

22S14 Philippians 2:19-30 Coworkers

Hello everyone. Thank you for joining me today @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. I hope everyone is doing well. Today I want to continue our study of Philippians with Philippians 2:19-30.

Before we start, let us remember this short letter was most likely written by the Apostle Paul while he was in prison in Rome. Paul had first visited Philippi during his second missionary journey, and he has great affection for the church in Philippi. This letter is sometimes called “the Joy Epistle” because of thankful and joyful tone. But remember Paul is in prison in Rome, not very happy circumstances.

I’m reading from the New King James version (NKJV) today. But of course, you can use whatever translation you choose.

Let’s read Philippians 2:19-30 (NKJV) *¹⁹But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state. ²⁰For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. ²¹For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus. ²²But you know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel. ²³Therefore I hope to send him at once, as soon as I see how it goes with me. ²⁴But I trust in the Lord that I myself shall also come shortly. ²⁵Yet I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier, but your messenger and the one who ministered to my need; ²⁶since he was longing for you all, and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. ²⁷For indeed he was sick almost unto death; but God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. ²⁸Therefore I sent him the more eagerly, that when you see him again you may rejoice, and I may be less sorrowful. ²⁹Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such men in esteem; ³⁰because for the work of Christ he came close to death, not regarding his life, to supply what was lacking in your service toward me.*

Let’s pray. Dear heavenly father, guide our discussion today such that your message is clear to each of us. As we read your word from Philippians, help us see why Paul is so thankful and joyful despite his situation. I pray that you help me stay out of the way so your hope and peace can be shared with us. I pray this in your name Lord Jesus. Amen.

So, in this part of Paul’s letter, Paul is commending two coworkers, Timothy and Epaphroditus. I hope I said that correctly. Let’s look at these passages a little closer, starting with the portion about Timothy, Philippians 2:19-24 (NKJV) *¹⁹But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state. ²⁰For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. ²¹For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus. ²²But you know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel. ²³Therefore I hope to send him at once, as soon as I see how it goes with me. ²⁴But I trust in the Lord that I myself shall also come shortly.*

Do we remember how Timothy was? This is most likely the same Timothy that Paul writes 1&2 Timothy. Timothy is mentioned in Acts, Romans, 1 &2 Corinthians, Philemon, Colossians, 1&2 Thessalonians, Hebrews and of course 1&2 Timothy. We know Timothy was from Lystra and traveled with Paul. Paul calls Timothy his “son in the faith”. So, Timothy is a very important character in the new testament. Timothy served as Paul’s representative to several churches, and he was later the leader or pastor of the church in Ephesus. Paul shows great affection for Timothy throughout his letters. The people Philippi knew Timothy or at least knew of him, since Paul says in verse 33 when speaking about Timothy, “.*But you know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel.* Paul is making clear he trusts Timothy and believes he can be a great help in Philippi if Paul is unable to come. Paul is hoping God will make a way for him to return to Philippi, but if not, he wants them to know he values them and is going to send Timothy, “his son in the faith”, his trusted companion to encourage and help the church in Philippi.

Then Paul commends Epaphroditus, Philippians 2:25-30 (NKJV)²⁵*Yet I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier, but your messenger and the one who ministered to my need;* ²⁶*since he was longing for you all, and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick.* ²⁷*For indeed he was sick almost unto death; but God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.* ²⁸*Therefore I sent him the more eagerly, that when you see him again you may rejoice, and I may be less sorrowful.* ²⁹*Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such men in esteem;* ³⁰*because for the work of Christ he came close to death, not regarding his life, to supply what was lacking in your service toward me.*

We find out later in Philippians that Epaphroditus had come from Philippi with aid for Paul. Epaphroditus had been the one who brought Paul the message for Philippi. He was obviously a trusted member of the church in Philippi. Paul goes on to tell how Epaphroditus had nearly died but that Epaphroditus had shown great faith and confidence in Jesus. This was probably great encouragement to them especially as it was probably Epaphroditus who delivered this letter.

I think we can learn a lot of great lessons for the Apostle Paul, but one very important one is his willingness to share his notoriety and spotlight with others. Epaphroditus, Timothy, Luke, Titus, Silas, Barnabas, John Mark and others throughout his letters. It was not just Paul or about Paul. It was all about Jesus and Paul was a coworker for Jesus with many others and Paul makes this clear again here.

Let’s review.

- 1) Why send Epaphroditus? Epaphroditus had come from Philippi and nearly died from some sort of illness. Paul is sending him back with this letter as an encouragement for the Philippians.
- 2) Why send Timothy? Paul is planning to send Timothy who is a close friend and companion, because Paul is not sure if he will be able to return. If he can’t, he

wants the Philippians to know how much he values them by sending Timothy who they know as a person of great character.

- 3) Why commend others? Paul was a great leader, teaching but first of all he was a follower of Jesus. Paul understood it was not about him but all about Jesus. Throughout Paul's letter he shares the credit and stage with others, this is a great lesson for us. It's not about us, it's all about Jesus.

Let me leave you with this. No matter what we do in life or accomplish, chances are we had a lot of help from others. I know for me, I have had many successes and accomplishments in my career, school and life. But I needed help from others every step of the way. My parents and family, teachers, colleagues, mentors, coworkers and adversaries. All have helped me to achieve great things. And of course, God, without who I could do nothing. So yes, it is very important to thank those who help us. Share credit with those who made it possible, helped and encouraged us. Be thankful, gracious and humble. Keep our focus and the focus of others on God, not us.

Let's Pray. Heavenly Father thank you for this letter from Paul. Help us to read and meditate on this letter so we can hear the message you have for us. Help us to remember who you are Lord. You are our king, king of kings. You are our Lord, Lord over everyone. We can trust you, Lord. Help us to do what you ask and not worry about what others are doing. I pray this in your Name Lord Jesus. Amen

I hope you will join us for the rest of our study of Philippians. Please email me comments or feedback. Thank you for joining me today. Until next time @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. God bless.