

Philippians: The Book of Joy (Phil. 2:19-30)

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- [0 : 00] Before I share the message, I want to share one quick announcement with you. First, Melissa is out of town today, hence the reason for giving an announcement.
- I know we would all love to hear, including myself, from Melissa, announcements. She is out of town, though, and I think she did this on purpose today because today is her birthday.
- And I'm not one to disclose someone's age, but she's just one year away from 50. So when you see her next Sunday, you can wish her happy birthday.
- But the announcement is this, that next Sunday after church, following church, March 2nd, there is a women's event called the Spring Fling.
- And how I would frame this is it's a time of fellowship, the time to hear from God's word and time for enjoyment of opportunity for ladies to get to know one another. And following that event, there'll be different ladies groups that you will hear about, and you'll have opportunities to sign up for a chance to continue those relationships that are formed and continue those relationships that are formed on that evening into the following semester as we study God's word together with other ladies.
- [1 : 20] So I encourage all ladies to attend that event. And how I want to appeal is to the men also, though, is I know that men can make opportunities for their ladies to get away difficult, and to honestly, and to not watch children, and to make the getting away for our wives very difficult.
- And I'm going to appeal to men to say, may that not ever be said of us as men. And we make it very easy for our ladies to gather together, study God's word, and to do that faithfully.
- So men, please help your wives join that event next Sunday afternoon at 4 o'clock. There's tables out in the foyer.
- Ladies, if you want to go and hear more from those who are more informed than myself. As for the message today, as we turn our hearts to God's word, I pray that you would turn with me to the book of Philippians.
- We're going to be reading from Philippians chapter 2. We're going to be looking at verses 19 through 30. And would you read along with me as we, or follow along as we read these verses together.
- [2 : 44] Philippians chapter 2, verses 19 through 30. This is the word of the Lord. I hope that in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you, so that I too may be cheered by your good news.
- For I have no one like him who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare, for they all seek their own interests, but those of Jesus Christ. Not those of Jesus Christ.
- But you know Timothy, 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 you, 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.

[3 : 57] 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 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 workman Christ, risking his life to complete that which is lacking in your service to me. Three weeks ago, I recently replaced all recessed lighting in my kitchen, in these canned lights.

And in the process of doing so, I opened the package of the light, and I discarded and did not even consider one piece of information the manufacturer gives to you to consider in installing lights.

And that was the instructions. And so I just discarded them and robustly went after with gusto installing these lights. And why do I have this adverse relationship to instructions?

[5 : 10] I don't exactly know. A few things have come to my mind. Is it my ignorance? Is it that I just don't know any better? Is it my pride? Is it because I think I know better? Is it the fact that I don't like being told what to do by a piece of paper?

I have mixed, is it an overinflation of my perceived competency of electronics and electrical competency?

And lastly, I think there is an odd feeling that I have of either I nailed this and I did it right, or I may not return to a home later this afternoon. There could be a mixture of all of this that goes into why I don't consult instructions.

But if I were to use instructions, there's one part of the instructions that I do consult, and that is the images, the pictures that are provided. When they say, okay, the black wire needs to go to this black wire and put a wire nut on those and this, I'll look at the pictures.

Those are more informative often to me than the words themselves. So I am often, and I think you are with me, that often images and pictures draw us into instructions and things more than perhaps words themselves.

[6 : 27] And today, you say, how does this apply to our text today? Today, we're going to be given two portraits of people who have given us as an example, who are to do nothing out of selfish ambition or vacancy, but in humility count others more significant themselves.

We read that. Let's remind ourselves where we find ourselves in the book of Philippians. In chapter 2, verse 3, we read that verse. Do nothing out of selfish ambition and vacancy, but in humility count others more significant than themselves.

What does that look like? Verse 4 tells us, in chapter 2, verse 4, we've said, let each of us look not only for the interests of our own, but also for the interests of others. So then we're given three portraits.

The first example of that, of someone who in humility counted others more significant than themselves, was Christ himself, because the first example of that was Christ.

