

In High Definition, Part 1
Philippians 2:19-30
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I don't know if your house is like mine or not, but it seems like I spend half of my time sorting through junk mail to distinguish what's really important that I need to deal with. And I've noticed recently both through the direct mail and in various other ways, there seems to be a sort of campaign out to sell us on something that many of us don't yet have and that is high definition television - absolutely being bombarded with ads. The best I can make out, you'll now be able to see how bad television has gotten in more clear and vivid detail.

As I thought about that (and over the last couple of weeks, I was thinking about Christian biography), it occurred to me that in a sense, Christian biography is God's truth in high definition. Often in Scripture, God will communicate His truth, and then He'll step back and give us a clear, living, breathing, flesh and blood example so that we can see that truth in clear and vivid detail.

I think one of the best illustrations of this is Hebrews 11. You know, you're going through Hebrews and you're learning all of the reality and richness about the person of Jesus Christ and all that He has brought to us in the new covenant. And then, you arrive at a point where there's a point of decision. This is how you should be, this is what you should pursue. You should exercise faith in the risen Christ and you get to chapter 11. And the writer of Hebrews steps back and gives us, as it were, a string of Christian biographies as a sort of living, breathing example of the truth that he's presenting - that we should in faith follow Christ regardless of how it seems to us or regardless of what those around us should think.

You see, having a model to follow can provide a powerful spiritual influence. We all understand that. I mean, many of us follow the example of some spiritual mentor, some person who had a great impact on our lives. Personally, I have been greatly influenced by three people I guess I could say. One is my father who's now with the Lord. The second is John MacArthur, with whom I had the privilege of serving for I guess almost sixteen years. And the third is a man whose, whom I never met, but a man whose influence is very real in my life and that's Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones. All of us can look at those who have directed our lives as we've seen and observed their example.

I can't emphasize enough to you how strongly I would urge you to read Christian biography. You see, as you read Christian biography, it lets you see the Christian life through the joys and

sorrows of others, and it helps us to see ourselves more clearly. Recently, my wife and I have begun to read together a new biography of Jonathan Edwards written by a man by the name of George Marsden. We're several chapters in and so far, I would highly recommend it to you.

But as we read that biography, it's fascinating to see the struggle that he experienced early in his life. You know, Jonathan Edwards was one of our country's greatest theologians and yet, to see the life of the Christian working its way out through, through his experience is fascinating and encouraging to all of us. For example, in his early diary, this great father of American Christianity writes this:

When I look into my heart and take a view of my wickedness, it looks like an abyss infinitely deeper than hell [you ever felt that way about your own heart?] It is affecting to me to think how ignorant I was when I was a young Christian of the bottomless, infinite depths of wickedness, pride, hypocrisy and deceit left in my heart.

He goes on to describe how there were times when he had such a high spiritually that he was, as it were, lifted into the very presence of God. You see, both the valleys and the mountain peaks in the lives of other Christians help us learn how to travel well in our own Christian lives. That's the power of example.

When we come to Philippians 2 and the next passage that's before us, verses 19 - 30, at first glance it doesn't seem to fit. I mean, it just seems to be popped in by the apostle Paul and not to fit the flow of his argument, but in reality, it fits very well. You see, Paul has just explained how to live the Christian life by being preoccupied with Christ and the gospel and by sacrificing ourselves to care about the interests of others, how to pursue our own sanctification. This whole section begins in chapter 1, verse 27 where he says I want you to learn to "conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ". He says, "I want you to live like citizens of heaven worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ."

So he's laid out the teaching, but to bring the truth that he's taught into high definition, Paul illustrates it with real people. He starts with Christ in verse 5 of chapter 2, and he uses the life of Christ as an example of how we ought to give ourselves to others. Then he includes himself, verse 17. He refers to his work and service as if he were a drink offering, that wine or oil poured on top of a completed sacrifice to complete it. Then he uses Timothy in verses 19 - 23 and he lets us see what a Christian looks like in real color, in high definition, as we look at this man Timothy. And then Epaphroditus, beginning in verse 24 through the end of the chapter.

