

## **Proven Character Philippians 2:19-23**

19 But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state. 20 For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. 21 For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus. 22 But you know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel. 23 Therefore I hope to send him at once, as soon as I see how it goes with me. NKJV

Paul finds himself in what we all from time to time experience. No one seems to see things the way that Paul does. He has many acquaintances but few who will stand with him when the going gets rough.

Paul, as we have seen, is not favored as a faithful servant of God by many in Rome where he is now a prisoner. Some have used his imprisonment to their advantage. While other have just faded away from Paul in his distress.

But not all. Paul has a few that stick closer than a brother. They not only see things the way that Paul does but they are willing to walk in his footsteps if need be in order to serve Christ.

Timothy is just such a person. Someone that had the same care that Paul did in the ministry.

We spoke about Timothy and family on Mother's day. He had been converted under Paul's ministry and has become a valuable part of Paul missionary team. He would later pastor the church of Ephesus during Paul's final imprisonment.

So let us look at this passage and see what it was that made Timothy so different.

- I. **19 But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state.**
  - A. Paul had received a very unfavorable report and wants to know how his letter to them is received.
  - B. There are divisions in the church that threaten the unity of the church.
  - C. Paul has confidence that they will eventually make the right moves. But he cannot be sure until he hears back from them. And it will be through Timothy that he will receive their reply.
- II. **20 For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state.**
  - A. He knows that Timothy will do what is right.
  - B. He has confidence that Timothy will be able to use Paul's letter to them as a means to effect certain change in this church.
    1. 2 Cor 11:28 besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches. NKJV
    2. Rom 1:14 I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and

to unwise. NKJV

3. 1 Cor 10:31-33 31 Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.<sup>32</sup> Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God,<sup>33</sup> just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved. NKJV

III. For Timothy is **like-minded** with Paul.

- A. The word literally means of similar soul. We would say of one heart. The idea is that the same things that were important to Paul were important to Timothy.
  1. We do what we think is important. If we do not read our Bible it is because we do not think it is important. If we do not tell others about Jesus it is because we do not think it is important. If we do not support the church and the work of the Lord it is because we do not think it is important.
- B. Paul thought that the welfare of the church at Philippi was important and so did Timothy.
- C. Paul had deep concern for their spiritual welfare and so did Timothy.
- D. Paul was willing to put his life on the line for them and so was Timothy.

IV. 21 **For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus.**

- A. It is not that they were bad people.
  1. It is not that they were crooked or perverse. They could well be honest and pure, but they did not worry about the work of Christ and His kingdom.
  2. They were just more interested in their own things than the things of Christ.
  3. It is the same problem we all deal with.
  4. After we have been here long enough we begin to think that the most important person in our lives is us.
  5. We think everything is about me.
- B. For you see Paul's mind was in line with that of Jesus.
  1. 1 Corinthians 4:16-17 (NKJV) 16 Therefore I urge you, imitate me. 17 For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.
  2. 1 Cor 10:33-11:1 33 Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved. 11 Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. KJV

3. Paul did not want people to follow him but Christ, but following Jesus was so much a part of his life, he could say to everyone, "Follow me."

V. **22 But you know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel.**

- A. Timothy had been like the son Paul had never had.
  1. He had served many long years with Paul in the work of the gospel.
  2. He had been with Paul even in the worst times and had remained faithful.
- B. Timothy was a person, proven, tried and found genuine, real.
  1. I don't like the modern translations that use the word worth here.
  2. Timothy was more than valuable to Paul.
  3. Paul is not simply saying that Timothy was of great worth.
  4. He was talking about Timothy's internal makeup.
  5. Timothy could be counted upon for he was genuine, solid, not plated to look like the real thing.
- C. God is still looking for people of character.
  1. There will never be a lot for just as in days of old we have a tendency to mind our own things and not the things that be of Jesus Christ.
  2. It is not an easy road.
  3. Jesus said that we must deny self and to deny self seems so hard to do.
  4. Mark 8:34-38 When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.<sup>35</sup> For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it.<sup>36</sup> For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?<sup>37</sup> Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?<sup>38</sup> For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."  
NKJV

VI. **23 Therefore I hope to send him at once, as soon as I see how it goes with me.**

- A. Yes Paul had one man who was with him as he was with Jesus Christ.
  1. He was in it 100%
  2. He had done what he had taught Timothy to do.

3. 2 Tim 2:1 You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.2 And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.3 You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.4 No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.5 And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. NKJV