Paul says later in chapter 2, who, verse 7, he emptied himself by taking on the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of Ben, and being found in the human form. He humbled himself by being obedient to the cross, being obedient to the point of death, even the death on the cross.

[7 : 42] So Christ is our first example of that. Then today, we're going to look at two more examples, two more portraits of people who in humility considered others more significant than themselves.

Timothy and Epaphroditus. And so, in this section, before we get into the nuts and the bolts of the passage, this is a little bit of a travelogue.

In essence, briefly, I would say the travelogue includes something, will sound something like this. Church at Philippi, I have, and I believe this to be true, that probably when Paul is writing to the church at Philippi, he has Timothy sitting in front of him and Epaphroditus.

And he is saying to the church at Philippi, okay, I'm going to send you Epaphroditus sooner than later. I'm going to be sending to you Timothy later than sooner.

And I, too, want to come to you, but there's some things that I have to settle up before I come. Mainly, he's under house arrest, and he's awaiting to stand trial. So, that's what is delaying.

[8 : 49] And so, he writes all three of these things, in essence, in his letter also. Epaphroditus, sooner than later. Timothy, later than sooner. I'm wanting to come to you, but I have some things.

That is also included in this passage, a little bit of a travelogue, for the church at Philippi to understand the delay of these individuals or when they could anticipate them arriving.

But mostly, this is a portrait of two individuals who give us an example of what it looks like to, in humility, count others as more significant than ourselves.

Let's first take Timothy. Let's look at the first portrait. In verse 19 through 21, which we just read, he says, One of the purposes that Paul wants to send Timothy to the church at Philippi is that Paul may be encouraged.

And notice, he's anticipating hearing a good report from what he may hear from Timothy of the church at Philippi, that I may be cheered on of you. You hear his hopeful anticipation.

[10 : 12] I'm certain there's great things going on there, and I look forward to hearing from Timothy a good report. That's one of the purposes.

But then what's interesting is we get to see why Timothy is such a profound portrait. There are five characteristics that I find.

The first one we see of Timothy, we see him in verse 20, verse A. We see the first characteristic of what makes him such a great portrait of someone who considered others as more significant than himself.

Firstly, we see the first characteristic from Timothy is that he has a spiritual character. He has a spiritual character. Look with me in verses 20, the first part of 20a.

It says, For I have no one like him. For the apostle Paul to say of someone, For I have no one like him, is astounding.

[11 : 11] Like him is a compound adjective, and literally it's translated, I have no one that is of equal souled, or I have no one of one soul.

So, Paul and Timothy were of one soul, or of equal souled, is the compound word. There is no one that Paul knows that is quite like Timothy.

He is a good soulmate. Exactly. The goal of spiritual discipleship is reproduction here, and Paul has taken Timothy under his wing after the second missionary journey.

He found him there in Lystra, and he takes him along, and he further disciplines him. And so there is no one that knows Paul like Timothy. And he is this faithful, younger brother in the Lord that Paul has invested in.

Timothy had similar passions. He has had similar objections. He has a similar zeal for the lost and the zeal for the Lord as Paul does.

[12 : 20] He is one of spiritual character. He also is someone of compassion. Look with me in the latter part of verse 20. It says, in what way is he one-souled with Paul?

He says, he will genuinely be concerned for your welfare. Now, if you remember with me, earlier in this letter, we can turn back to chapter 1, verse 15.

Paul is lamenting that there are some in Rome who preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others of goodwill, that there are some who are preaching Christ out of envy and rivalry.

And so, and they proclaim Christ out of a selfish ambition. A few verses later in verse 17, we see what that envy and rivalry looks like.

They're preaching Christ and proclaiming Christ out of selfish ambition. And we talked about that a few weeks ago. Their genuine concern was only for themselves. But Paul is saying, listen, I can send no one to you better than Timothy, church at Philippi, because there is no one like him.

[13 : 29] He is one-souled with me. And one aspect that he has that you can be assured of is he has a genuine concern, not for himself. He has a genuine concern for the saints of the church.