You see, Paul's aim is to give us clear Christian examples that we who are less experienced can follow because we will follow some example. And if we're not directed to the right examples, we're likely to follow poor or misleading examples, even dangerous examples. And so, Paul says, "Here's the truth lived out. Let me show you what this looks like in real life."

Let's read it together. You follow along. Philippians 2:19. Paul writes:

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 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....

Now remember when Paul dictates this letter, he's bound to a Roman guard in his own rented quarters. Timothy is with him. In fact, in 1:1, he reminds the Philippians that Timothy is in fact part of his cohort at this time as he writes this letter. So as Paul writes these words about Timothy, he intends not simply the Philippians to hear them, but for Timothy as well. There's a lesson here for us. You know, I often hear people in the church say something encouraging or positive about a brother or sister in Christ. And as soon as they say it, they say, "But don't tell him because I don't want him to become proud" or "I don't want her to be big-headed about it." That's not how Paul thought. He lays out, he seizes the moment of this letter to wax eloquent about his dear friend in the faith, Timothy.

Let me briefly remind you about Timothy since we're going to be looking at him this morning. He was a native of Lystra in Galatia. That's modern Turkey. He had a mother named Eunice and a grandmother named Lois. They were both believers according to 2 Timothy 1:5. They taught him the Old Testament Scriptures very well in his youth according to 2 Timothy 3:15. Paul came to town probably on his first missionary journey in Acts 14. Paul came to Lystra and apparently Timothy responded to the ministry of Paul because Paul often refers to him as he does in 2, or excuse me, in 1 Timothy 1:2 as his "true child in the faith". So apparently, Timothy came to faith as Paul ministered the gospel there in Lystra in Acts 14.

Timothy's father was not a believer. Timothy's father was a Greek. And because he didn't circumcise Timothy, and for several other reasons, because he's not mentioned anywhere else in the New Testament, there's reason to believe that Timothy's father was probably a pagan. He

was a Greek who was interested in his young son learning the ways of the Greeks, being educated in the culture and knowledge of the Greeks. That was the environment in which Timothy was raised.

By the time Paul came back to Philippi on his second missionary journey now in Acts 16, Timothy has already (as a young believer) caught the eye of other believers. They see him already as a faithful young man worthy of commendation, having a good reputation. And so in verse 3 of Acts 16, Paul decides to take this young man with him on his second, the rest of his second missionary journey. That was about ten years before Paul wrote this letter back to the Philippians. So for ten years, Timothy has served alongside Paul. Timothy is probably in his early to mid-thirties at this point.

And in Philippians 2:19 - 23, Paul lays out and explains for us the qualities that make Timothy so valuable to him. And in the process, he gives us the qualities of an excellent servant. He gives us the target that we should all aim at. You see, many of us would have loved to have served with the apostle Paul. You want to ask yourself, “How could that have happened? What kind of man, what kind of woman was Paul looking for?” You see it in the qualities laid out as he describes Timothy. The question today is what kind of man, what kind of woman is God looking for as the right kind of servant to serve Him, and the qualities are laid out here in these verses.

So let’s look at them together. Notice verse 19. Paul says: “... I hope [remember the Greek word has the idea of eager certainty] in the Lord Jesus [that is, as the Lord wills and permits] to send Timothy to you shortly....” Why? Why was it important for Timothy to go to Philippi? Well, there are two reasons given.

The first is in verse 19. Paul wanted to learn of their condition and be encouraged by that. He expected a good report about the church in Philippi, and he was after some good news.

But there’s a second reason. Notice verse 23: “.... I hope to send him immediately, as soon as I see how things *go* with me.” Paul wanted the Philippians to know the outcome of his circumstances. He’s probably referring to the verdict that would come back regarding his trial. So he’s going to send Timothy to communicate that as soon as the outcome is known. He expected to be released, but as soon as he knows for sure, he’ll send Timothy to report to them.

What follows verse 19 as he says, “I’m going to send Timothy” are the reasons why. It’s a brief list of the qualities that made Timothy such a valuable asset to Paul. These are the qualities that God prizes in a servant. Let’s look at them together.

