

Three Role Models for the Believer

Philippians 2:17-30

All Stand and Read Scripture

Philippians 2:17-30

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

¹⁷ But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all. ¹⁸ You too, *I urge you*, rejoice in the same way and share your joy with me.

¹⁹ But I hope ⁱⁿ the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition. ²⁰ For I have no one *else* of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare. ²¹ For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus. ²² But you know of his proven worth, that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child *serv*ing his father. ²³ Therefore I hope to send him immediately, as soon as I see how things *go* with me; ²⁴ and I trust in the Lord that I myself also will be coming shortly. ²⁵ But I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your ⁱⁿ messenger and minister to my need; ²⁶ because he was longing ^{for} you all and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. ²⁷ For indeed he was sick to the point of death, but God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, so that I would not have sorrow upon sorrow. ²⁸ Therefore I have sent him all the more eagerly so that when you see him again you may rejoice and I may be less concerned *about you*. ²⁹ Receive him then in the Lord with all joy, and hold men like him in high regard; ³⁰ because he came close to death ^{for} the work of Christ, risking his life to complete ^{what} was deficient in your service to me.

Prayer

INTRODUCTION:

ILLUSTRATION:

Simon's says, "Fold your hands."

Simon says, "Nod your head."

Simon says, "Touch your nose". (I touch my chin. See how many follow my example.)

Some of you followed my example and touched your chin instead of your nose.

The lesson learned here is that "actions speak louder than words". When Simon asked you to touch your nose, some of you touched your chin with me.

You followed my example instead of what Simon instructed you to do. We must be very careful to follow that which is right.

ILLUSTRATION:

Mickey Mantle was a power-hitter for the New York Yankees. He held a news conference shortly before his death. The former Yankees center fielder and a member of baseball's hall of fame admitted that he had squandered his life with alcoholism. He warned his followers that he was not a role model. He said "God gave me the ability to play baseball. God gave me everything. But for the kids out there, don't be like me."

With a smorgasbord of possible role models available to us today, one must be careful whose example to follow.

Philippians 2:17-30 presents three men whose lives were exceptional examples for us to follow. They were Paul, Timothy, and Epaphroditus. They were all together in Rome. Paul, of course, was in prison.

Timothy, a son in the faith, had been with him for some time now. Epaphroditus had been sent by the Philippian church to bring financial support to Paul and minister to his needs.

Their character has been set forth in the scripture this morning. I would suggest that we follow their example. I have entitled my message **Three Role Models for the Believer**.

BODY:

I. Paul's Model of Sacrifice

Philippians 2:17-18

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

¹⁷ But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all. ¹⁸ You too, I urge you, rejoice in the same way and share your joy with me.

A. Paul Sacrificed Greatly with Them.

Whether great or small, sacrifice demands something of us. To sacrifice is to give something of ourselves to others.

We may sacrifice by:

- Giving money to a good cause.
- Giving our time to someone in need.
- Make an ultimate sacrifice by giving our life for the cause of Christ.

In verse 17, Paul talks about **being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your** (the Philippian's) **faith**,

The Philippians would have a full understanding of what Paul was telling them here. The term “**poured out**” is from the OT sacrificial system.

Numbers 15:8-10

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

⁸ When you prepare a bull as a burnt offering or a sacrifice, to fulfill a special vow, or for peace offerings to the LORD, ⁹ then you shall offer with the bull a grain offering of three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with one-half a hin of oil; ¹⁰ and you shall offer as the drink offering one-half a hin of wine as an offering by fire, as a soothing aroma to the LORD.

As commanded in the book of Numbers, the people of Israel, as well as Gentiles who lived among them, were first to give a burnt offering of one of the prescribed animals, then a grain offering, and finally a drink offering when they arrived in the Promised Land.

Paul uses this drink-offering speak of the violent death that he is facing as a martyr. It was during his second Roman imprisonment that he realized that he would shortly be sent to the executioner’s block for beheading.

The Philippian believers were making sacrifices for the cause of Christ and Paul was a part of that sacrifice. Paul’s is offering his blood to be poured out as a drink offering **upon** their sacrifice.

Paul's last letter ever recorded was II Timothy. The apostle Paul wrote of his coming death as his final offering to God.

2 Timothy 4:6-8

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

⁶ For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith;

Christ is **our** ultimate example and He was Paul’s **role model**. He wrote to the Ephesians and said:

Ephesians 5:1-2

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

⁵ Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; ² and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

So how does this relate to us?

Romans 12:1

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

12 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, ^[a]acceptable to God, *which is your* ^[b]spiritual service of worship.

Paul offered himself to the Lord as “a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God” while he was alive, he now offered himself to the Lord as a drink offering in his impending death.