He has a genuine concern for you. I remember being in a meeting with pastors, and one of the seasoned pastors who I respect deeply said, do you have a concern for your wandering sheep?

Yes, do you have the concern for everyone in the body of Christ at your church? But do you also have, do you know your sheep well enough, the congregation well enough, that you notice when somebody is wandering, and does that cause your heart to ache?

And for a guy like Timothy, his heart ached. I get concerned about those who teach the Bible, of whom I am one. Why do we teach the Bible?

Because Timothy is someone who proclaimed God's word. He's a shepherd. Do we like to show off our knowledge? Do we want others to think well of us?

[14 : 44] Do we want to have influence over other people? Or do you, as a means of genuine concern, care and concern for the church can think nothing better than to faithfully preach God's word?

Because it is God who is the transforming agent among us who uses his word to transform lives. Do we preach Christ out of concern for the church?

Timothy, an amazing portrait of someone who does not seek his own interest but the interests of others and considers others as more significant than himself.

We see, firstly, that he has a spiritual character. Secondly, we see his compassion for the church. Thirdly, we see that he is a single-minded man. And this one is seen in the converse of verse what 21 says.

21 says, for they all seek their own interests. Who is they? He's referring to those other proclaimers of Christ back in chapter 1 that we looked at, who they do things out of their own interest and not of Jesus Christ.

[15 : 53] He's contrasting Timothy's honest concern for the church and these others who proclaim Christ out of their own interest. So, what is it?

It says, for they all seek their own interests. This seek after their own interests, they seek, that word seek or seek after, depends upon your translation, means to continually seek after.

They always are proclaiming Christ and they're in this thing for their own selfish gain. But Timothy is not like this. Timothy is not like this.

And we all need to be on guard for losing our first love. And may our seeking, this continually seeking after, only be for that of Christ.

Let us seek after Christ. And Timothy was a single-minded man who sought after Christ. There's a fourth characteristic of Timothy that makes him unusual.

[16 : 56] He has spiritual character. He has compassion. He's single-minded. But fourthly, he's seasoned. In verse 22, we read this, but you know Timothy's proven worth.

How, as a son with a father, he has served with me in the gospel. This basic meaning of the words proven worth is a proof after testing.

It's like gold being melted down and there's some dross on the top and it's scooped away. But the gold has been proven.

It's been melted down. It's been tested. And so now, he has proven worth. So when it says, but you know Timothy's proven worth, he's saying, you know that Timothy has served alongside of me and his character and passion for the Lord, his concern for the truth has been tested and you can be sure that it is true.

I remember, let us recall, in Acts chapter 17, there were some agitators in the church at Thessalonica and Paul had to leave town and he left Timothy in his charge to shepherd the church at Thessalonica because Paul had to leave.

[18 : 15] He had to get out of town. And so as a result, Timothy was tested in a town of Thessalonica because there were people that didn't want him there and he was under much duress and he faithfully served the Lord and faithfully served that congregation in Paul's absence there in Thessalonica.

He had proven worth. His character had been proven and he was a seasoned man. Which begs the question, what is your present circumstance?

Perhaps the Lord has laid upon you where your character is being tested as to whether you will honor the Lord in this and through this and at the end of it.

There's a fifth characteristic for Timothy that gives him this to be a great example for us as a church of someone who considered others as more significant than themselves.

He was firstly, he had spiritual character, he had compassion, he was single-minded, he was seasoned, and then lastly, he was submissive. And submissive to the Lord is what I mean.

[19 : 31] And it says in the latter part of verse 22, and how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel. Notice this does not say he served Paul.

He didn't say he served Paul. It says he served with me, Paul, in the gospel. So he was submissive to the call of God on his life to proclaim Christ to the nations and he has served with Paul.

So Paul has benefited from this man, but Timothy is submissive to the Lord. He was this kindred friend to Paul.

Paul certainly benefited from him, from Timothy's service and ministry, but he was not the object of Timothy's service and ministry. Only the Lord was. Are you submissive to Christ?