The first is found at the beginning of verse 20: a biblical mindset. The first quality is a biblical mindset. Notice “I have no one else of kindred spirit”. Now when Paul says, “I have no one *else*”, he isn’t saying that every partner he ever had in ministry is absolutely worthless except for Timothy. Paul was always sending his valuable men away. In fact, notice in 2 Timothy during his second imprisonment, 2 Timothy 4:10, after he mentions verse 9, that he wants Timothy to come soon to see him in Rome, he mentions that Demas deserted him. But then notice he goes through a list of men that are valuable to him. In verse 10, he says: “Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus (I’ve sent) to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Pick up Mark (where he’s ministering) and bring him, for he’s useful for service. But Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus.” So Paul was often using the men God had entrusted to him as chess pieces, as it were, as he saw the kingdom of God advancing, and he would move them to various places.

Before Paul wrote Philippians, Luke and Aristarchus had been with him in Rome according to Colossians 4 and Philemon 24, but they were apparently no longer there. He had sent them off into some sort of ministry. So, when you read Philippians 2:20 says: “I have no one else of kindred spirit”, it doesn’t include those faithful servants whom Paul has already sent off to some other place. Simply “no one else” points up the reality that this kind of servant is hard to find. Paul only had a few and at this point in Rome, he only has one left, and it’s Timothy.

In a small way, I’ve experienced this myself. When I was at Grace Church, occasionally we’d have the need to bring a new pastoral staff member onboard. And, you know, on Sunday ten thousand attended, and we had three hundred men in the seminary. And yet, when we sat down to make a list of those whom we wanted to see move into the, the next position that had become open for ministry, often that list was really short. And I remember I was often discouraged by that until my father-in-law reminded me of this verse.

You see, even the apostle Paul wasn’t surrounded with dozens of dependable and faithful men ready to step in at any time. There were only a few men in his entire thirty year ministry whom he would have described this way. As I prepared this message, I found myself often praying that someday I and the other leaders of this church would be able to say that we have a few young men in this church who fit the characteristics and qualities of Timothy.

Notice what Paul says about him – “kindred spirit”, no one else has a kindred spirit. Literally, the Greek says “equal-souled”. “I have no one else who has an equal soul.” In other words, Timothy thinks like I think. He responds like I do. He knows me. Second Timothy 3:10, you understand why that’s true. Paul says this to Timothy in verse 10 of chapter 3: Now you have followed my teaching, my conduct, my purpose (that is, the goals for which I live), my faith, my patience, my

love, my perseverance (and you've even observed) my persecutions, *and* my sufferings. He says, "Listen. Timothy, you know me, you've seen me, you've followed me." Timothy learned to have a kindred spirit, how to be of equal soul with Paul as he was with Paul, as he watched him preach, as he watched him serve, as he watched him live, as he sat over the table and had meals with him, as he travelled with him, as he had long conversations together.

The result is expected. First Corinthians 4:17. Because of all of that interaction, Paul says this of Timothy in 1 Corinthians 4:17, "For this reason I have sent ... you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord [watch what he says next] ... he will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, just as I teach everywhere in every church." He says, Listen, Timothy knows how I would handle every situation. He knows what I would say because he's been with me, he's observed me. He's of equal soul. He's a kindred spirit. You see, that is the goal of spiritual discipleship.

You remember what Christ said in Luke 6:40? He said: "A pupil is not above his teacher; ... [in fact] everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher." That was true of Timothy. Timothy was like Paul. He was equal-souled with him. He was a kindred spirit. He thought like Paul thought. You see, as Timothy lived with, travelled with, and ministered with Paul, he became a kindred spirit.

So, how can we become a kindred spirit with Paul? By living in the letters he wrote. To follow Timothy's example, we need to learn to think like Paul. We need to learn to follow and do and act and behave and think the way Paul would. And we do that in the pages of Scripture. To be excellent servants like Timothy, we must have a biblical mindset. And to have a biblical mindset to think like Paul, we have to be in this book, we have to master this book. If you want to be the kind of servant God can use, you have to know your Bible.

