

Philippians, Chapter Two, Lesson Four

THE JOY OF FAITHFULNESS Philippians 2:19-24

STIMULATE

** In our study together last week we looked closely at "**The Joy of Obedience**" and learned that our Heavenly Father wants to conform two things in us for His own good pleasure. Do you recall what those two things were?

Our will and our work! Our attitudes and actions! cf. Philippians 2:13

** From verse fifteen of last week's passage, what five things have we got to prove for the sake of Jesus Christ and the glory of God?

1. We are blameless
2. We are innocent
3. We are children of God
4. We are above reproach
5. We are lights in the world

** Have you been experiencing "**The Joy of Obedience**" this past week by conforming your attitudes and actions to the will of God?

It is such a joyous thing indeed, when our merciful God works in us to transform us by the renewing of our minds into the very image of His beloved Son!

MOTIVATE

** Who is it in your Christian life that the Lord has made very dear to you? That special someone who deeply understands you and faithfully ministers to you in a unique way. The question is - What is to be my perspective of this type of individual, as well as of those people who let me down?

Today, we have the privilege of looking deep into the heart of Paul as he experiences "**The Joy of Faithfulness**" along with the pain of disappointment, as he lays himself bare for everyone to see how he maintains the proper perspective through it all.

Let's read our passage together as we set our minds on the things of God.

Read passage (V.19-21) (22-24)

Opening Prayer

The Joy of Faithfulness

INVESTIGATE

V.19 ** As Paul opens our passage, he is waiting for the verdict of his Roman imprisonment. However, this is not a time of idleness for Paul. (cf. Philippians 1:12) What is it that he wants to do?

He wants to send Timothy to the Philippians.

** Is he sending Timothy because he is looking out for himself, and wants the Philippians to help him?

No - He is concerned about them and will be encouraged when he learns about their condition. The apostle Paul would always desire to be spent on behalf of those he loved, rather than to gain anything from them. cf. Philippians 2:17

I would like us to take a long look at this next thought...

** How expensive will it be to Paul to send Timothy?

In order to answer that question, let's look at the riches of their relationship.

2Timothy 3:14-15 - Timothy was raised learning and trusting in the word of God.
Acts 16:1-2 - Timothy was well spoken of by the brethren in Lystra and Iconium.
1Corinthians 4:17 - Timothy was Paul's "beloved and faithful child in the Lord".
Romans 16:21 - Timothy was Paul's "fellow worker".
1Thessalonians 3:1-2 - Timothy was "God's fellow worker in the gospel of Christ".

We can see by all of this, that Paul derived great joy from Timothy's faithfulness and to send him anywhere would be very costly indeed.

** Do you have a Timothy type in your life? What if it became necessary to let go of that beloved brother or sister, so they could go off to help someone else in their service to Christ?

We would then experience first hand some of what the apostle Paul went through by sacrificing his own needs on behalf of the Philippians.

V.20 ** Before you can answer that question, let's continue in Paul's thought. Not only does he give up someone who is personally valuable to him - someone he needs and loves, but with what does that leave him?

"No one else of kindred spirit".

** What does Paul mean by "kindred" spirit?

isopsuchos - lit. "like-minded"

This term is used only here in this verse, in all of the New Testament and is a compound word coming from:

isos - meaning "equal"

psuche - meaning "breath, the soul"

Paul is saying that he and Timothy have the same heartbeat, same mindset and the same concerns toward the Word of God and for other believers. Further, he is saying that there is "no one else" with which he can share on such a deep personal level.

** Is Paul saying that there are no other Christians around him?

No - there were thousands! Remember "the whole praetorian guard" from Philippians 1:13 - some 9000 strong and "everyone else". He is saying that they just do not share Paul's concern or heartbeat for the Philippians like Timothy does.

** What does this verse say about how Timothy feels for the Philippians?

He is "genuinely" concerned for their welfare. cf. 1Peter 1:22

V.21 ** What is the problem with the other Christians there in Rome? Why don't they share Paul's concern for the Philippians?

"...they all seek after their own interest..."

** What has Paul already said here in chapter two, that these self-centered Christians in Rome need to hear?

"...do not merely look out for your own personal interest, but also for the interests of others."
(Philippians 2:4)

** Do you suppose that "their own interests" were evil?

Not necessarily - they are just different from "those of Christ Jesus". Some of them did have evil or sinful interests. cf. Philippians 1:15-17 and 2Timothy 4:10 and 16 regarding his second imprisonment some five or six years later.