How are you participating in the gospel work? Are you single-minded about this? Who are we discipling? Who are we mentoring? Who are we teaching? Who are we sharing Christ with? It is this type of work that is not relegated to those in vocational ministry.

[20 : 38] It is for all of us in Christ. All of us participate in gospel work. And before we move on to Epaphroditus, the second portrait that we will look at here, we need to look and consider Timothy's heritage.

Timothy grew up in Lystra. How did he become such a man? How did Timothy become this person of Christ who he has become? He grew up in Lystra, which is in Asia Minor, modern-day Turkey.

On Paul's first missionary journey, his mother and grandmother came to faith in Christ, perhaps even Timothy, or mom and grandma taught Timothy and shared with him the love of Christ.

But regardless, his grandmother Lois and mother Eunice were two people the Lord used in Timothy's life to disciple this young man and raise him up in the Lord.

So that on Paul's second missionary journey, he found Timothy and said, come with me, I want to serve with you. And Paul took him under his wing and they then ministered together.

[21 : 50] But here's what I want to just pause and consider for a moment. What I appreciate about these two ladies, and by the way, the father was likely a Gentile who maybe never believed in the Lord and so he's not mentioned in Timothy's heritage.

But these two ladies, I love that they did not farm out the responsibility to raise their children and raise the grandchildren in the Lord. They understood that it was their primary responsibility of the parents to raise their children in the Lord.

And I love that Timothy had that advantage. And I pray that we would not be people who farm out the responsibility of our spiritual formation of our children to others.

To that end, Pastor Jay found a resource which I'm grateful and we would like to offer this resource to you.

We're highly concerned about parents raising their children in the Lord and being part of their spiritual formation. In a few weeks, on March 12th, it's a Wednesday night.

[23 : 00] We're going to have a prayer and praise service. In that prayer and praise service, it will be your first opportunity to be handed this book. It's called Rich Wounds by an author who I have grown to appreciate over the years.

His name is David Mathis. And this book, Rich Wounds, will be first handed out at that prayer and praise service. That prayer and praise service is about 40 days before Easter and we want to be a people who prepare our hearts for an Easter service and for hearing of the resurrection of the Lord and celebrating that together as a church.

In addition, we want to have, we want to be praying for at that prayer and praise service those who the Lord has broken our hearts for who we want to know the Lord, who we will be purposed to invite to an Easter service.

So, why else am I mentioning this? We want to be a people who, want to be a church who is intentional of giving resources to individuals to help us not only in our own spiritual formation but also our children.

So, this would be a great resource for dads in the evenings to have a family devotional time, to hand to your teenagers as you're driving from here to there and say, hey, read the next thing and let's discuss it in the car.

[24 : 19] However that may look like, it's a great resource and I look forward to all of us doing that together, journeying together using that devotional book.

Epaphroditus is the second portrait that we're going to look at. We're going to look at the example of Epaphroditus. He is another example of one who in humility considered others as more significant than himself.

And these two individuals, Timothy and Epaphroditus, could not be further apart from one another as far as how they may have grown up. Timothy grew up with a Jewish heritage under that household that I just mentioned.

Epaphroditus, his name means one who belongs to or is favored by Aphrodite, which is the Greek goddess of love who the Romans named Venus.

And so, Epaphroditus, his very name is to a Roman god. And so, Epaphroditus is a common name. It is shortened to Epaphras. There is another Epaphras mentioned in the book of Colossians.

[25 : 27] It was a very common name in the first century and so, whether these two gentlemen are the same person or different is debatable. I'm not going to get into that, but Epaphroditus, if I in my message say Epaphras as opposed to Epaphroditus, I'm speaking of Epaphroditus, the same guy.

It's kind of like shortening the name Scott to one T and calling me Scott. You get the idea. Epaphroditus, as opposed to Timothy, he's not a noted preacher.

He's not a noteworthy teacher. There is no indication that he served as the office of an elder or a deacon at the church at Philippi. He is a lay leader just simply in the church at Philippi.

