

**The Book of Philippians**  
**“Examples of Spiritual Servants”**  
**8/7/2016 Sunday AM**

**Scripture Verses: Philippians 2:17-30**

**Sermon Notes**

- Last week we spoke about “Complaining and Discontentment”.
- The question was asked, “Are you satisfied with your circumstances right now?”
- Paul teaches us to do everything without complaining or arguing because we need to learn to be content in where God has us and instead of complaining, we need to turn to prayer and humility.
- This morning we will look at “Examples of Spiritual Servants” as we continue our study in the Book of Philippians and really examine ourselves when it comes to what we have learned so far.
- If we could just sum up everything Paul said from vv. 1-16 it would go a little bit like this. We are called to humbly work out our salvation knowing that it is the power of God working in us to do so in every circumstance and in every difficulty without complaining and without arguing. And that's the pattern of our spiritual service. Work out your salvation with humility and without complaint.

**Philippians 2:17-30**

<sup>17</sup>But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. <sup>18</sup>So you too should be glad and rejoice with me. <sup>19</sup>I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. <sup>20</sup>I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare. <sup>21</sup>For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. <sup>22</sup>But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. <sup>23</sup>I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how things go with me. <sup>24</sup>And I am confident in the Lord that I myself will come soon. <sup>25</sup>But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs. <sup>26</sup>For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill. <sup>27</sup>Indeed he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow. <sup>28</sup>Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you may be glad and I may have less anxiety. <sup>29</sup>Welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor men like him, <sup>30</sup>because he almost died for the work of Christ, risking his life to make up for the help you could not give me.

- In these verses we have three marvelous examples of spiritual servants: Paul, Timothy, and Epaphroditus.

**Paul**

- In vv. 17-18 we see that Paul's example as he says he is “being poured out like a drink offering.”
- This is something that is hard for us Americans in 2016 to understand.
- Paul's audience sacrificed animals on a regular basis and they understood his illustration perfectly.
- Most every religion that had a sacrificial ritual had a “drink offering.” Normally as the slain animal was being burned the priests would also pour out wine or another liquid on the sacrifice to top it off.
- Paul references in v.16 that he wanted to boast on the Day of Christ that he did not run or labor for nothing.
- He then goes into v. 17 and says, “But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you.”
- What he is saying is that the second half of his life has been devoted to the Lord, and that even if his present situation is him “being poured out like a drink offering” to top off the sacrifice, he will still rejoice.
- Paul knew that the Romans could sentence him to death at any given time, but even if that is what happened, he was still going to rejoice.
- This is Paul's example to us: He lived out his teaching to consider others better than himself, and to work out his salvation without complaining or arguing.
- Dying for the name of Christ would only top off the life of sacrifice that he had lead and he knew where he was going, because he held to the promises that Christ gave.
- Not only did Paul talk the talk, he walked the walk. Do we?

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**Timothy**

- In vv. 19-23 we see Paul mention to send Timothy to them. Pay close attention to vv. 20-21.
- Timothy was basically Paul’s student in the ministry. Paul trained Timothy in the ministry.
- So it should be surprising that Timothy would have many of the same qualities that Paul had.
- Vv. 20-21 are interesting because Paul says, “...I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare. <sup>21</sup>For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.”
- You can look at this two different ways, either Paul is indicting other Christians because of their lack of care for the Philippians or he is setting Timothy apart in his genuine and sincere love for the Philippians.
- I happen to think that it is more of the latter than the former.
- I am not sure that Paul really was saying that “everyone” that he knew looked to their own interests rather than those of Christ.
- I believe Paul was using hyperbole (extreme exaggeration) here to illustrate just how much Timothy cared for the church.
- There is no doubt that most of the world then, and the world today think about themselves more than other people, however I am not sure that was Paul’s point in this particular statement.
- Timothy was someone that genuinely cared for the interest of others above himself and was willing to put that into action.
- He is a wonderful example to us because he was a young man and really did not spend time wasting years of his life devoting them to the world, he spent his life from a young age devoting it to the Lord and the church

**Epaphroditus**

- Outside of vv.25-30 we do not know much about Epaphroditus.
- What these verses tell us though does gives us enough information as to his devotion to servanthood.
- It seems that Epaphroditus was a member of the Philippian church that delivered an offering to Paul earlier and stayed to assist Paul.
- During that time he became ill, but still remained with Paul despite his illness.
- Paul was now going to send him back to the Philippians.
- What Paul says in v. 30 really lets us know about Epaphroditus’ level of devotion in that he risked his life to continue to serve the Lord.
- Paul is often thought of as a “super man” when it comes to being a servant and so does Timothy because he was so close to Paul.
- Epaphroditus was a man that we know little about and yet Paul highly regards him and his servanthood.
- He can be an example to us in that plain, ordinary people, that are not widely known can make a large impact of the Kingdom of God with their service to the Lord.
- So many people think that they have to be the most educated and skilled person to serve the Lord.
- Really and truly not one of the three men that are given as examples here were the best and most fit to serve the Lord when it comes to worldly standards.
- What they each had though was a willingness to surrender everything to God, no matter the costs and to think about the needs of others above their own needs.
- Want to serve God genuinely? Then follow the example of Christ as laid out in vv.5- 11 and the example of these men here in vv.17-30.