

THE PRICELESS PAIR

PHILIPPIANS 2:19-30

Text:

Introduction:

As one reads the epistles of Paul it is easy to see that he crossed paths with many different individuals. Some of these individuals, it would seem, were a great hindrance to his work for the Lord:

2 Timothy 2:14

¹⁴ Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.

Philippians 1:16

¹⁶ The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds:

1 Timothy 1:19-20

¹⁹ Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: ²⁰ Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.

However, most of the people Paul met were a great blessing to his life and ministry. Paul closes most of his letters with a personal note to some of these very special people. In the last chapter of the book of Romans, Paul mentions at least 35 people by name!

In our text this evening, Paul speaks about two men who were very helpful to him and the work of the Lord.

One we know several things about, the other is we know next to nothing.

I want us to consider this “Priceless Pair.”

1. TIMOTHY

Was born in Lystra, had a Jewish mother, Eunice and a Greek father. He was taught from a child the Old Testament scriptures, was saved and committed his life to Christ during Paul’s 1st missionary journey.

He joined Paul on his 2nd missionary journey and stayed with him on his journeys for about 10 years.

He became the pastor of the church of Ephesus.

A. He Had a Similar Spirit as Paul

- 1. He became like Paul in being a bond-servant of Christ (1:1)**

2. Paul mentored Timothy for 10 years and became as a son to him.

B. He Had a Sympathetic Heart

1. He was concerned for the welfare of others and was not self-seeking.

C. He Was Single-minded

1. He wasn't double minded, he wasn't undecided on who would rule his life.

D. He Was a Seasoned Servant

1. He passed the test of years of ministry.

2. He proved himself genuine in his life and ministry.

E. He Had a Submissive Attitude

1. He served with Paul

F. He Had a Sacrificial life

1. He gave up his personal agenda to travel with Paul and to be sent on special trips.

2. He gave his life in service for the furtherance of the gospel.

What kind of an example are you?

Do you have a genuine care for the wellbeing of others?

Do you seek just after your own interests and not those of Christ?

How much are you willing to sacrifice for the furtherance of the gospel?

2. EPAPHRODITUS

While we may not know much about Epaphroditus, but the small amount of information Paul gives us, tells us much about this special man. His name means “*lovely*” and he was a man who lived up to his name.

In these verses, we are given a glimpse of a man who possessed certain characteristics that should be possessed by every believer.

The things we see in Epaphroditus are the things that should be in the life of every believer.

A. He was a Balanced Christian

It is easy for Christians to get out of balance. We are prone to focus on one area of our Christian walk to the exclusion of other areas that are just as important.

Some people get off balance in the area of fellowship; everything is about being with their “*group*” and having a good time.

For some it is legalism, they are so concerned with keeping things in line with their idea of how things ought to be that they set themselves up as spiritual detectives who investigate and correct the motives and action of others.

Notice the three areas of his life that were balanced:

1. In His Walk As A Son - Paul calls him “*my brother*”

2. In His Work As A Servant - Epaphroditus was a “*fellow worker*” with Paul.

He shouldered his portion of the load. He was not a loafer, who let others carry his part.

Verse 25 tells us that he was a “*messenger*” and a “*minister*”. He was sent by the church at Philippi with a gift for Paul. He was their messenger. But, I think the greatest gift from Philippi was Epaphroditus himself.

Why? Because, when he arrived in Rome, Paul had somebody who was willing to him in the ministry.

3. In His Warfare As A Soldier - When Paul calls this man a “*fellowsoldier*” he is talking about a man who is “*an associate in the spiritual conflicts of the Christian life*”.

Epaphroditus was active in all these areas of the Christian life. He was balanced in his walk, in his work and in his warfare!

B. He was a Burdened Christian

1. The Focus Of This Burden - Verse 26-27

Philippians 2:26-27

²⁶ For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick. ²⁷ For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.

Paul says that “*he was sick nigh unto death*”. It’s interesting to consider; Paul had healed others so why didn’t he heal Epaphroditus?

Possibly, the sign gift of healing had already been phased out.

Either way, this passage lets us know that God, not man is in charge of healing.

Even though he was desperately ill, his focus was not on himself. His focus was on his brothers and sisters at Philippi! He had heard that they had heard he was sick. He is burdened because they are worried about him!

2. The Fruit of This Burden

Epaphroditus was the kind of person who made you feel important and loved.

He was an encourager! As a result, he was a joy to know and be around!

C. He Was a Brave Christian

1. There Is Bravery in His Service

Philippians 2:30

³⁰ Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.

This seems to indicate that the sickness Epaphroditus endured was the result of his labors for the Lord.

Tradition tells us that Epaphroditus was known for his work among the sick in Rome. It is said that he and

others would try to help people that most others would not even dare go near.

For this man, nothing in this life was more important than doing the will of the Lord, even if it cost him everything!

2. There Is Bravery in His Sacrifice

He put his life on the line to see Paul's needs met and to see souls brought into the kingdom of God.

Missionary Jim Elliot, who gave his life for Christ trying to reach the Acua Indians of South America, said, "*He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.*" Epaphroditus knew this and lived by this motto! He put everything on the line for Jesus!

Close:

Verse 29 tells the Philippian believers to hold Epaphroditus "*in reputation*".

Epaphroditus was to be prized and considered precious.

Do you know what Temple Baptist Church needs? Not money, this is God's boat and He knows how to keep it afloat! Not prestige in the community. You can look for many to criticize this church as the day's move forward.

Why? Because we are out of step with the world and we don't intend to change! Not political influence. This world and all that is within it will burn one day. What we need is people who will commit themselves to be like this priceless two! We need men, women, boys and girls who will put everything on the line for the cause of Christ, who will hold nothing back.