Yet, without title and formal position, he is incredibly useful to the Lord and an incredible friend to the Apostle Paul. He is someone who exemplifies the spirit of sacrifice for the sake of Christ.

He's an amazing man. And I look forward to us together to have an opportunity to look at this hymn, look at him a little closer. And think about what may have made him such an incredible servant.

[26 : 43] Now, again, I believe that Epaphroditus is sitting in front of Paul at the time of writing this letter to the church at Philippi. But how did this man from Philippi, Epaphroditus, get in front of Paul when he's writing this letter that he's probably going to send as a courier with the letter of Philippians back to Philippi?

But how did Epaphroditus come from the church at Philippi to Paul sitting in Rome under house arrest? And think what kind of man he must have been and we kind of get a glimpse at what kind of man he must have been by looking at all the titles that we read of him starting in verse 25.

I have thought it necessary, Paul is writing to the church at Philippi, I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, my fellow worker, my fellow soldier, a messenger and minister, to my need.

Did you see all those five titles? What kind of man must this man have been? He is heavy with titles.

Paul says, he is my brother, he's my fellow worker, he's my fellow soldier, and a messenger and minister to my need. Five titles for one man. And so, whoever this man Epaphroditus must have been, we find some things, we'll get into why he must have been a man of character.

[28 : 01] But first, let's start with the title brother. Brother is not a term that we use when we forget someone's name alone. Hey brother, good to see you. I have forgotten your name, brother.

So, that's not what Paul is saying about Epaphroditus. He is saying that he is in Christ. He is a fellow partner in the gospel through Christ and we have been adopted by our father and so we are spiritual brothers and sisters in the Lord and we have a common mission and this man, Epaphroditus, he is a brother.

Secondly, he's a fellow worker. Fellow worker. Paul recognizes that Epaphroditus is his equal. He is a fellow worker. They link arms side by side in what work they share the same mission, the mission of making disciples, of serving the Lord.

They are equals in that. Paul is an apostle and Epaphroditus is not, but what they are equals in the work of the Lord. He is my fellow worker, Paul says, of Epaphroditus.

Second, or thirdly, he is a fellow soldier that we are engaged in a spiritual warfare. When we come to faith in Christ, it is not like there is a battle line that is drawn and we can cross the battle line when we want to choose and retreat when we want to choose.

[29 : 30] No, no, no, no, no. When we are in Christ and have accepted him and he has paid the penalty of sin for us and we by faith believe in the life, death, resurrection of Christ for the forgiveness of sin, when we have become in Christ, we have crossed into enemy lands and there is no retreat back.

we are always going to be this side of heaven in enemy territory and so he says of Epaphroditus, he is my fellow soldier.

We have crossed into enemy territory and there is no retreat and I am glad to link arms with a man like Epaphroditus. Paul then also, though, says two more things of him which also gets to the why Epaphroditus came to Paul.

He says, your messenger and your minister for the sake of your messenger and your minister to my need.

That the church at Philippi sent Epaphroditus with two things, a message and then it says to minister, a messenger and to minister. So Epaphroditus came with a message and it came with something to deliver to Paul.

[30 : 49] We get a glimpse of what that, what it may have included, what that would have maybe included in chapter four. We read that of Epaphroditus that he comes with a gift, a financial gift and you think, well why is Epaphroditus giving a financial gift to Paul?

And so Paul is commending the church at Philippi, thank you for this sacrificial gift you've given to me. Well how did Paul receive this sacrificial monetary gift was probably through the hands of Epaphroditus.

And Epaphroditus, why does Paul need money? Paul is under house arrest in Rome and he has to pay rent, he has to eat food but he can't leave or go anywhere and so he needs outside support to help fund his apartment or whatever that looked like and to sustain his life.

And Epaphroditus gave this wonderful gift to Paul to minister to his need that Paul found himself in need and Paul is saying he is a wonderful brother among all these things to minister to my need.

But he also came with a message and we will look at the content of that message here in a moment. Moving on though let's see what the crisis was about Epaphroditus.

[32 : 11] three times in a very few amount of verses we are told that he became very ill. In verse 26 it says you heard that he was ill. Verse 27 indeed he was ill near to death and verse 30 says he nearly died.

So whatever it was when Epaphroditus came he came to minister he came with a message of encouragement but the problem was when he arrived in Rome he became very ill and he almost died.

The illness is so severe Paul thought to write of it three times. And you say well how did he get well? Did he use medicine? Did he was he restored miraculously?

Did he experience a divine miracle or a combination of all these three? I don't know but what I do know is this in verse 27 we will find out how he was made well because verse 27 says God had mercy on him.

That's how he was made well. God simply had mercy on him. And Epaphroditus in spending that time with Paul should he have died we know from Paul's perspective that would have been gain because we read about that earlier in Philippians chapter 121 for me to live as Christ and to die as gain so that would have been gain for Epaphroditus.

[33 : 35] Paul knows that it's true of him it's true of Epaphroditus but we know that Epaphroditus meant so much to him that it says of Epaphroditus verse at the bottom of verse 27 it says lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.

God had mercy on him spared his life unless I should have had sorrow upon sorrow. who knows how close of a friendship the Apostle Paul had with Epaphroditus when earlier in Philippi the Apostle Paul was integral in the starting and the planting and the establishing of the church at Philippi we know that and is it could it have been that they met back then we don't know but he was refreshed so much so by this brother that it would have added sorrow upon sorrow for Paul to have lost him.

There is something peculiar that may have been overlooked in verse 26 that I find slightly humorous. What added what added to Epaphroditus' illness in verse 26 for it says verse 26 for he has been longing for you all speaking of those in the church of Philippi and has been distressed what has contributed to his illness he has been distressed by what because you heard that he was ill.

Epaphroditus what is compromising his health he is under a little bit of distress is because the church at Philippi has become anxious as to his state of being because they heard that he was sick so he is distressed because others are anxious for his sake.

isn't that different than how it is often with us today. We want to tell people readily and freely our discomfort of the day to try to solicit sympathy because it doesn't distress me that you're concerned for me I want you to be concerned for me so let me tell you my daily woe if not posted on social media why not more sympathy I just find it a little humorous that Epaphroditus was distressed by others concern for him but Paul is sending Epaphroditus back to the church at Philippi and we understand the reasons for that through these verses look with me in verses 28

[36 : 26] I am the more eager to send him therefore that you may rejoice in seeing him again so notice it's for the church's benefit you can stop being anxious and that I may be less anxious Paul says I'm tired of being anxious about this guy as well and he needs to recover under your care church at Philippi so I'm sending him back so I can be less anxious and then so what I find a little bit humorous here is Paul wants to send him back in part so that Paul wouldn't have to worry about him the church could know in Philippi that he's okay and Epaphroditus can stop worrying that others are worried about his own care I find that a little humorous and upon arrival though here's what I also want to conclude with though here's this faithful brother we know in some ways little about but in other ways we know much about and it says and Paul is saying to the church when you receive him back at

Philippi he has accomplished the mission he has come he has been of encouragement to me he has given the things that you have asked him to bring to me how much of a trustworthy man he must have been to have been given money and said go to Paul and Rome were in Greece Philippi is in Greece modern day Greece and go to Italy go to Rome and hand deliver this money to Paul how trustworthy would Epaphroditus must have been for that church of Philippi to send him on his way in that way but upon receiving him this is what I want to camp out on a little bit it says this in verse 29 so when you receive him in the Lord with all joy honor such a man church at Philippi honor this man when he returns he has accomplished what you set him out to do he's been an encouragement to me he's been faithful to the

Lord in the work that he has set out for him and you are to honor such a person they are to welcome this minister and messenger back and honor him he deserves to be welcomed as Christ will welcome those who faithfully labor in the service of others as Matthew 25 shares with us isn't that command to honor Epaphroditus refreshing those who often are honored or famous or are talented or are powerful individuals but Epaphroditus is not necessarily he doesn't hold the title he's not an elder we don't see him as that at least he's not recorded him as that he's not a deacon but they are to receive him back with honor and isn't that refreshing I'm a little bit of a basketball fan!

I don't really watch much sports but during March Madness I may catch a game or two but in 2014 Kentucky was playing UConn for the national championship and Kentucky lost that year and what I remember about that loss is how many people it made the news of how many people went out to the airport to receive back their basketball team who had just lost so Kentucky went out to the airport, and you would have thought Kentucky won, how many people came out just to clap and cheer and express thanks to their team that had returned home.

I think we underappreciate faithful service to Jesus. Who is greater, the person who serves the least of these or the person who wins championships? Sports are wonderful gifts, but games are just games. There is a much more important battle that we all engage in, and when we see someone serving faithfully Christ, we should encourage them. We should say thank you. We should honor them. We should not deify them, but we should honor them. A few weeks ago, or months ago rather, one of our dear brothers, Gary Gibson, gives Wayne Lucas, who is 91 years old, who is here today, a ride to men's breakfast. So Gary swings by Wayne's place and gives Wayne a ride, and afterward, Gary came to me quietly and said, hey, do you see Wayne Lucas? And we were scouring the room. The room had kind of dwindled down, and people had kind of gone home, and so the crowd was lower. So Wayne's easy to spot, and we looked around, and we couldn't find him. And immediately, my mind went to, oh no, did Wayne fall somewhere, and we need to find him quickly. And so that's where my mind went, and so I started moving with a little bit of urgency, and then I took a step back, and then Gary and I thought of the same thing at the same time. We both said, have you checked the kitchen? No, let's check the kitchen.

[41 : 43] Sure enough, where is the 91-year-old Wayne Lucas, after a men's breakfast, washing the dishes? Washing dishes. I want to honor faithful servants.

I want us to grow as a church to honor faithful servants who consider others as more significant than themselves. We have the portrait of Christ. We have the portrait of Timothy. We have the portrait of Epaphroditus, and we also have the portrait of one another. And when we see someone faithfully serving the Lord, honor such a person. Who have you noticed in the body serving the Lord?

Who have you noticed early arriving to make coffee? Who stands at a door to welcome someone? Quick story, and I will make this brief. My father, who attends a different church, he is a greeter at a door, and he loved being a greeter at a door. And my father wanted to make sure that everybody was greeted with a warm welcome at the church that he attends. And he would wait, because he noticed this one woman who was a single mom who had children in tow would always arrive 15 to 20 minutes late, but he waited. And it was his joy to make sure that she was greeted. Later, after that lady came many, many times, she, in tears one day, said to my father, I just want to tell you what it means to me that someone waited for me to open the door.

Those who prepare a lesson to teach children and teach your youth. Those who miss the worship service to disciple your children. Those who practice on Thursday nights and arrive early on Sunday to lead us in worship. Those who prepare a lesson to teach adults each week. Those who arrive early to shovel snow. Maybe not today. Those who are prayer warriors who are just faithful to pray for the body of Christ here at 4th. Those who mentor and disciple others. Who do you know is worthy of honor?

I pray those who are worthy of honor are those in humility who consider others as more significant than themselves. And it's obvious.

[44 : 20] When you note it, honor them. Lord, may we do that really well as a church. I pray these portraits of people would stand as examples to us of those who considered others as more significant than themselves.

Timothy and Epaphroditus. And may we be named among them as well. Let's pray. Father, thank you for this day. Thank you for your goodness and your kindness.

Lord, I thank you for how you are the superlative of the example of one who considered others as more significant than themselves.

You did that. You are the chief example for that, of that for us, Lord. But we also thank you for these examples in Timothy. We thank you for these examples in Epaphroditus.

And truly, I pray, Lord, that we would be a you would work in us and we would be a formed people such that we too could be named among those who consider others as more significant than ourselves.

[45 : 29] Thank you for these three examples found in the book of Philippians. And may we be a living example to one another in that way. Thank you, Lord, for putting us all in the service of you.

There is no excuses. Thank you, Lord. Amen. Amen.