order.

But divine priority in humility. Right? Uh, we must, uh, we must, we must, not we should, we must, I made sure to note that. We must, uh, seek the will and desire of our father, the overseer and commander in everything.

He's more important than ourselves. In divine priority, God is first. Right? God is first. Christ is first. Timothy plays Christ, his own interests.

Christ is the head. Paphroditus, I will strive and labor even to the point of death because this is Christ's worth. Paul, Timothy, Paphroditus, they're all examples of men who exemplify their lives to

the point of death.

[35 : 30] Paphroditus almost dies delivering funds. Paul is executed at the hands of the Romans in the service of Christ. Timothy, preaching against a pagan worship, was brutally murdered in stone.

But not there. Like, we don't stop there. Stephen, preaching against the Jews, murdered in stone.

Peter, crucified upside down.

If God is more important than ourselves, are his commands your delight? Are they a lamp onto your feet?

In the service of Christ, is he the priority, or are you? Right? That's all I have for you.

Let me pray. Let me pray. Let me pray.