I would like for you to consider how Paul sacrificed greatly during his ministry.

2 Corinthians 11:24-28

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

²⁴ Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine *lashes*. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. ²⁶ *I have been* on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from *my* countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; ²⁷ *I have been* in labor and hardship, ^[a]through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and ^[b]exposure. ²⁸ Apart from *such* ^[c]external things, there is the daily pressure on me *of* concern for all the churches.

Paul experienced all of this persecution. Now he was facing execution.

The cause of Jesus Christ cost Paul **SOMETHING!** Paul gave of himself and sacrificed for the work of the Lord.

This morning, **I exhort you to sacrifice.** I urge you to make Paul one of your role models for your Christian walk with the Lord. He is a model of how to **SACRIFICE** with gladness and rejoicing for the cause of Christ.

What can you give of yourself for the cause of Christ and the sake of the ministry here at Greenwood Christian Church?

We have countless opportunities to give of our

- Time
- Talents
- Treasure

B. Paul Celebrated Greatly with Them.

Philippians 2:17b-18

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

I rejoice and share my joy with you all. ¹⁸ You too, *I urge you*, rejoice in the same way and share your joy with me.

Paul's way of life did not mirror the world. Our natural man will not sacrifice unless they are compelled or coerced. When we do sacrifice, we would not naturally sacrifice with joy, gladness, or rejoicing.

Unfortunately, many Christians today try to receive joy much like the world does. That is through **gaining** rather than **giving**.

Worldly sacrifice is generally for the purpose of self gratification.

- Promotion.
- Popularity.
- Prestige.
- Personal Pleasure.
- Possessions.
- Personal Profit.

If we sacrifice and gain those things, we are happy. But, when circumstances take away from us, we are unhappy. So, happiness only occurs when we promote ourselves successfully.

Because of this, we know very little about Paul's type of joy. This is because we know very little about Paul's type of joy. But, here Paul is celebrating in the latter part of verse 17 and verse 18.

Men and women of God, throughout the centuries have

- Given up their "worldly comforts" as "living sacrifices" to God.
- Given of worldly possessions to God.
- Some have even given their life for God as the ultimate sacrifice.
 - In a vat of boiling oil.
 - Tied to a burning stake.
 - Standing in front of a firing squad.

They have done so with **JOY**, using their final breath to **PRAISE THE LORD!**

HOW CAN THAT BE?

We have a model in front of us this morning...Paul's model of SACRIFICE. This is a model that each of us needs to embrace. "**Present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, [a]acceptable to God, which is your [b]spiritual service of worship.**"

Follow Paul's model of sacrifice with gladness and rejoicing.

II. Timothy's Model of Single Mindedness.

There is a second role model that we could follow. It is Timothy's model of single mindedness. It is found in...

Philippians 2:19-24

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

Timothy and Epaphroditus

¹⁹ But I hope ⁱⁿ the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition. ²⁰ For I have no one *else* of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare. ²¹ For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus. ²² But you know of his proven worth, that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child *serv*ing his father. ²³ Therefore I hope to send him immediately, as soon as I see how things *go* with me; ²⁴ and I trust in the Lord that I myself also will be coming shortly.

Paul described Timothy in different verses as

- My true child in the faith.
- My beloved son.
- My beloved and faithful child of the Lord.
- My fellow worker.
- Our brother.
- Phil. 1:1, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ.

Paul wanted to send Timothy to the church in Philippi...

- In order to learn of their condition. (v. 19)
- Because he would be genuinely concerned for their welfare. (v. 20)
- Because Paul had confidence in Timothy's proven character. (v. 22)
- And his kindred spirit. (v. 20)

Timothy and Paul were single minded. There is a lot in that LABEL.

ILLUSTRATION:

Maybe you have a **like-minded** friend. Your friend may be so close that you would trust your very life to him. Perhaps you would want him to raise your children if you were to pass away. This might be the person that you share all of your secrets with. They are the first one you call when you have good news or a crisis to share.

I say all of this to say that I do not believe that this is exactly what Paul is referring to when he speaks of a "**kindred spirit**".

I would like to propose to you a scriptural definition of single mindedness or like-mindedness. Let's look again closely at verses ²⁰ For I have no one *else* of **kindred spirit** who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare. ²¹ For they all seek after their own interests, **not those of Christ Jesus.**

Now let's back up to Chapter 2 verses 3-5.

