

Ministry of The Holy Spirit
Prison Letters
Philippians 2:19-30

Last time...v12-16a

Work out that which is worked in, and without complaining about anything!
Worked in by God: salvation, a new nature, newness of life, an inner change
 When we trust and surrender to God's will
 An event
Worked out by God: sanctification/purification
 As we day-by-day trust and surrender to God's will
 A life-long process

This time...being encouraged when surrounded by discouragement

v19 But I trust in the Lord Jesus...a wonderful way to begin every discussion!
And the very foundation for encouragement in a discouraging world

The Lord is bigger than any circumstance and
 mightier than any adversary we ever face
The Lord fights for us, leads us, guides us thru everything in this world
 on our journey to the next world

Scripture encourages us with the eternal perspective

1 Peter 1:3-7

So no matter what – be encouraged!

Rom 8:18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy
 to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Paul, in Rome under house arrest awaiting his appeal before Caesar (Nero) that could end
 either in his release or in his execution, loves the brethren in Philippi who are
 concerned about his welfare, just as he is concerned about their welfare
He wants to encourage them, so he sends them 2 encouragers

Paul will send them someone very important to him that is currently by his side –
 Timothy, his son in the faith

By dispatching Timothy,

- they will be encouraged, knowing how Paul is doing
- he will be encouraged, knowing how they are doing

Encouragement is a two-way street; everybody needs encouragement in this
 broken and discouraging world

En-courage-ment: to be of good courage, no matter “the odds”

The Lord thru Moses told the 12 spies commissioned to scope things out in the land of Canaan to be of good courage and bring back the fruit of the land...to encourage the people about the glory of their inheritance to be received after the trial of their faith

The Lord thru Moses told Israel to be of good courage and not fearful of the Amorites before he passed the baton of leadership to Joshua

Joshua was implored by the Lord to be of good courage as he led Israel to conquer the land inhabited by of 7 nations bigger and mightier than them... whom the Lord Himself would be driving out and whom they would be following by faith

En-courage-ment comes from the Lord God Almighty

Ps 27:13-14 *I had fainted*, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.

Ps 31:23-24 O love the LORD, all ye his saints: *for* the LORD preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer. Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD.

v20-21 Aside from Timothy, no one with Paul shares his Christ-like concern for the church at Philippi

With the mind of Christ, Paul’s desire for the church to be encouraged and to be genuinely cared for surpasses his personal desire to be comforted and cared for in his current state

By sending them the most important person in his life

In Timothy’s absence he will have no one likeminded, no one of v1-2

Because all the others are motivated by their own selfish best interests and not by the best interests of others i.e. they are self-serving, they have not the mind of Christ

Can you hear, can you feel Paul’s dis-courage-ment and sorrow?

Likeminded brethren genuinely motivated by the mind of Christ to serve the best interests of others instead of their own selfish best interests are...rare!

Precious are brethren who are truly likeminded with Christ and faithful!

But they are few

Many/Most cannot continue

Prov 20:6 Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?

1 Tim 4:1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils (deception);

1 John 2:19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would *no doubt* have continued with us: but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

On a ministry level, this is a great discouragement – people seeking their own and not the things of Christ

Sometimes love hurts and ministry hurts

How much did Jesus' loving ministry of reconciliation hurt Him? ("Follow Me.")

On a personal level, we have all been hurt by people we thought were our friends, until they proved otherwise.

Conversely, we have all hurt someone who they thought we were their friend, until we proved otherwise

On a ministry level or a personal level, how do we deal with the hurt that comes with people?

We encourage ourselves in the Lord Who is faithful

1 Sam 30:1-6 Amalek, type of the flesh, a major bummer!

The flesh/sin nature burns everything down, takes everyone captive...Ex 17:16

But the Lord is greater

People are flawed and, therefore, can be discouraging.

The Lord Jesus Christ is perfect and is never discouraging,

He is always encouraging (1 Cor 14:3)!