One of my favorite former theologians and teachers is a man by the name of John Broadus. It was in the winter of 1895 that John Broadus gathered together his class. He taught seminary in Southern Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. He ended up through his ministry producing one of the greatest commentaries on Matthew that's ever been written. He also wrote a textbook on homiletics that is still the standard in many seminaries across the world. But he stood that cold winter morning in 1895 to teach what would be his last class in English Bible. One of his students recorded the scene. He wrote this about what Broadus said: "Young gentlemen, if this were the last time I should ever be permitted to address you, I would feel amply repaid for consuming the whole hour in endeavoring to impress upon you these two things - true piety, and like Apollos, to be men mighty in the Scriptures."

The student goes on. He says: “Then pausing, Broadus stood for a moment with his piercing eye fixed upon us, and he repeated over and over again in that slow, but wonderfully impressive style peculiar to himself, “Mighty in the Scriptures,” “Mighty in the Scriptures”, until the whole class seemed to be lifted through him into a sacred nearness to the Master. That picture of him as he stood there at that moment can never be obliterated from my mind.” You want to be a servant God can use, then, like Apollos, you must be mighty in the Scriptures.

There’s a second quality of an excellent servant that Paul identifies here of Timothy: not only a man with a biblical mindset, but a genuine concern for people, a genuine concern for people. Notice the second part of verse 20. He says: “I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare.” The word “concerned” is an interesting Greek word. It’s often translated negatively. For example, in the famous verse over in Philippians 4:6 where it says, “be anxious for nothing”. The Greek word translated “anxious” is the same word as “concerned” in chapter 2. In Matthew 6, you remember when Christ teaches that we shouldn’t worry about what we’re going to eat or what we’re going to put on? He uses the same word – to be concerned, to give care to.

But this word is also used positively in the New Testament of a deep care and concern for people. Notice 1 Corinthians 12. First Corinthians 12, this word is used, verse 25, as Paul deals with the issue of spiritual gifts and the, the diversity is there for a reason, he says, verse 24. Verse 25: “so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another.” That word “care” is our same Greek word as to be anxious, to worry or to be concerned, to exercise care for people.

In 2 Corinthians 11:28, Paul uses this same word in that familiar expression when he talks about “the daily pressure on him of concern for all the churches”. You see, a person who is the right kind of servant, the kind of person that God will use, is a person who has a genuine concern for others. There is a form of anxiety that is a biblical anxiety and that is a genuine concern to see Christ formed in others, and Paul had that. D.A. Carson writes this:

Be on the alert for the Christians who really do exemplify this basic Christian attitude, this habit of helpfulness. They are never the sort who strut their way into leadership with inflated estimates of their own importance. They are the kind who cheerfully pick up after other people. They are not offended if no one asks about them. They are too busy asking about others.

Notice Paul adds, he says they'll do it, they'll care. Timothy will care for you "genuinely". Why does he include the word "genuinely"? Because there are some people who care for others with all the wrong motives. They do it because it's their assignment, it's their duty. The word "genuinely" was originally used to describe a legitimate child. And it came to mean a person who's genuine, a person who's the real thing, a person who is what he seems to be. Paul says Timothy will genuinely care about you.

You see, there are some people who serve and minister for what they can get out of it. They do it like hirelings. They're paid to do it. Oh, I don't mean paid in money necessarily, but there are people who serve other people because they're paid in prestige and honor and reputation and that's their concern, that's why they care for people. Christ highlights this wrong attitude I think in John 10, you remember, when He's talking about Himself as the good shepherd. He talks about those who don't serve for the right reasons. He says in verse 11 of John 10:

I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep [but then He contrasts Himself, a good true shepherd, with a hired hand]. He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, he sees the wolf coming, and he leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters *them*. *He flees* because he's a hired hand and ... [he's] not concerned about the sheep.

He's only concerned for what he gets out of it. Paul says, "Listen, Timothy serves not for what he gets out of it, but he cares genuinely about you."

