

Introduction: One of the best things about The Bible is all the different people we meet in it – real people. Just in the last few years we met Hezekiah’s evil son Manasseh, the king of the Jews who did evil things before God for 55 years. (2 Chronicles 33) Generations before him, Jehoram king of the Jews, married one of Ahab’s daughters – Athaliah. After her son died she proceeded to kill all her grandsons in an attempt to destroy God’s royal line in David and set up idol worship in God’s Kingdom of Judah. But her step-daughter rescued the baby Joash who after eight years was installed king of Judah. (2 Chronicles 21-23). *** Speaking of David, this man ‘after God’s heart’ (1 Samuel 13:11-14; Acts 13:11-23) who composed about half of the book of Psalms, committed adultery with the wife of one of his most loyal foot-soldiers; and, then he commanded his nephew to put this same man – Uriah (Yahweh is my Light) – in a position to die in battle, so he could possess his wife. (2 Samuel 11) How could David violate two of Yahweh’s ten big ‘words of instruction’ given to His people so they could fully enjoy His blessings? (Exodus 20:1-22) *** Most people we meet in The Bible are mixtures of good and evil. As a result, it is easy to get cynical about human nature. This is good IF it drives us to The Cross of The Savior in repentance SO we cry out for forgiveness of our failure to always do the good God wants us to do. All who do this will be restored IN Christ as God’s proper children. *** We have now been in Paul’s letter to the house churches he and Silas planted in Philippi for seven weeks. Last week we saw more of Paul’s heart concern that the Christians in that city would continue to grow in their partnership with him to bring The Good News of what Jesus did for all people to the people in their region. First, they must be all they can be IN Jesus through ‘fear and trembling’ – a phrase signifying faith (Mark 5:25-34). So, Paul is a man in The Bible we can use as a good role model. *** This week I was pleasantly surprised to find that Paul’s ‘son’ in The Faith, Timothy who was some thirty years younger than Paul, is also a good role model.

I. Paul hopes IN The Lord to send like-souled Timothy to them so he may be encouraged after learning the things concerning them. (Verses 19-21)

A. Paul hopes to send Timothy to Philippi soon so he too may be encouraged, having learned their situation, as only Timothy has genuine concern. (Verses 19-21)

1. But, I am hoping IN The Lord Jesus, to send Timothy to y’all soon. (Verse 19a)

IN The Lord Jesus: The only source of hope is Jesus, the Lord of all creation. Paul knows the only way to have abundant and meaningful life is to always live IN Him, aware of His presence and power.

Timing: In actuality, Epaphroditus will bring the letter and come first. But Timothy is listed first because, as we have heard and will see, he is also IN The Lord as Paul is.

2. So, I also may be encouraged (‘good-soul’) having learned of the things concerning you. (Verse 19b)

‘Good-soul’: ‘Good comfort’ (KJV), ‘cheered’ (RSV) and ‘encouraged’ (NAS), literally ‘good-soul’.

The things: Paul uses a term ‘the things’ five times in this passage for: ‘state’ (KJV), ‘condition’, ‘welfare’, and ‘interests’ (NAS), and in more current lingo ‘life situation’.

3. Because I have no one like-minded (KJV), of kindred spirit (NAS). (Verse 20a)

Like-souled: Literally, the word is ‘like souled’. This involves the heart, mind and will. Paul considered his spiritual son Timothy (1 Timothy 1:2, 18) to be the only one who was as fully committed and surrendered to Jesus Christ and spreading His Gospel as he was.

4. He will have genuine concern for the things of y’all. (Verse 20b)

Genuine: The adverb genuine describes the character of Timothy, which again is Paul’s character.

Concern: Timothy has Paul’s ‘same soul’ of doing and saying everything for the sake of Jesus Christ (The Savior King). And when someone gives every aspect of his life to God IN The Lord Jesus, he will also have God’s concern for people, enough to suffer and if need be ‘take up his cross’ (2 Timothy 3:10-17).

All who seek God in everything also have a deep love for all His children!

Those seeking The Lord are concerned about His brothers

B. Because ‘they’ all are seeking the things of themselves, NOT of Christ Jesus. (Verse 21)

1. Because ‘they’ seek the things of themselves, NOT the things of Christ Jesus. (Verse 21a)

Sharp contrast: Paul now introduces people who, unlike Paul and Timothy, are self-seeking.

Seek MY things: In sharp contrast to the brothers and sisters IN Christ, they are people who are only concerned about ME, and MY interests-possession!

2. [They are] NOT [seeking] the things of Christ Jesus. (Verse 21b)

NOT the things of Christ: In fact, these people are so focused on themselves they have NO place for God, His Messiah, or anything concerning God and His ways and words! In light of this, may we all pray we would be convicted of any area of our lives that is self-seeking and repent to seek God to be forgiven and changed.