People are not faithful, not trustworthy, not dependable...
sheep do wander and bite, after all

But our Lord our Shepherd and the Head of the Body is ever faithful and trustworthy and dependable!

As He is faithful to His Word to Israel, most of whom do not even know or believe He exists, He will be faithful to His Word to us

He shall not fail nor be discouraged until He sets up justice in the earth (Is 42:4)

We must not let our hearts be hardened by what other flawed people like us do,
we must let our heart be softened by what the Lord Jesus has done

By the mercy of God...the healing of our hearts...choose to have
thick skin and a soft heart, with lots of grace
and not

thin skin and a hard heart, with lots of bleeding

How?
Trust in the Lord Jesus

v22-23 Timothy has served with Paul in the Gospel at Philippi with the mind of Christ
They know he is trustworthy, faithful, and dependable, proven by time and trials

Therefore, as soon as the disposition of his appeal, and therefore his life, is known,
Paul will release Timothy to them

v24 But I trust in the Lord...Paul's first and last word regarding sending Timothy
The Lord is the Beginning and the End, the Alpha and Omega, the First and the
Last of en-courage-ment
He is consummately trustworthy, faithful, and dependable
So we lean on Him and not on mere men

Paul is convinced, fully persuaded, that,
after undoubtedly giving Caesar Nero

- a powerful presentation of the Gospel of Grace
- an opportunity to be forgiven of his sins
- an invitation to accept the gift of eternal life

he will be released and freed to rejoin Timothy and the Philippians...
to the encouragement of everyone!

Additionally Paul had previously moved to minister to the Philippians with another
encourager

v25 Paul had already deemed it necessary to encourage the church at Philippi by returning to
them one of their own, their ambassador to him in prison sent to comfort/minister
to him (Rome provided absolutely nothing to its prisoners) and to encourage him:
Epaphroditus, Paul's

- brother...in the Family of God
- companion in labor...co-laborer in the Gospel of Grace
- fellowsoldier...in intense and unending spiritual warfare

v26-28 Epaphroditus fell deathly ill while ministering to Paul...but God

God used a near-death-illness to stir the hearts of His children

The Philippians heard about the condition of one of their own whom they loved
and were very concerned

Their concern and love for him stirred Epaphroditus' love and concern for them,
prompting a yearning to get back to them

With a healing touch...a gift of healing...upon the gravely ill,
God had mercy on

- Epaphroditus
- Paul
- the Philippians

Personally encouraged by the healing of Epaphroditus, Paul quickly sent him home so
that the church at Philippi would also be encouraged and rejoice in the Lord who
heals us

Healing: mercy from the Lord who heals us

Ex 15:23-26

How did God help, have mercy on, His complaining people?

A tree in the bitter water, turning the water sweet...a type of Jesus
on the Cross being made a curse for us, giving Himself for
us, turning death into life for whoever believes/trusts Him
By His stripes we **are** healed

To hearken/do/keep is to love

To love is to obey

John 15:13-14 **Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay
down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if
ye do whatsoever I command you.**

I am the Lord that heals you

I am the Lord...that cannot lie and cannot fail

“that heals”...maybe? Always? In part?

- spiritual
- physical
- emotional
- relational
- EVERYTHING that is broken or hurts

you...Who are the “you”? His people who trust the Lord Jesus

1 Peter 2:10 Which in time past *were* not a people, but
are now the people of God: which had not
obtained mercy, but now have obtained
mercy.

Why does God heal?

He is a merciful God that delights in mercy
To encourage His children, both the sick and those who love him/her,
in a discouraging world
To give us strength to continue

This fellowship has been mercifully helped and encouraged by the Almighty God
Charity
Bob
Mike B
Monica
Marta
etc

You may be thinking, “Well then, why does God not heal?”

