

The Proven Character of Timothy

Philippians 2:19-24

Introduction

1. As Paul wrote to churches from prison it was common for him to answer concerns which the churches had for him – **Ephesians 6:21-22**
2. He informed the Philippians of his state as well – **Philippians 1:12-14** – his imprisonment has not hindered the gospel.
3. Paul also had a great concern for these churches to remain faithful, and being in prison was limited in what he could know and do. For this reason, he would send others to report back to him. For Philippi, he intended to send Timothy – **Philippians 2:19** – **“I also may be encouraged”** – i.e. after you are hearing of my state.
4. Paul details the reasons he chose to send Timothy for such an important work. Namely, his **“proven character” (v. 22)**.
5. That someone like Paul would trust someone like Timothy speaks great things about him.
6. Timothy stands as an exemplar of exceptional character which makes one fit for great work in the kingdom.
- I. His Sincere Care for the Brethren **(v. 20)**
 - A. **“I have no one like-minded”** – what a profound compliment coming from the apostle – **Colossians 2:1; 2 Corinthians 11:28**
 - B. Timothy began with Paul on his 2nd missionary journey – **Acts 16:1-5 (“they,” Paul and Timothy)**
 - a. Macedonian call – **Acts 16:6-12** – included Philippi.
 - b. Timothy was present at the conversion of Lydia – **Acts 16:13-15** – received her hospitality.
 - c. Paul converted the jailer and received care from him – **Acts 16:30-34** – though not present, Timothy surely would have been told the tremendous story.
 - d. The bond formed by the gospel between Paul and Philippi grew and continued – **Philippians 1:3-5; 4:10**
 - i. As they strived together in the work of the gospel their affection for each other grew.
 - ii. Timothy was present for much of this, and as such had equal concern for them according to Paul.
 - C. Genuine care for brethren is fundamental to effective labor in the kingdom:
 - a. **1 Peter 1:22-25** – obedience to the gospel adds one to an eternal, spiritual family, and enjoins one with a great responsibility of affectionate and serving love.
 - b. **Matthew 25:31-40** – genuine care for brethren is genuine care for Christ. **(cf. 1 John 4:12, 20-21)**

- c. **Galatians 6:1-2** – genuine care for brethren gives the greatest attention to the spiritual state. (Knowing at the same time the physical state can affect the spiritual.)
- II. His Unselfish Interest in the Matters of Christ **(v. 21)**
 - A. **"I have no one like-minded...for all seek their own"** – this is not a pessimistic reflection on others by Paul, but a show of unparalleled confidence in Timothy.
 - a. Epaphroditus was not self-seeking – **Philippians 2:25-26, 30**
 - b. Luke had been with Paul, and Mark regained the apostles' trust – **2 Timothy 4:11**
 - c. However, Timothy stood out from the rest.
 - B. Paul heard great things about Timothy, then spoke highly of him as well:
 - a. **Acts 16:1-3** – the context suggests Timothy's diligence in spiritual matters, and interest in the matters of Christ's kingdom.
 - b. **2 Timothy 1:5; 3:14-15** – Timothy had genuine faith, having been trained in the truth concerning faith in Christ.
 - C. A fundamental component to being useful to Christ is caring about His will more than yours, even to the greatest extreme:
 - a. **Mark 8:34-38** – a prerequisite to following Christ is self-denial, even to the point of suffering in service to Him.
 - b. **Matthew 6:33** – we are to prioritize His kingdom and righteousness.
 - c. **Colossians 3:1-4, 17** – Christ's reign from heaven should be our constant focus.
 - d. **Matthew 26:39, 42** – we are to imitate Christ.
- III. His Intense Labor in the Gospel **(v. 22)**
 - A. **"you know his proven character"** – they were not ignorant but had firsthand experience.
 - a. **1 Timothy 4:12-13, 15** – later, Paul would encourage Timothy to be an example and make his progress evident.
 - b. Timothy already had a track record of doing this.
 - B. Served with Paul like a son.
 - a. Note: not served under Paul, or served Paul, but **"served with [Paul] in the gospel."**
 - b. A reference to their close relationship, and the diligence Timothy displayed in being faithful like Paul.
 - i. **"To Timothy, a true son in the faith" (1 Timothy 1:2).**
 - ii. **"To Timothy, a beloved son" (2 Timothy 1:2).**
 - iii. **2 Timothy 1:8-9, 13** – Paul urged Timothy to share with him.
 - iv. **2 Timothy 3:10-11** – Timothy followed Paul's great example of diligence and faith.
 - C. Being a member of the church, a citizen in God's kingdom, is about being a worker for the Lord:

- a. **Galatians 5:6** – faith working through love.
- b. **1 Thessalonians 1:2-3** – work of faith, labor of love, patience of hope.
- c. **Ephesians 4:11-13** – equipped for the work of ministry, image of Christ
(cf. **Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:10** – carrying on His work as a member of the body.)
 - i. **(v. 16)** – every joint supplies, every part does its share.
 - ii. **1 Corinthians 12:15-22** – you are not lesser, you are not greater – all parts are essential!
- d. **2 Timothy 2:15** – as Timothy was to do, we must be a diligent worker who seeks approval of God.

Conclusion

1. Paul trusted Timothy and knew Philippi could as well due to his **“proven character.”**
2. Timothy is an exceptional character we would all do well to imitate.
3. What made Timothy so reliable is within our grasp. We just need to put forth the effort, and trust in God’s grace to use us as He sees fit.