
LIKE MINDED FOR SERVICE

As we've been looking at Paul's letter to the Philippian church, he's given us plenty to chew on, plenty to stew over, and plenty to submit to the Lord in, but now that we get to Chapter 2:19, and through the end of the chapter, he's going to give us some prime examples of some men, who love the Lord and the Philippian church, as much as he does. We get a glimpse of the relationship between these co-laborers of Christ, and see their heart for the Lord. Be encouraged and inspired!

Philippians 2:19-30 is our today's text:

"But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly,
so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition.

For I have no one else of kindred spirit
who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare.

For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus.

But you know of his proven worth, that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel
like a child serving his father.

Therefore I hope to send him immediately, as soon as I see how things go with me;

and I trust in the Lord that I myself also will be coming shortly.

But I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus,

my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier,

who is also your messenger and minister to my need;

because he was longing for you all and was distressed

because you had heard that he was sick. For indeed he was sick to the point of death, but

God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me,

so that I would not have sorrow upon sorrow.

Therefore I have sent him all the more eagerly
so that when you see him again you may rejoice
and I may be less concerned about you.

Receive him then in the Lord with all joy, and hold men like him in high regard;
because he came close to death for the work of Christ,
risking his life to complete what was deficient in your service to me." (nasb)

Paul, with great affection, tells of Timothy. **Read through the verses again and underline the way he is described by Paul.** It's a pretty amazing list for a young man.

Now circle the descriptions of Ephaphraditus.

Note that these men are described differently, but both are sold out for the ministry and service of Christ. Both are a benefit to Paul, and both love the church in Philippi.

Paul says there is no one like-minded to him like Timothy is. Let's see what the mind of Paul looks like.

Looking back at Ch. 1 we find out quite a bit about his mindset. Paul considers himself a bondservant of Christ Jesus. You may not have noticed it but this is the only letter that Paul doesn't assert his authority as an "apostle" of Jesus Christ, perhaps because he's commending these believers rather than rebuking them. Perhaps because he's writing to thank them for their gift to him. But his approach to them is as a humble bondservant, one who willfully gives himself to serve the Lord. We see him praying often for the Philippian church because he has such a fond affection for them. We see that even though he's in prison he is joyful, even though some are preaching the gospel specifically to make things harder on him, he is thrilled that at least the gospel is being shared. His mindset is summed up in v. 21, *"to live is Christ, to die is gain"* and here we find him saying Timothy is of the same mind.

We get a bit more insight into the mind of Paul by looking at some of his other letters.

What does it say about Paul in 2 Corinthians 10:1, 11:2:

List some of the things in his "resume" in 11:22-12:10:

It continues on even after, but you get the idea. This is the mindset that he says Timothy has also. Apparently Paul thought very highly of him.

Then we have Epaphraditus. Look again at Philippians 2:25-30 at what you have circled. We know that he had been sent from his home church in Philippi to take a gift to Paul, and once he got there he realized the gift was not enough to really help so he stayed and worked even more to help Paul, making himself sick in the process, even almost dying. Word of his illness had gotten back to Philippi and he wanted to get back to the church to alleviate their fears, also, to return with news from Paul. He loved his church. We see that Paul, also, considers Epaphraditus a fellow soldier.

Read 2 Timothy 2:3-4. This letter was written to Timothy but the principles apply to Epaphraditus, and to us, as well.

So, in looking at the qualities of these men, there are direct correlations we can draw for ourselves as followers of Christ. These men were esteemed because of their commitment not only to Christ, but to the church. Their character revealed much more than being "pew-sitters." Having the mind of Christ, being trained and transformed, these men shone the light of Christ to all around them and worked at accomplishing the plans God had for them, even at their own physical peril, because ultimately, the mindset is "to live is Christ, to die is gain." Are we there yet? If not, don't panic. He who began His work in us will be faithful to complete it.

We look at what is said about these men, and it's quite a list, how do we measure up? - Paul said, there's no one else like minded as him (remember all that entails, but mostly that to live is Christ, to die is gain.)

What about us? Do we have a genuine care and concern for other believers? Do we seek our own way, or the things of Christ? Do we have a proven character (are we a person of integrity?) Do we have a servant heart, that of a bondservant, working to further the gospel? Do we behave as a fellow worker, or fellow soldier? Are we willing to go and serve even at our own personal risk? Do we have a deep concern for others?

I certainly know I fall short in many of these. But we can rejoice that He loves us enough to work on those things in our lives, being thankful that He will be faithful in changing us from "glory to glory" as we engage the mind of Christ, shine the light of Christ, and hold forth the word of life. Who knows, but that we like these men, will have a testimony and legacy of great faithfulness to the Lord. May it be so! Amen and amen!

Do you need to make a personal commitment to Christ to live more with His mindset?
Take that opportunity now, and see what He can do with a little cooperation from you.

My prayer:

REVIEW

Text Philippians 2:19-30

~ We are to be like-minded for service. Philippians 1:21, 2 Corinthians 10:1, 11:2

~ We are to be fellow workers, and work as soldiers. 2 Timothy 2:3-4