In 1 Thessalonians 2:6 Paul describes the character of his ministry to the people in Thessalonica and I love what he says. He says, "[Listen],

... as apostles of Christ we might have asserted our authority. But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing *mother* tenderly cares for her own children."
[There's a model for ministry – as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children. He says:] "... we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but our own lives also, because you had become very dear to us." [Listen, true servants – pastors, laymen, whoever it is – true servants always have a tenderness and compassion for people.]

Do you really care about people? Do you reach out to people? Do you express this kind of care and concern for them? Is there a genuineness from your heart, interest in the needs and concerns of others? Listen, you can start by caring for them physically. You remember what the apostle

John said in 1 John 3. He said, “What if you have this world’s goods (that is, you have the stuff that’s required to live in this world), you see your brother has needs, and you withhold it from him?” He says, “How dwells the love of God in you?” So, I’d encourage you to start by just noticing the needs of people around you. Fix somebody a meal. Fix their vehicle if it isn’t working. Give to the benevolence fund here at the church to support those who have need. Slip some money in somebody’s pocket who you know has a need. Start with physical needs, but then move beyond that. Are you available in times of need like when they’re in the hospital, or when they’re going through a tragedy in their life, perhaps a death of a loved one? Are you available? Do you express care in those times?

You know, we often criticize Job’s friends (and well we should as God did at the end of the book), but Job’s friends did something right. You ever remember reading in Job 2, I think it’s verse 13, where, where it records the fact that when all of that disaster fell on Job, you know what his friends did? They came and for seven days and seven nights they sat with Job and said nothing. They were there. They exercised care and concern for Job. Yeah, their advice was bad. They had a flawed theology. But their hearts were to care and concern for Job.

Do you pray for others? I mean, do you genuinely pray for them? Do you pray that God would help them to grow spiritually? Do you pray for what you know they’re going through? Do you take it upon yourself to pray for something other than your own concerns, your own needs? Christ put it pretty starkly in John 13:35 when He said, “By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” You want to be a valuable servant of Jesus Christ? Be genuinely concerned about people.

Paul identifies a third quality. Notice verse 21. It’s a selfless devotion to Christ, a selfless devotion to Christ. Verse 21 says: “For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus.” Now who are these people? Those are pretty harsh words from the apostle. These are professing Christians in Rome whom Paul had considered sending with the letter to Philippi, but decided that they weren’t up to the task. We’ve already met some pretty troubled people in Philippi. Remember in Philippians 1:15, Paul said that there in Rome where he was in prison there were some “preaching Christ even from envy and strife”. Verse 17, they were “proclaiming Christ out of selfish ambition rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment.”

Rome was a tough place to find people to serve. Later, when Paul was in prison the second time, you remember in 2 Timothy 4, he says this in verse 16: “At my first defense no one supported me, but all deserted me; may it not be counted against them.” It’s a tough place to get support.

It's a tough place to have people that would genuinely care for others and that would not be consumed only with their own interest. That's the issue. Notice what he says in verse 21: "they all seek their own interests". Now "their own interests" doesn't necessarily mean sinful pursuits. Literally, the Greek text says this: "for all are seeking their own things". That's exactly what it says – "all are seeking their own things". To seek describes an orientation of the will. It's synonymous here with "being concerned about" in verse 20. So these people in Rome were worried about, they were concerned with, pursuing their own things – that is, their own personal responsibilities, their own desires, living their own lives. They were choosing to put their own pursuits, that is, the things of this life, ahead of their devotion to Jesus Christ. Essentially, they were being self-centered. John Calvin writes, "They were so warm in pursuing their own interests that they were cold in the work of the Lord."

Now it wasn't that Timothy didn't have anything else to do, that he didn't have any personal responsibilities or obligations. He had a family. He needed to make a living. There were issues of life that he needed to deal with just as you and I do. He was a normal young man. But rather than follow the normal course of putting his own personal interests ahead of everything else, he practiced self-denial for the sake of Christ.

