

February 8th, 2023- Wednesday night.

Safe Harbor Baptist Church

Pastor Josh Montgomery

“Laborers together with God”

Philippians 2:19-30

Introduction:

The work of God is not meant to be a “solo endeavor”.

The mistake of many Pastors is they attempt to accomplish the work of God by themselves, thus leading to frustration, burnout and eventually quitting altogether.

One cannot do everything that needs to be done. We must labor together in the work of the LORD.

Paul dealt with the Church at Corinth about the different jobs that we as believers have in the body of Christ.

I Corinthians 3:6-9 *I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.*

7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

*9 For **we are labourers together with God**: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.*

Within the context of the verses that we have selected for a text we find 3 different men that are mentioned.

Each one of them was important and vital to the Work of God there at Philippi.

End of Introduction:

I. The ***Selfless Desire*** of Paul. **Vs 19 & Vs 24**

Obviously, we know that the Apostle Paul is in this context. He of course was used by God to start this Church at Philippi back in Acts 16.

Even though Paul was only at Philippi about 3 months, he had a great love and passion for this group of believers.

We note his Desire in 2 areas.

1. To be ***Present*** with the ***Congregation***. Vs 24

“But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly.”

Paul states his Passion and desire to be reunited with these believers at Philippi.

We must remind ourselves that Paul is in prison in Rome when he writes this Epistle.

Paul is not expressing Human optimism in this text, but rather he was expressing his faith in the LORD that God was able in deed to open the prison (if that would be God’s will) and allow him to go back to minister at Philippi.

Point: There is just something special about congregating with the people of God!

2. To have Perception of their Condition. Vs 19

“But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state.”

Paul is in prison. He is in the lower dungeon. No lights, no food, no modern comforts. No bed. No blanket. No medical care.....But yet he is concerned with the spiritual well-being of the congregation of the church of Philippi.

Turns out that Paul was a real deal Man of God who actually loved the LORD, loved the Church and loved the people to whom he ministered.

What a selfless act on the part of the Apostle Paul that through all his difficulties and trials he was concerned and cared about others.

This is why the book of Philippians has been called the “Joy” epistle.

Joy- 6 times in Philippians

Rejoice- 9 times in Philippians

Jesus

Others

Yourself

II. The Spiritual Description of Timothy. Vs 19-23

1. Timothy’s Conversion.

I Timothy 1:2 *Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.*

It is commonly agreed that Timothy was a convert of the Apostle Paul’s ministry during Paul’s first missionary journey visit to Lystra and Iconium.

Some even teach that after Paul was stoned and left for dead that he recovered in the home of Timothy’s mother. (No scripture to prove that).

We do know that Paul had a great impact on this young man Timothy.

2. Timothy's *Contentment*. Vs 19

"But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you,"

I use the word "Contentment" because Paul said that he desired to "send" Timothy to them.

Who gets sent? Servants!

In Luke 7 Jesus is called upon to heal the Centurions servant. As Jesus is making his way to his home this centurion sent word to Jesus.

Luke 7:6:8 Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof:

7 Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.

8 For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

The primary interpretation of that text is about faith. But I want us to see the principle that part of a servant's job description is to be "sent".

Timothy did not mind going where he was sent, because he accepted the fact that he was a servant!

3. Timothy's *Connection*. Vs 20a

"For I have no man likeminded,"

This word "Likeminded" means equal in soul.

In other words, Paul and Timothy were not just on the "same page" that were in the same sentence!

They were connected and joined together for the cause of Christ and the work of the ministry!

*Acts 2:46 And they, continuing daily with **one accord** in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and **singleness of heart**,*

*Acts 4:32 And the multitude of them that believed were of **one heart and of one soul**: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.*

What made the early Church so great? They were in unity!

Illustration: The Church is the body of Christ. The body must have unity, if work and task are going to be accomplished.

4. Timothy's *Care*. Vs 20b

"who will naturally care for your state."

This word "Care" means to look after or to provide for.

Paul states that he is confident that Timothy will take care and look after the Church at Philippi just like Paul would if he was there!

5. Timothy's *Character*. Vs 21

"For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's."

We have already stated that Paul was a selfless man. But he is an older, mature Preacher, thus we would expect that of him.

But here is this young preacher of the Gospel in Timothy, that Paul deems to be selfless and has one desire and one goal and that was to fulfill the will of God and glorify Jesus Christ.

6. Timothy's *Commitment*. Vs 22-23

"But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel."

23 Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me."

Timothy had proven his character and his commitment, not just to the Apostle Paul but also to the congregation at Philippi.

III. The Stated Dedication of Epaphroditus. Vs 25-30

We of course are very familiar with the Apostle Paul. We know his testimony, his conversion and his many exploits for God's glory.

We also know a good bit of background on Timothy.

But this man Epaphroditus is a man that we do not know much about, but Paul gives a wonderful description of this man's character and integrity.

Epaphroditus was a member of the church at Philippi and was sent by the Church to Rome, to where Paul was in prison for the purpose of delivering a love offering that the church had received to be a blessing to Paul.

Paul gives us some great details about this man in these verses.

1. His *Salvation*. Vs 25a

"Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother,"

This term “Brother” is of course a family term which refers and speaks of the fact that Epaphroditus was a believer in the LORD Jesus Christ.

2. His *Steadfastness*. Vs 25b

“and companion in labour,”

Paul states that he had been laboring with him in the Gospel ministry.

We do not know to what extent this refers to being that Paul was in prison, but somehow and somehow he was laboring in the Gospel.

3. His *Soldiering*. Vs 25c

“and fellowsoldier,”

Everyone knows Paul. Not many know Epaphroditus.

But Paul states that this man is a fellow soldier!

Meaning we are in this thing together! No bigshots and not little shots!

4. His *Submission*. Vs 25d

“but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.”

Just as Timothy was willing to be sent, and be submitted to the work of the LORD, Epaphroditus had these same character traits.

5. His *Sickness*. Vs 26

“For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick.”

Somewhere along the way in his journey to be a blessing to Paul, Epaphroditus fell sick.

He became full of heaviness which means full of anguish and distress. Why? Because he concerned that his family and friends back home would worry about him.

He just like Paul and Timothy was a “**Selfless**” man!

6. His *Sustaining*. Vs 27

“For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.”

Through God’s mercy and grace Epaphroditus was touched by the hand of God and recovered from his sickness.

Point: This once again proves that the Apostolic gifts of healing had ceased, because Paul did not heal Epaphroditus.

7. His *Service*. Vs 28-30

A. The Return.

“I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful.”

Paul was going to send Epaphroditus back to Philippi. He hated to do so but he knew that was the right thing to do for the state and well-being of the Church.

B. The Request.

29 Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation:

He instructed the Church to Receive him with all gladness.

“Hold such in reputation” – Honored- Prized- Precious.

People that are faithful and labor in the work of God are a prized and precious treasure that should be honored.

C. The Reason.

30 Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.”

Paul said “Honor him” because he was willing to lay down his life for minister to my needs, and for the furtherance of the Gospel ministry!

Conclusion:

We are Laborers together with God!

These 3 men had many things in common, but one thing that kept coming up over and over again in this study is the fact that all 3 of these men were selfless men!

Men who Loved God, Loved others, Loved the Church and wanted to be a blessing!

May God help us to live our lives in such a way that pleases God!