

(19) I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I, too, may be cheered by news of you. For I have no one like him, who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. For they all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But you know Timothy's proven worth, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the Gospel. I hope, therefore, to send him just as soon as I see how it will go with me, and I trust in the Lord that shortly I myself will come also.

(25) I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, and your minister to my need, for he has been longing for you all and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill. Indeed, he was ill, near to death. But God had mercy on him, and not only on him, but on me also --- lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. I am the more eager to send him, therefore, that you may rejoice at seeing him again, and that I may be less anxious. So, receive him in the Lord with all joy, and honor such men, for he nearly died for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was lacking in your service to me.

(3:1) Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you. Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh ---

(4) Though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more:

Circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a
Hebrew of Hebrews;
As to the Law, a Pharisee;
As to zeal, a persecutor of the church;
As to righteousness under the Law, blameless.

(7) But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the Law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith --- that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and may share His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Think on these things:

- 1) In vs. 19-24, identify the various ways that Paul "commends" Timothy to the Philippians. Which of these would you like shared about you?

Paul says Timothy is a genuine person (v. 20) and has proven himself worthy (v. 22). Paul considered Timothy as a son serving alongside him. Paul relied on his trustworthiness to visit the churches with news about Paul and to gather news about the churches (v. 23).

(Personal opinion about which commendation they would like shared about themselves.)

- 2) From vs. 25-30, can you tell where Epaphroditus comes from and what he recently experienced? Paul was really grateful for Epaphroditus, especially for the Lord's work in him that spared Paul sorrow and anxiousness. Why did Paul say we should "honor such men" as Epaphroditus (v. 30)?

Epaphroditus was a member of Paul's traveling team, apparently coming to him from the church at Philippi (v. 25, "your messenger"). He seemed to have gotten sick and almost died.

Paul says that he also risked his life to be of service when the church couldn't help (v. 30), and so he should be honored.

- 3) From 3:1, what "safe" counsel does Paul share that we can all share with one another?

"Rejoice in the Lord!"

- 4) In v. 2, Paul refers to the "Judaizers" --- Jews pushing for Christian compliance with Jewish laws and ceremonies --- as dogs and evildoers. This derogatory term is common for Jews to use when referring to Gentiles (read Jesus using it in Matthew 15:21-28), so there is irony in Paul using it on fellow Jews! But Paul had no tolerance for those perverting the Gospel of Christ. In v. 3 he speaks about those who are the "true circumcision." What 3 characteristics does Paul share as defining those truly circumcised of God (in heart)?

1) They worship God in the Holy Spirit. 2) They glory in Jesus. 3) They put no confidence in themselves and their accomplishments (no self-glorifying pride --- it's NOT about me!).

- 5) In 3:4-6, we see how Paul was a great defender of the faith --- for the Jews!! Looking at vs. 7-8, how did Paul feel about his Jewish heritage at the time he is writing this letter to the Philippians, i.e., how did he feel about his conversion to becoming a Christian? Can you identify one faith thing that did NOT change with his conversion (compare v. 5 with Acts 23:6)?

He essentially shares that, "I've put my past behind me to embrace Jesus! My heritage counts for nothing, really. I set everything aside to gain Christ!" --- Paul maintains his hope in the resurrection.

- 6) Instead of relying on his Jewish heritage to make him "right" with God, what did Paul rely on (v. 9)? This principle applies to us today, whether we have a Christian, or unbelieving, heritage.

His hope in having the "righteousness of Christ" that comes by faith in God credited to him.

- 7) Paul had personal hopes in becoming a Christian, as should we! In vs. 10-11, what does he want from God, and what negative things was he willing to face? What is the ultimate desire for Paul and every Christian (see also 1 Corinthians 15:12-22)?

Two desires – **To know God and to experience His power in life.**

Two negatives – **To suffer as Jesus had to, even following Him into death.**

Ultimate desire – **To be resurrected to eternal life!**

People and situations I want to pray for this week: