

**“Others-centric”
Philippians 2:19-30**

Introduction: Pg. ____ ?Read 2:19-30

If the book of Philippians was one of your favorite music albums, this section might be like the one or two tracks that you skip over. Not because it's bad, but because the rest are so good. There are so many powerful passages in this little letter that the end of chapter two is probably one of the least known and appears, on the surface to seem somewhat inconsequential

After all, Paul is giving them details about future plans. He comes across a little bit more like a travel agent than the great theologian and missionary we know him to be, BUT these words could be some of the most impactful for anyone who wants to learn the way of Jesus.

By we learn an important lesson here: **“Every word of God is flawless.” (Prov 30:5, NIV) AND 16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable (2 Timothy 3:16-17)**

SO... as Paul lays out some of these travel plans to check on his friends back in the city of Philippi, he tells us a lot about two key people: Timothy and Ephaphroditus. Timothy and Eppaphroditus, in turn, tell us a lot about what it looks like to know, love, follow, and imitate Jesus.

They provide two very godly examples for us to imitate this morning as we seek to cultivate the mind of Christ. They show us that Jesus will...

The Point: Jesus moves us from a self-centric to others-centric life.

What is so special about these men? Let's start with Timothy...

- Timothy became a Christian during Paul's first visit to the city of Lystra. On his second visit, Paul saw Timothy's maturity and readiness for service, so Paul invited Timothy to join him in his missionary work.
- Only two other people are referred to as sons of Paul (Titus once and Onesimus once). Paul refers to Timothy affectionately as his son six times in his various writings.
 - Sure, this is because Timothy came to faith under the ministry of Paul.
 - But there is more going on here. Clearly there was a strong bond, a deep affection between these two men.
- Verse 22 spells out this special relationship they enjoyed. Paul says Timothy served him as a father would with his son in the work of the gospel.
 - This does not hold the significance for us as it would for those in the 1st century.
 - During these days children did not grow up like kids today.

- College students today can basically pick their field. They can pursue 1000 different vocational paths.
- I'm sure our Tufts students get sick of people... Where you from? What's your major? (I mean these aren't bad questions. They are good questions. They are informative. But you know what I'm saying).
- A.D. 47... not so much. No one was asking kids: "What do you want to be when you grow up?" Why? Because 95 percent of the time, they would follow in their father's footsteps and carry on the family business.
- Because of that they would grow up, work with their father, apprentice under their father, be trained by him on a daily basis so they could carry out that line of work
- That's what Paul is saying here.
- It is a picture of a very close relationship...

T: What did he learn from Paul about living an "Others-centric" kind of life? How did he imitate Paul that, in turn, was worthy of imitation by others?

I. Others-centricism begins with genuine concern (2:19-21).

- "I have no one like him..." The adjective Paul uses to describe Timothy is *isopnychos*, translated out could mean "equal-soul." In other words, I have no one that is as like-minded as Timothy, no one who is on the same page with me as much as Timothy.
- I hope you find this motivating. Clearly, Timothy excelled, and here's some news for each one of us: God wants us to excel in our faith too!
 - We should want to excel.... We should seek exponential growth
 - Galatians 5:22-23 **"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things *there is no law!*"** No restrictions. No limits... Go be as much like Jesus as you possibly can be!
 - Work out what he works in you, without limit!!
 - Isn't coming on Sundays life-giving? I was thinking about this. If all that happened is that we had a spiritual checkpoint to say, "How are you living out that? And a reminder: there's no limit to that. Nothing stopping you from giving more and more and more fruit. And then an encouragement: so go live it! Do it!" Wouldn't it be worth it?
 - That doesn't include having our hearts stirred by the truth of the songs we sing. The friendship we experience by rubbing shoulders with one another. The times of prayer. The opportunities to serve.
 - For me and I hope you'll say the same... Sunday Worship is not an optional part of my life. It is essential.
 - We need that weekly encouragement to live as though "living is Christ, means Christ, equals Christ" because it does.
 - T: One of the ways Timothy displayed Christ was through compassion, genuine concern (another aspect of the fruit of the Spirit, btw)

- Timothy possessed genuine concern and clear love for others. *Read verses 20-21.*
- Do you hear the echo of 2:3-5... look back.
- And don't miss this: looking after the interests of the church in Philippi and looking after the interests of Jesus... are those different interests? No! Two ways of saying the same thing.
- How? Because this is how Jesus lived, AND because Jesus is one with his people. We are united. To care for them is to care for him.
- We can't say we love Jesus then fail to love Jesus people. Jesus people love and care for and display genuine concern for other Jesus people.
- This is why one of the core values of our church is "Community." God brings us together to walk side by side so that we can love one another, serve one another, and bear one another's burdens.

- Compassion begins in the heart. "For they all seek . . ." Do you desire it? What do you seek after?
 - "Both to WILL and to work..."
 - Pray, God, give me a greater concern. God, give me greater desires to seek others interests.
- I see this in my 8 year-old, Parker, who is learning sign-language with her classmates, for a girl in her class who often communicates more effectively through sign.
- I saw this in one of the Kingdom of God's invisible heroes. He'll never have 1M views on YouTube, but Dr. Jose in Ecuador, he knows the kingdom is not about that. Gave up his profession as a doctor to use his gifts in caring for homeless street people in the city of Guayaquil. We asked him: "Why?" (Matthew 25) When you saw them, you saw me...
- Compassion puts ourselves in their shoes.
 - "Those of Jesus Christ."
 - These are image-bearers.
 - These are people with dignity in the sight of God.
 - This should run through how we look at every person and situation. From new neighbors moving across the street, to the Global Refugee crisis.
 -
 - T: Do you have a genuine concern, a deep concern for others?

II. Others-centricism leads us to service (2:22-24).

- Christianity is not about power, prestige, or position. It is about strength in weakness, about laying our lives down to build others up!
 - When Jesus was asked by his disciples about a seat of power... (who can sit at your right hand), he looked at them and said: "You've got it all wrong. If you want to be great, become small. If you want to be first, you take the last position."
- Timothy saw this in Paul, which is the power of mentorship.

- Timothy saw Paul serving, which instructed and motivated his serving.
- Verse 22 - Timothy was serving Paul
- Verse 23 - Timothy is ready to serve them.
- Craddock illustration.... “
 - “To give my life for Christ appears glorious. To pour myself out for others... to pay the ultimate price of martyrdom—I’ll do it. I’m ready, Lord, to go out in a blaze of glory. . . . We think giving our all to the Lord is like taking a \$1,000 bill and laying it on the table—“Here’s my life, Lord. I’m giving it all.” But the reality for most of us is that he sends us to the bank and has us cash in the \$1,000 for quarters. We go through life putting out 25 cents here and 50 cents there. Listen to the neighbor kid’s troubles instead of saying, “Get lost.” Go to a meeting. Give a cup of water to a shaky old man in a nursing home.
 - [Add examples here...
 1. Bending a listening ear. [25 cents]
 2. Helping a friend move into a new apartment.
 3. Buying someone’s dinner. [50 cents]
 4. Extending an irresistible invitation to a friend. [Quarter]
 5. Following up with a friend who shared a burden in small group.
 6. Taking a meal to a family who welcomed a child into their home. [Fitty spot]
 7. Calling someone to pray for them when times are tough. [Quarter]
 8. Running an errand for a friend who is under the weather. [Quarter]
 9. Taking a few hours out of your Easter weekend to serve Medford families at our Eggstravaganza. [Dimes]
 10. Giving someone a ride when you’re crunched for time and you don’t really have that 25 minutes to spare. [Quarter]
 11. Helping a friend prepare for an exam.
 12. Volunteering some time so that a parent can get a breather, or a couple can get a date night. [Quarter]
 13. Showing up a few minutes early on a Sunday (not on time - which would be a stretch for many of us on Sunday, not hating, just saying and I am just reminding, worship starts at 10:30am) to greet newcomers and create a hospitable atmosphere at RHC.
 - Usually given our life to Christ isn’t glorious. It’s done in all those little acts of love, 25 cents at a time. It would be easy to go out in a flash of glory; it’s harder to live the Christina life little by little over the long haul.” {IMAGE: Stacks of Quarters/Dimes???) - Fred Craddock
- God uses the humble. He esteems the humble. “This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.” (Isaiah 66:2) Why? Because humility is a reflection of the heart of God, revealed so clearly in the person of Jesus.

“He has proved himself. I have no one else like him...” What a compliment...” That girl, man. She’s a gem. That dude. Selfless. Man, you can’t not want to hang around people who are like Jesus. I’m just telling you straight up. That’s the WAY it is.

T: That’s Timothy. What about Epaphroditus? As we turn to v. 25, we discover...

III. Others-centricism vigorously sets aside personal comfort (2:25-26).

First off, let’s just get this out of the way: What a name! Incredible! Next family to add a boy into the mix, can we consider that biblical name. What’s your son’s name? Epaphroditus! Look at how Paul describes him: “my brother, fellow worker, fellow soldier, your messenger and minister to my need.”

But did you catch Verse 26? Shouldn’t he be distressed because he was ill? OR shouldn’t he expect others to be distressed because he was ill? But No... Epaphroditus is distressed because they might be distressed over his illness.

- If there was ever a time the attention should have been on him, this was it.
 - He could have been thinking about the get well cards and the balloons and hot-cooked meals...
 - “He didn’t look to his own interests...”
- He knew Jesus words: **“It is more blessed to give than receive.”**
 - Here’s a challenge: the next time you think you deserve something, **give away what you think you deserve.**
 - The cure for self-focus is others focus.
 - When you feel like you deserve some encouragement, give someone else some encouragement.
 - When you really wish someone would call and pray for you, you go and pray with someone else.
 - When you wish your neighbor would come on out with their snowblower, go shovel their driveway.
 - The question is not, What can I receive from others, but what can they receive from me?
 - Give! Freely. Overflow... don’t wait to be loved, go love and what you’ll find is that when you pour out, you will be a person that is easier to love. Just the way it works.
 - The cure for self-focus is others focus.
 - Who can you serve this week? (Work, Home, Church)
 - You want to be a game changer? Serve!

T: In fact, his situation was so dire that Paul says, “Indeed he was so ill that he almost died.” But Epaphroditus didn’t want them to be concerned about him, which brings us to our fourth principle.

IV. Others-centricism gladly makes sacrifices (2:27-30).

- Let's take it one step farther. Verse 30. "For he nearly died.
- "But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God." (Acts 20:24)
- We saw this in verse 17 of chapter 2... **I am being poured out like a "drink offering.."**
- **Tim Keller says: "There is no more practical index of whether your church has movement dynamics [we're going somewhere] than examining whether you have a culture of sacrifice. If the top leaders of the church are the only ones making all the sacrifices, then you don't have a movement culture."**
- A few minutes ago I highlighted about 16 ways to serve others by looking to their interests in your personal life, but let me throw out a way you can fulfill these ideas of genuine concern, service, setting aside personal comfort, and making sacrifices here at Redemption Hill. The primary mechanism for serving at RHC is through our serve Teams.
- **[Vision Slide PIC]** If you were here about a month ago, on our Vision Sunday, we said: "Steps change stories." I'd love to see many of you take a great next step by exploring how you can Serve with a Team.
 - Serve for the first time... (1x month)
 - Some who are serving... can up your game... (2x month)
 - Connect Card...
- This is the essence of love, by the way: giving of oneself for the benefit of someone else.

Conclusion:

Super Bowl 51... Second greatest comeback in history. You know the greatest, right? Jesus rose from the dead, that's right...

- Honor such people!! Receive him back. Welcome him with great joy and honor people like him, because
- Duck Boat Parade: We finished elder meeting on Tremont St. **(PICS)**.
- We should celebrate People like this. We should honor servants like this.

But I got better news for you... Not only will you or should you be honored here, but more importantly, Jesus will honor you...

"Then the King [that would be Jesus] will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.'" (Matthew 25:34-36)