Who are ‘they’?: It is most likely all these people are the ‘brothers’ in Rome he described earlier: ‘Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife ... out of selfish ambition, rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment’ (1:17-19). So Paul has already identified people who preach Christ, but in a self-seeking way.

Paul, Timothy and Christ: Since Paul and Timothy both serve Christ with their entire life, his desire is to hear his brothers in Philippi love God with everything (according to the greatest commandment) with the result that they show God’s love to their neighbors (the second great commandment). The letter to now has described how Paul seeks Christ’s interests according to The Gospel. Therefore, they must seek God as they ‘work out’ among themselves (as His Church) how they will share the salvation they have received.

Those seeking The Lord are concerned about His brothers

II. They know Timothy is proven as Paul's son in serving The Gospel, so Paul hopes to send him soon. (Verses 22-24)

A. You are knowing that, as a child to me, he served in The Gospel; so, this one, I hope to send, as soon as I may 'look away'. (Verses 22-23)

1. But, y'all are knowing the proof of his character. (Verse 22a)

Proven character: This word is unique to Paul. He used it seven times altogether. In his letter to churches in Rome, he listed it as the fruit of tribulation that precedes hope, 'we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about ... proven character; and proven character, hope', (Romans 5:3-6).

Known: With his well-known proven character Timothy, as well as Paul, was a role model to them of the attitudes and actions God expects of His children in Christ. May we all be motivated to re-read Paul's two letters to Timothy!

2. That, as a child to father with me, he served into The Gospel. (Verse 22b)

'Son' in faith: In his last known letter, Paul urged Timothy to persist in his Christ-like behavior: 'You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them' – his mother, grandmother and his 'spiritual' father (2 Timothy 3:10 – 4:2)

Gospel: Paul uses the word Gospel **nine** times in this short letter. Paul's call and passion was to bring The Gospel to all the Roman Empire. In this letter, he writes about these aspects of bringing the Gospel:

fellowship and partnering in (1:15; 4:15); confirmation of and co-laboring in (1:7; 4:3); furthering of and serving in (1:12; 2:22); defense of and contending for the faith of (1:17; 1:27b); and. being worthy of (1:27a).

God expects every person to obey by faith all He has commanded in the Torah, the Prophets, the Writings, the Gospels and the New Testament. (Galatians 3:10-12; Deuteronomy 27:26) No one has ever been able to accomplish this obedience of faith, nor is anyone capable of the accomplishment. And, the penalty for falling short of total faithful obedience is death. (Romans 3:21-26) The good news (message) is that Jesus The Savior died in the place of all people who can receive this gracious gift of God. To receive God's gift of forgiveness and righteousness for restoration IN Jesus, people must admit their failure and need, turn away from themselves and their ways (verse 21), and ask to be forgiven with humble, dependent child-like surrendered faith IN The Lord Jesus. They must be willing to let Jesus control their lives – 'Thy will be done'! All who do this will have their dead spirits brought to life and also have The Holy Spirit enter into them to work with their newly born spirit to both understand and obey all He has written in The Bible! Then, as they grow IN Christ, they must share Him with others, starting with the children in their extended family.

May we allow Christ to control our lives; and, may we make it our highest priority to share His Gospel with all people, especially children and youth!

The Gospel advances when generations serve The Savior

3. Therefore, indeed, I am hoping to send this one. (Verse 23a)

Hope again: Paul started this passage saying he hoped to send Timothy, and he closes expressing the same hope.

Them: And his hope is that he will receive encouragement concerning their progress in the things of The Gospel.

4. [I will send him] as soon as I may look away from the things concerning me – soon. (Verse 23b)

Paul's things: He is currently chained to Roman soldiers under house arrest. But, he fully has hope IN Christ that He has more work for Paul to do. (In fact, Paul was released and served Christ as a church planter for almost seven more years!)

B. But I trust IN The Lord that, also, I myself will come soon. (Verses 16b-c)

Persuaded faith: Paul has a fully persuaded faith. As a result of this, he knows he has not labored in vain in his service of The Gospel of The Savior (verse 17).

IN The Lord: Because he lives his life IN The Lord Jesus he expects to come to them soon.

Bottom line: Paul knows that first of all The Savior King calls all people to humility like His that puts others above themselves (verses 3-4). Then all who surrender to Him take up His Cross in obedient faith to Him. Finally, their faithful relationship to The Lord inspires them to genuine concern for other people.

Those seeking The Lord are concerned about His brothers

Conclusion: Paul is hoping IN The Lord Jesus to send Timothy to Philippi so he may be encouraged after learning what was happening concerning them in their progress in The Gospel. And, he reminds them Timothy has a soul like his when it comes to serving The Gospel of The Lord and being genuinely concerned about the life situation of other Christians.

Those seeking The Lord are concerned about His brothers