³ Do nothing ^{from} selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; ⁴ do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. ⁵ Have this attitude ^{in yourselves} **which was also in Christ Jesus,**

The like-mindedness that Paul is talking about is **Christ's like-mindedness**. **It is the attitude of caring for one another and having the mind of Christ. BINGO!**

The kindred spirit or like-mindedness that Paul and Timothy shared was the **caring for one another and having the mind of Christ!**

The text here is describing that type of mind: **the selfless mind of Christ.**

This is the attitude that we must develop here. If we are to achieve "SINGLE MINDEDNESS" amongst ourselves as a church family, we must mirror the mind of your MINISTER? **NOOO! (IN HUSH), the mind of JESUS CHRIST** just as Timothy did.

(In Hush) We can only mirror the model of Paul and Timothy here if we **know** the mind of Christ.

ILLUSTRATION:

Has there ever been an occasion when you have said to your spouse, "I know what you are thinking"?

June and I may, on occasion eat at Cracker Barrel. While she is in the restroom or shopping for trinkets in the front lobby, the waitress will come by and ask what we would like to drink. I will say that we would like two glasses of water, which will disappoint her, because she was suggesting other drinks. I say "Two glasses of water" and then I say, "But, she will want hers without ice and with lots of lemon." Now, how do I know that? How do I know that she will want "no ice and lots of lemons"? It is easy for me because we have been married for...a lotta...it doesn't matter.

Well, uh, IT---DOES---MATTER! Now, I know my wife well enough that I will be in trouble when I get home!

But, how do I know that she does not want ice and wants lots of lemons? Because, we have been married for 40 years. 40 GOOD YEARS!

So, the question arises, "How well do you know the mind of Christ?"

- Do you know what God loves?
- Do you know what God hates?
- Do you know how He thinks?
- Do you know what He would do?

You see, Paul declares here in the scripture that Timothy is single-minded. He says he is of a kindred spirit because he has adopted the selfless mind of Christ.

That is the model that I call Greenwood Christian Church to mirror; **the mind of Christ**.

The Believer must model the **Sacrifice of Paul** and the **Single Mindedness of Timothy**. Then there is a third model for us to emulate and that is...

III. Apaphroditus' Model of Service.

Philippians 2:25-30

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

²⁵ But I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your ^lmessenger and minister to my need;

Apaphroditus had been sent to Paul by the Philippians as a messenger and as a minister to Paul's needs. Apaphroditus was **not an apostle like Paul**. He was **not an elder of pastor like Timothy**. And, there is no record of **outstanding work** that Apaphroditus accomplished. His record of service to Christ had **NO public acclaim, prominence, or high office**.

That is good. You know why? It is because his example is relevant to us! It is attainable for all of us who are just NORMAL PEOPLE.

Apaphroditus was simply a servant that was willing to travel to Rome and take on great risk to report to Paul while he was in prison and minister to his needs.

²⁶ because he was longing ^lfor you all and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. ²⁷ For indeed he was sick to the point of death, but God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, so that I would not have sorrow upon sorrow.

Apaphroditus became ill even to the point of death and everyone (Apaphroditus, Paul, and the Philippians) were all concerned over his illness. But God brought him back to health.

²⁸ Therefore I have sent him all the more eagerly so that when you see him again you may rejoice and I may be less concerned *about you*. ²⁹ Receive him then in the Lord with all joy, and hold men like him in high regard; ³⁰ because he came close to death ^lfor the work of Christ, risking his life to complete ^lwhat was deficient in your service to me.

Paul sent Apaphroditus back to them so that they could rejoice with him on escaping death. The Philippians were told to hold him in high regard for sacrificing himself, nearly to death, in his service to the Lord.

CONCLUSION:

There are many role models that we can follow. Our culture presents us with many personalities that we are tempted to model.

- Professional Athletes.
- Movie Stars.
- Successful Business People.

Philippians 2:17-30 presents us with three viable role models for us to follow.

Paul charged the Corinthian church in

1 Corinthians 11:1

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

11 Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.

I urge you, be followers of those who follow the Shepherd because there are others who will follow you.

We can play a simple game of “Simon Says”. Some might listen to the **rhetoric**, but some will follow our **example**. Our actions speak louder than words.

As I shared with you last week, for some people, we are the only Bible they will ever read. Some people never read the scriptures. You are the only Christian that they know. They judge Christianity based upon what they see in you! They come to conclusions about Christ based on you!

May our actions reflect Christ and His word! Let us strive to be “lights of the world”, so that our peers will see Christ in us.

We have the examples of

- Paul and his sacrifice.
- Timothy and his single mindedness with Paul and more importantly with Christ.
- Apaphroditus and his service to the Lord.

If you have not accepted Christ as your Lord and Savior, this is your opportunity to come forward and let Him know that you are ready to become a part of His family.

We are also here with open arms, if you would like to identify yourself as part of this family of God in the Greenwood Christian church.

He is Lord, He is Lord.
He has risen from the dead and He is Lord.
Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess,
That Jesus Christ is Lord.