That is a very short-sighted question
He is the Lord that heals...always...us, His people, the just who live by faith
Sometimes the Lord heals us with the ultimate healing of a new body,
the greatest mercy and grace!
Precious in the sight of the LORD *is* the death of his saints. (Ps 116:15)
Our Father desires to beautify His house with His children, whom He
loves more than we do

Whether with a temporary healing or an eternal healing, the Lord heals us
How, when, which way is His business, He is Sovereign
Unsearchable are His judgments and His ways are past finding out (Rom 11:33)
We follow the One Who is faithful...by faith and without complaining!

v29-30 Paul “frames” this en-courage-ment of Epaphroditus’ temporary healing, this mercy from the Lord to the Philippians:

- receive Epaphroditus in the Lord...PTL!!! All glory and honor to our God!!
- with all gladness...Thank you, Thank you, Jesus!
i.e. never take for granted the mercy and healing of the Lord
- hold such in reputation...Epaphroditus’ healing and return to them is precious and Christ-honoring

because the Lord honored the servant who honored Him

For the work/toil of Christ (Acts 1:1 with the mind of Christ), the Father’s business

Luke 19:10 **the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.**

Matt 22:36-40 love of God and others

James 2:8 Royal Law

Rom 13:10 Love is the end/fulfillment of the Law

The Gospel grace (Rom 5:20), the mystery of Redemption

2 Cor 5:18-20 And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

he (Epaphroditus, their ambassador to Paul) hazarded his life by coming to minister to Paul...then became sick, nearly unto death
not regarding his life more than Paul's, but Paul's life more than his (the mind of Christ),
like minded with Paul in Ch 1:21

Thoughts in a discouraging world

1. Learn whose voice you are hearing
Are you hearing a dis-couraging word?
It is coming from Satan
Are you hearing and en-couraging word?
It is the Lord

If Satan is speaking, have him bound in Jesus' name and cast behind you
If the Lord is speaking, soak it up, ask for more, and pass it on!

2. Be an encourager
The world is a very discouraging place
It is very easy to be discouraged and to be discouraging
Everyone needs encouragement
People "push forward", are drawn to, respond to encouragement
They "pull back" in response to discouragement and criticism

Let's do something radical – think before we speak
Do we have something discouraging to say?
Keep it to ourself
Do we have something encouraging to say?
Share it!

We must bite the critical, "downer" tongue of our sin nature and yield our tongue
to the words of encouragement of God Who is the lifter of our head!

Ps 3:1-3 LORD, how are they increased that trouble me! many *are* they that rise up against me. Many *there be* which say of my soul, *There is* no help for him in God. But thou, O LORD, *art* a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.

Rom 15:1-2 We then that are strong (of strong courage) ought to bear the infirmities of the weak (discouraged), and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please *his* neighbour for *his* good to edification (building up vs tearing down).

1 Cor 14:3 But he that prophesieth (proclaim the Word of God) speaketh unto men *to* edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

Just as the Lord sent encouragers to those discouraged in the re-building of the Temple (Haggai and Zechariah), He sends encouragers to the discouraged in the building of the Temple of the Holy Spirit, the Church

1 Cor 14:12b seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.

1 Cor 14:26b Let all things be done unto edifying.

Eph 4:29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

Heart check:

Are you an encouraging spouse? Friend? Brother/Sister?

Are you faithful?

Are you dependable?

Do you have	peace?	Be peaceable...it is contagious!
	hope?	Be hopeful... “
	joy?	Be joyful... “
	comfort	Be comforting... “
	God's love?	Be loving... “
	courage	Be encouraging... “

3. But I trust in the Lord Jesus...But I trust in the Lord

The only way we will finish well our course and the ministry which we have received of the Lord Jesus to testify the Gospel of the grace of God is:

Trust the Lord Jesus Christ

The en-courage-ment of trusting the Lord Jesus is the First and the Last, the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End of every fruitful ministry

Ps 4:5 Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the LORD.

Ps 115:11 Ye that fear the LORD, trust in the LORD: he *is* their help and their shield.

Ps 118:8 *It is* better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.