You know, this is absolutely contrary to the culture in which we live. In fact, it sounds almost radical to say this, but the Scripture everywhere says that you and I are not to live for ourselves. Let me show you several texts. Turn with me to 1 Corinthians 10, 1 Corinthians 10. Paul is dealing with the issue of controversial things, those things that are debated and issues of conscience and he says this in verse 24: "Let no one seek his own things, but that of his neighbor." "Let no one seek (as the translators have it here) his own *good*, but that of his neighbor." Verse 33: "just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit but the profit of the many, so that they may be saved." Listen. Paul says, let me tell you who to live for. Don't you dare live for yourselves. You live for other fellow Christians, and you live for those who are lost to see them come to faith in Jesus Christ. That's why you live.

In chapter 13, Paul is telling us we're commanded everywhere to love, to love everyone we come in contact with, to love those who are in our house, to love those who are in our church, to love those whom we sovereignly bump into. We're to love everybody, even our enemies. And notice what love does in 1 Corinthians 13:5, "love does not seek its own things". Love doesn't live for itself. Love isn't after what it can get.

But I think this is put most definitively in 2 Corinthians 5, 2 Corinthians 5:14. Paul says, "For the love of Christ controls us [that is, Christ's love for me, my knowledge of Christ's love for me

controls ... [me],] having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died....” You know what Paul is saying? He’s saying, “When I think about the reality of what Christ has done for me, it moves me, it motivates me, it dominates me to live a certain way.” Listen, if you’re here this morning, and you enjoy forgiveness in Jesus Christ, if you’re a believer, if you have the hope of heaven, Paul says here’s the way you ought to live.

Verse 15, here’s the conclusion: “[If] ... He died for all [if you enjoy that], ... [those] who live might no longer live for themselves.” Notice he says “no longer”. Why does he include that? Because that’s how most people live. That’s how unbelievers live. They live for themselves. Paul says, “Not us. If we have understood, if we’ve come to know the love of Christ, we no longer live for ourselves,” “but we live for Him who died and rose again on our behalf.” You and I must live selflessly devoted to Jesus Christ. We don’t live for ourselves. We don’t make decisions for what advances ourselves and our own personal agenda.

I think one of the greatest examples in church history is a man by the name of David Livingstone. David Livingstone lost his wife. He lost his health. And eventually, he lost his own life bringing the gospel to the interior of Africa. It was at 4 a.m. on May 1st, 1873 that his friend stumbled into his tent to find him dead, kneeling beside his bed. He had literally died in prayer. David Livingstone was a man of prayer. You may have heard his most famous prayer. It was this: “Lord, send me anywhere, only go with me. Lay any burden on me, only sustain me. Sever any tie but the tie that binds me to Your service and to Your heart.” That is selfless devotion to Jesus Christ.

Can you from the bottom of your heart genuinely before the Lord this morning pray that prayer? Can you say, “Lord, send me anywhere as long as You go with me. Lay any burden on me, any trouble, any trial that You see fit in Your providence. Lord, lay that burden on me, only sustain me. Sever any tie except the tie that binds me to Your heart.” That’s what it means to be selflessly devoted to Jesus Christ and Timothy had that quality and you and I should pursue it as well.

There’s a fourth quality: (beginning of verse 22) we’ll call it a pattern of faithfulness, a pattern of faithfulness. Paul writes: “But you know of his proven worth.” The word “proven worth” is literally “proven character”. It’s a difficult word to translate into English. It comes from a verb which means “to test”. So the best way to translate it is probably this: it’s the quality of having stood the test, of having been approved. As one writer describes it, it’s the temper of the veteran as opposed to the raw recruit. Timothy was a veteran. He had been with Paul and served by his side for ten years. He had proven himself utterly faithful.

Remember, Timothy left home with Paul in Acts 16. When we look at the New Testament, we find that Timothy was with Paul when Paul wrote Romans, 2 Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Philemon. And then Paul often sent Timothy away. He sent Timothy as his emissary, his troubleshooter, to Corinth, to Thessalonica, to Ephesus and soon he's going to send him to Philippi. Paul had seen Timothy and Timothy had proven himself to Paul over ten years' time.

