



IMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH
SERIES: TOGETHER FOR THE GOSPEL
SCRIPTURE: PHILIPPIANS 2:19-30
DATE: JUNE 14, 2026

INTRODUCTION

The last couple of weeks, we have talked about the relationship between joy and friendships, especially when friendships are rooted in the gospel. Paul tells us that his *joy is made complete* when the Philippians, his friends, are pursuing Christ and dedicating themselves to the Gospel (2:2). Also, we have discussed how joy is best when it is mutually shared between two or more people. We saw this to be true as we read Paul's words in Philippians 2:17-18: "I am glad and rejoice with you all. Likewise, you also should be glad and rejoice with me."

In this week's text, we see two more examples of joyful partnerships who are living for the gospel. Paul refers to two men named Timothy and Epaphroditus who share in their love for Paul and Philippians. They also demonstrate remarkable humility that aligns with what Paul has already stressed in his letter.

Text

Philippians 2:19–30

¹⁹I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I too may be cheered by news of you. ²⁰For I have no one like him, who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. ²¹For they all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. ²²But you know Timothy's^[d] proven worth, how as a son^[e] with a father he has served with me in the gospel. ²³I hope therefore to send him just as soon as I see how it will go with me, ²⁴and I trust in the Lord that shortly I myself will come also.

²⁵I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need, ²⁶for he has been longing for you all and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill. ²⁷Indeed he was ill, near to death. But God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. ²⁸I am the more eager to send him, therefore, that you may rejoice at seeing him again, and that I may be less anxious. ²⁹So receive him in the Lord with all joy, and honor such men, ³⁰for he nearly died^[f] for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was lacking in your service to me.

Explanation

Timothy

Paul desires to send Timothy to the Philippians soon. Paul says that he hopes “in the Lord Jesus” to send him. That phrase reminds us that Paul’s plans were always submitted to God’s will. Paul was not simply acting out of personal curiosity or convenience—his concern was centered on the gospel and the spiritual well-being of the church. We can easily picture Paul praying that God would open the door for Timothy to go.

Timothy was one of Paul’s most faithful and trusted companions. Paul first met him during his second missionary journey in Lystra (Acts 16:1–3), and from that point forward Timothy became a close partner in ministry. Paul speaks very highly of him here, even saying, “I have no one like him.” In several of his letters, Paul refers to Timothy as his spiritual son (1 Tim. 1:2; 2

Tim. 1:2; 1 Cor. 4:17), which shows the deep affection and investment he had in him.

Paul not only loved Timothy, but also had great confidence in him. Timothy had learned from Paul and was entrusted with passing those truths on to others (2 Tim. 2:2). Paul recognized Timothy's sincere faith and the gifts God had given him for ministry (2 Tim. 1:5–7).

What is especially meaningful here is that Timothy was valuable to Paul personally, especially during Paul's imprisonment, yet Paul was willing to send him away for the benefit of the Philippians. Once again, we see Paul living out the principle he taught earlier in this chapter: looking not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others (Phil. 2:4).

Paul says there was “no one like” Timothy because Timothy genuinely cared for the Philippians. His concern for them was sincere, not self-serving. Timothy modeled the very attitude Paul had been encouraging in the church: “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves” (Phil. 2:3).

Timothy stands as an example of humble, Christlike service—a servant who cared deeply for God's people and faithfully carried out the work God gave him to do.

Epaphroditus

Compared to Timothy, we know much less about Epaphroditus. In fact, he only appears in the letter to the Philippians. Yet the descriptions Paul gives him are remarkable. Paul calls him a brother, fellow worker, fellow soldier, messenger, and minister. Those are powerful words of respect and appreciation.

It appears that the Philippian church had sent Epaphroditus to minister to Paul while he was imprisoned in Rome, likely bringing financial support from the church as well (Phil. 4:18). But this mission was not easy. During his service to Paul, Epaphroditus became seriously ill—so ill that Paul says he nearly died.

This situation created deep concern for everyone involved. Paul speaks of the sorrow he would have experienced if Epaphroditus had died. Epaphroditus himself was distressed because news of his illness had reached the Philippians, and he knew they would be worried about him. We can imagine the church praying earnestly for his recovery.

Thankfully, God showed mercy and restored his health. Paul was eager to send him back to Philippi, and he urged the church to receive him with joy and honor. Epaphroditus had faithfully served Christ, Paul, and the Philippian believers, even at great personal cost. Paul says he “risked his life” for the work of Christ.

Like Timothy, Epaphroditus serves as a living example of the truths Paul has been teaching throughout this chapter. He put the needs of others above his own comfort and safety. He was willing to serve even when it involved suffering and danger.

This mindset ultimately points us back to Christ Himself. Jesus humbled Himself and became obedient “to the point of death” (Phil. 2:8). Paul spoke earlier about his own willingness to continue serving the church, even through hardship and the possibility of death (Phil. 1:20–26). Epaphroditus demonstrates that same spirit of sacrificial service.

For us, this passage is a reminder that genuine Christian service often comes with sacrifice. Following Christ and serving His people may at times be costly. Yet these examples encourage us to live with humility, faithfulness, and a sincere concern for others.

Discussion Questions

- Why do you think Paul places these personal examples here in the middle of his letter?
- When your life is going well, is it easy or difficult to care about the wellbeing of others? What about when your life isn't going so well? Does that make it more difficult to focus on someone else?
- Can you think of any friends that you would say are focused on the interests of Jesus, not themselves?
- Paul also described Timothy as having “proven worth.” How does one go about establishing “proven worth” in a relationship?
- How willing would you say you are to risk your life to serve Christ? Do you know of anyone who risks their life for Christ or others?
- How can suffering or hardship reveal the sincerity of our faith and service?
- Paul urged the Philippians to honor such men as Epaphroditus because he nearly died for the work of the Christ. How might you go about honoring such a person?

- Which example challenges you more personally—Timothy’s faithful care or Epaphroditus’s sacrificial risk? Why?

Conclusions or Applications

HUMILITY AND SERVICE AT A COST

One thing that stands out in the examples of Christ, Paul, Timothy, and Epaphroditus is that their humble service came at a cost.

- Paul endured imprisonment and was even willing to remain on earth for the sake of fruitful ministry.
- Christ left the glory of heaven, took on flesh, became a servant, and willingly suffered and died.
- Timothy faithfully traveled and labored to strengthen and encourage the churches.
- Epaphroditus risked his own life in order to care for Paul and serve the work of the gospel.

These examples remind us that true humility and genuine service are often costly. We are not called to serve only when it is easy or convenient, but to remain faithful even when serving becomes difficult. In many ways, the sincerity of our love for Christ is revealed in our willingness to continue serving through sacrifice and hardship.

Yet any sacrifice made for the gospel is worth it. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the only message that offers eternal life and true hope to the world. There is nothing more worthy to give our lives to than faithfully serving Christ and others for the sake of the gospel. And when we one day stand before the Lord in heaven, no believer will regret the time, energy, or sacrifice spent humbly serving Him. Instead, we will rejoice that our lives were spent for what mattered most.