

PHILIPPIANS

JOY ON THE JOURNEY

Sermon-Based Study Guide
Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church

Philippians 2.19-30
October 20 & 21, 2012

Prepared by Dr. James Wilson
Jim@gspc.org | 562/493.2553 x112

I. Connecting With One Another

Have you ever known someone who exemplified sincere and genuine concern for you?
What was that person like? How did their concern and care impact you?

II. Introduction to this Study

Paul has encouraged the Philippian Christians to **"conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel... stand firm in one spirit... contending as one for the faith... without being frightened."**

As he continues to describe what this means he points to the attitude of humility – like that of Jesus – and obediently working or living out their faith in Jesus. In doing so, they – and we – “shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life.” What a great image. What a challenging call.

Paul now turns to two men whom he has known, mentored, and been helped by. Timothy is described as having a “genuine concern” for the Philippians. Epaphroditus risked his life to help them and Paul. They are examples for us of having genuine concern for others that leads to caring, serving, and giving ourselves for the sake of others.

III. Study the Text – Philippians 2.19-24

- a. Read Philippians 2.19-24. What things do you learn about Timothy from these verses? Compare verse 21 with Philippians 2.3-4. How would you describe Timothy’s character?
- b. Paul’s relationship with Timothy began in the town of Lystra in Asia Minor (modern day Turkey). Look at Acts 14.6 and 20 to begin the account. It continues in Acts 16.1-6. As you read these verses, what do you learn about Timothy and his faith? Acts 17.14, 18.5, 19.22, 20.4, 1 Corinthians 16.10-11, and 1 Timothy 1.3 tell more about Timothy’s activity and significance to Paul.
- c. Paul says in Philippians 2.20 that Timothy takes a “genuine interest” in you. The Greek word is “merimnao” which can be translated as concern, interest or anxiety. It conveys the idea of having intentness up or striving for something. Look at Matthew 6.25-34, a passage in which this same verb occurs numerous times. What is Jesus warning against in this passage? If we are to not be striving for or concerned or anxious for things that ultimately do not guarantee our well-being or security, for what then, according to Jesus, are we to be concerned? How does Timothy exemplify this kind of concern?
- d. If Timothy were being sent to Good Shepherd what might he do to help us as a community of faith? What are some practical ways we could follow his example?

IV. Study the Text – Philippians 2.25-30

- a. We are now introduced to Epaphroditus who is from Philippi and with Paul in Rome. How is he described? What things did he do on behalf of the Philippians and on behalf of Paul?

- b. Verse 30 mentions that Epaphroditus “risked his life” in order to carry out his task of service. The Greek term is “paraboleusmenos” which means “having gambled with his life.” It conveys a willingness to set aside one’s well-being in order to serve another. In what ways would you compare Epaphroditus to Timothy? How is the “genuine concern” of Timothy and the “risking of life” of Epaphroditus comparable? How are these men an example to you?
- c. Why is Paul sending Epaphroditus back to Philippi? Why is it important to honor people like Epaphroditus (and for that matter, Timothy)?

V. Reflect and Respond

- a. How can you honor those significant Christians in our life who have mentored, encouraged, or had genuine concern for you?
- b. As you think of Timothy’s example, how can you show genuine concern to others? How can you bring your own interests into harmony with the interests of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God?
- c. What is one way you can serve– with genuine concern – the mission of Good Shepherd (which is to make disciples of Jesus Christ), the members/participants of Good Shepherd, the ministries of Good Shepherd, or those served by the ministry partners of Good Shepherd?
- d. Would you be willing, like Epaphroditus, to give away yourself – your time, your abilities, your money, your convenience – in order to mentor, encourage, and serve others?

VI. Pray

Please pray:

- a. For our pastors, staff, and elders - those God has called to lead Good Shepherd - that they might have a genuine concern for this congregation, for fulfilling our mission, for enabling people to become Jesus’ disciples who connect with God, grow in faith, and serve in love.
- b. For one another, for our church, and the witness of the larger Church, that our attitude would be that of Jesus – humility, concern for the interests of others, and a willingness to give ourselves away in holding out the word of life in word and deed.
- c. For yourself, that God will continue to give you the heart of a servant.