But notice he says also in chapter 2: "you know", "you know of his proven character". You see, Timothy was present in Philippi when the church was first founded. Paul picked up Timothy in Acts 16:3 and at the end of chapter 16 is when the church of Philippi was founded. Timothy was there. In fact, that was his first ministry was seeing the church born. In addition, Timothy had gone back several times over that ten-year period so we can see it throughout the New Testament. There are several references to that. So, the people in Philippi knew Timothy, and they knew he was faithful, dependable.

And you know what I love about Timothy? He also ended life with that same reputation. You know, there was some fear at one time in the apostle's mind I think that Timothy might defect, that he might, because of his timidity and lack of courage, not stand for Christ. He writes 2 Timothy as Paul's about to be put to death, and he says, "Timothy, let me remind you God hasn't given us the spirit of timidity and fear, but of power and of sound mind." I think Paul was concerned about Timothy. But Timothy ended well. In Hebrews 13:23, the writer of Hebrews says, "our brother Timothy has been released". The implication is he went, he was faithful, and he ended up being imprisoned for his faith, and now he's being released. He was faithful.

When people think of you, do they think of someone who's dependable, who's faithful? Or do you have the reputation of jumping from church to church, from ministry to ministry, sort of showing up when it works for you? You know, I don't think we realize how important faithfulness is to God. Let me show you a couple of passages that make that point very clearly. Hosea 4, Hosea 4. The prophet writes this in verse 1. He says: "Listen to the word of the Lord, O sons of Israel, for the Lord has a case against the inhabitants of the land." In other words, God has a court case. The Hebrew word is an indictment if you will. Here it is. "There is no faithfulness ... in the land." There's no dependability. There's no reliability.

In case we doubt that that's what God intends, notice the words of Christ in Matthew 23:23. Matthew 23:23, He's talking to the, the Pharisees. He's delivering His woes against the Pharisees and the scribes. And He says in verse 23 of Matthew 23: "you tithe mint and dill and cummin". Those are herbs. He says, listen, you're so fastidious that you tithe herbs. I don't think the

deacons have ever found any herbs in the slot in the back wall, and don't start now, please. But that's how meticulous they were. But notice what He says: "justice and mercy", or, let me back up. He says you tithe those things and you "have neglected the weightier provisions of the law". Notice what Christ is doing. He's saying, "Tithing (tithing) herbs is not that important. Yes, it was required by the law. You need to do it and you do that, but you've neglected the things that really matter."

What are the things that really matter in the mind of God? Christ says: "justice [we understand that], mercy, [boy, there's another important quality, but then He adds] and faithfulness." God says, Faithfulness, dependability, reliability is one of the weightier matters of the law. In fact, when you get to Galatians 5:22, part of the fruit of the Spirit is faithfulness. And Timothy had it. He had a pattern of faithfulness. And you and I must pursue that as well. Ask yourself how you're known.

There's a fifth quality of an excellent servant (middle of verse 22, he says), "you know of his proven worth, that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel." "He served with me" – literally, he worked like a slave. What comes next is a little surprising. He says, "with me", not "for me". You see, you see in this expression Paul's humility and Timothy's value. Timothy, he says, served alongside me as a brother in my ministry. What was Paul's ministry? Well, he tells us in 2 Corinthians 5:18. He says it's the ministry of reconciliation. It's the message and ministry of the fact that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. It's the ministry of the good news of Jesus Christ, and Timothy ministered the gospel. The fifth quality of an excellent servant is: a passion for evangelism, a passion for evangelism. Timothy had it. Notice 2 Corinthians 1, 2 Corinthians 1:19. Paul says to the Corinthians: "For the Son of God, Christ Jesus, was preached among you by us – (that is) by me and Silvanus and Timothy." Timothy was a minister of the gospel. He cared about the truth of the good news.

First Thessalonians 3:2, Paul says, "we sent Timothy, our brother and God's fellow worker in the gospel of Christ." What a title, God's fellow worker in the gospel of Christ. That was Timothy. Near the end of Paul's life, he reminded Timothy of this important part of Timothy's life and ministry. You remember in 2 Timothy 4:5 as Paul's about to be put to death, he says, "Timothy, son, listen. Let me remind you: 'do the work of an evangelist.'"

