

Week 6 Philippians 2.19-24, 2.25-30

On Timothy

On Epaphroditus

- I. Prayer
- II. Opening Question
 - How are Christian friendships different from other friendships?
- III. Read N.T. Wright Commentary p.107-113
- IV. Scan Aesthetic Commentary p.135-141
- V. Discussion Questions
 - a. Read Philippians 2:19-30. What qualities do Timothy and Epaphroditus share?
 - b. How is Timothy different from others Paul has worked with (vv. 20-21)?
 - c. Have you experienced or known of a relationship like that of Paul and Timothy (v.22)? What was it like?
 - d. How does Paul indicate his profound trust in Timothy?
 - e. What is the connection between looking after the interests of others (2:4) and looking after the interests of Jesus the Messiah (v.21)?
 - f. Epaphroditus had carried the Philippians' gift to Paul (as we will see in Philippians 4:18). What had then happened which caused anxiety for everyone involved (vv. 25-27)?
 - g. How does Paul show his own vulnerability to the Philippians in verses 25-27?
 - h. Paul expresses thanks that Epaphroditus recovered, sparing him from having "one sorrow piled on top of another" (v. 27). How do you respond to the idea that Paul would have been stricken with sorrow if Epaphroditus had died?
 - i. How does Paul demonstrate that he was looking after the Philippians' interests and not only his own (vv. 28-30)?
 - j. Who has been a Timothy or an Epaphroditus in your life? In what ways?
 - k. Paul urges the Philippians to hold people like Epaphroditus "in special respect" (v. 29). How can you and/or your church do more to honor people who serve like Epaphroditus and Timothy?
 - l. Are you, or do you know someone, who has had a profound experience of the power of God' transforming grace? How, specifically, has this experience changed you/them?
 - m. If you have never experienced a powerful example of God's transformation, what makes you believe it could happen? What makes you skeptical?
 - n. What do people who are not Christ followers need to see to convince them that God can change individuals and communities through the power of His love?
 - o. What would be an equivalent to Paul's conversion in the contemporary Church?
 - p. Would your congregation eagerly send someone a great distance at a significant inconvenience and expense, to care for a person who was in distress? Would you allow yourself to be that person sent?