** So Paul is willing to give up his beloved Timothy, while at the same time being surrounded by believers who repeatedly let him down - all the while he is continually rejoicing. As we look even deeper into verse 21 we will learn the secret of how Paul was able to do this. What is it?

Paul only sought after the interests of Christ! By pointing out the error of those Christians in Rome, he is by implication showing us where his own heart was at; following after the will of Jesus.

cf. Ephesians 6:5-6 "...doing the will of God from the heart..."

Mark 3:35 "For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother."

1Peter 4:2 "live...for the will of God."

V.22 ** When we see faithfulness to the Lord in the heart of a brother or sister, it should always produce a joy in our own heart. And so it does with Paul, what does he say that the Philippians knew about Timothy?

They knew of his "proven worth" - dokimasia lit. "a testing" or "a proving"

The Philippians had seen Timothy in action and knew him to be trustworthy and faithful; of extreme value or worth to Paul, themselves and to the Lord.

** How was Timothy's faithfulness manifested?

"...he served with [Paul] in the furtherance of the gospel..."

** From what illustration in life does Paul draw to describe just how Timothy served with him?

The family! "...like a child serving his father."

Theirs was a tender, extremely valuable relationship, designed by God for the advancement of the kingdom. cf. 1Timothy 1:2, 18 and 2Timothy 1:2

This should leave no question in the mind of the reader as to how greatly Paul valued Timothy.

V.23 ** In this verse Paul says again that he hopes to send Timothy, but he begins the verse using a common connector. What is it and why does he use it?

The word connecting these two verses is "therefore" and Paul uses it to say that because Timothy is the best, because he knows how excellent his service to Christ is, because he knows of his faithfulness, he is willing to send him to the Philippians.

** Besides being able to report back to Paul about the Philippians (V.19), what information do you suppose Timothy will be taking with him to Philippi?

How "things" are going with Paul. Timothy will be reporting to the Philippians the verdict regarding Paul's imprisonment and encouraging them also to continue praying for the will of God in the life of the beloved apostle. cf. Philippians 1:19

V.24 ** Speaking of verdict, is there anything here in verse 24 that might indicate how Paul feels that all of this is going to turn out?

"...I myself also shall be coming shortly." cf. Again - Philippians 1:19-20, 24-25

Paul was joyously anticipating his reunion with the Philippians and his beloved Timothy.

** We have seen today that Paul desired the will of Christ over his own desires or needs. The loss of Timothy, or even the heart breaking discouragement that comes when brothers or sisters in Christ let you down could not rob Paul of "**The Joy of Faithfulness**" when he considered his son in the faith, Timothy. However, what is the key to all of this joy? How can Paul pull it off?

We have intentionally avoided two phrases up to this point in our study that will answer this question. Do you see them?

- 1) "...**I hope in the Lord Jesus...**" (V.19)
- 2) "...**I trust in the Lord...**" (V.24)

Our passage for today has been framed with the secret to victoriously rejoicing in the faithfulness of others in Christ. Even if we are called to give them up, while suffering disappointment at the hands of those who should be supporting us. If we will always **hope** and **trust** in the **Lord**, we will be open to seeing the faithfulness in others that can produce joy in us.

EXTRICATE

** What was Paul's view of Timothy and how did he act with regard to the will of Christ?

Timothy was raised learning and trusting in the word of God. Timothy was well spoken of by the brethren in Lystra and Iconium. Timothy was Paul's "beloved and faithful child in the Lord". Timothy was Paul's "fellow worker". Timothy was "God's fellow worker in the gospel of Christ". Timothy was his "true child in the faith".

With all of that, he was willing to let him go if that was the will of God, in ministry to the Philippians.

DELINEATE

** What was Paul's attitude toward the Christians in Rome who had let him down?

He continued to love them and he forgave them!

Remember 2Timothy 4:16, "...may in not be counted against them..."

** How do you respond when others in Christ do not display a passion for the "interest of Christ".

We must continue to hope and trust in Christ, knowing that as He works out His will in our life we will become more faithful ourselves.

EVALUATE

** Do I fully support the will of God? Am I open to His desires regarding the furtherance of the gospel, even if that means He may remove someone from me that I have grown to love and depend on?

** Am I joyful when I see faithfulness in the heart of a brother or sister in Christ?

ACTIVATE

** Lord, teach me to pursue Your will - to be flexible and willing to follow You, no matter what the cost. May I learn to experience "**The Joy of Faithfulness**", when I see You working in the hearts of others.

Closing prayer