Do you have a passion for evangelism? You ever think about the people around you as living under God's wrath? Do you ever pray for the salvation of anyone? When's the last time you spoke to someone about the gospel? You ever pass out tracts? You ever give a book to somebody you had a conversation with that shares the gospel? You ever invited over, a neighbor over solely

to build a relationship with them so you can share the gospel with them? Have you recently invited someone to a home fellowship or a men's or women's study or here to the worship services in order to expose them to spiritual truth and spiritual people so that you could see them come to faith in Christ? Do you care? Listen, if you're going to be a servant that God values, then, like Timothy, you must develop a passion for evangelism.

The final quality of a valuable servant is found in the end of verse 22. He says, "Timothy served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child serving his father." The final quality we see here is: a humble spirit, a humble spirit. You see, this metaphor of a child serving his father is intended to point out Timothy's attitude. This is the way in which he served. The image is of a son in the ancient world who was going to work alongside his father and learn the family business. He had to give up all of his personal dreams and ambitions and work with his father in the family company.

In the same way, Timothy had to give up any personal plans he may have had for his life. He was a young man with a great deal of potential, and yet, he committed himself to serve the Lord alongside Paul, serving Paul as if Paul was his spiritual father which he was. Remember what Timothy left. Timothy left his family. He left his home. He left his hometown. Best we can determine from the records of Scripture, he never married, he never had children, he never enjoyed the joys of family life. He repudiated all personal agendas. He was willing to go when Paul sent him. He was willing to be left behind when Paul left him. He's sitting on the ready in Rome next to his spiritual father ready to leave him in prison at any time to go to Philippi to deliver news to these people. For Timothy, being available to the Lord was being available to Paul. Wherever he went, it was entirely Paul's decision. He had great personal potential, yet he gladly identified himself with and served the apostle Paul.

You say, "Well yeah, who wouldn't? I mean, if I had the opportunity to serve with Paul, wow! What a wonderful privilege!" Well, it's easy for us to say that today since half of the world now holds Paul up as a wonderful person. But that isn't how it was in Paul's time. Listen to how Paul describes himself in 1 Corinthians 4. Here's what you would have been joining. Here's what Timothy joined, 1 Corinthians 4:9, he says,

... I think God has exhibited us apostles last of all [that is, He has displayed, put us on display last of all], as men condemned to death [we're like sentenced criminals]; ... we have become a spectacle to the world. [Verse 10] We are fools ... we are weak ... we are without honor. [Verse 11] ... we are ... hungry ... thirsty ... poorly clothed ... roughly treated ... homeless. [Verse 12] ... we toil ...

we are reviled ... we are persecuted. [Verse 13] ... we are slandered ... we have become as the scum of the world, the dregs of all things....

That's what Timothy joined. That's who he connected himself to, somebody that was thought of as the scum of the world.

In fact, in another place Paul describes himself as a clay pot meant for the worst uses in the household. As my mentor likes to say, Paul basically said, "I'm just a privy pot with the truth of the gospel as a treasure inside." That's how Timothy thought of himself. That's why he could connect himself to a man who was thought of that way.

Do you seek position and status in ministry? Are you willing to take the humble position of a servant? Are you willing to serve regardless of who gets the spotlight and who gets the credit, of whether or not you're honored and you get a great reputation? Timothy was. Timothy was willing to serve alongside Paul as if he were his father, a man who was thought of as the scum of the earth, a privy pot.

As you read these verses, did you notice what distinguishes Timothy in Paul's mind? It's not his gifts. It's not his abilities. It's his character. He highlights his biblical mindset, his genuine concern for people, his selfless devotion to Christ, his faithful service, his concern for the lost, and his humility. And those are the qualities that would have made you valuable to Paul. And those are the qualities that will make you a valuable servant of Christ.

Let's pray together.

Father, thank You for Your truth in the wonderful, living color, high definition example of Timothy.

Lord, help us to be a church of Timothies. Help us individually to be known in this way. Lord, help us to be less concerned about our gifts and our skills and more concerned about who we are before You because it's in our weakness that You find us valuable.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.