

**I. Being a Christian means having the Lord's active life within us and through us. Phil. 2:12-13. Being born again, having God's spirit in you...**

- A. Yet, God's Spirit is both grieved and joyful in this fallen world. Grieved for the sin and evil and death that is temporarily here, and joyful because he knows that he has defeated it, is saving people out of it, and will recreated the world better than it was in the beginning.
- B. Christians live and navigate life with these same feelings of grief and joy. Philippians is an example of how the apostles navigated life.

**II. Review 1:27-2:17. Paul, writing from prison...**

- A. Live in the reality of the gospel. Worthy. 27-30
  - 1. Standing firm in on Spirit, unity in the face of opposition
- B. Think like Jesus. 2:1-11
  - 1. Unity is composed of
    - a) Loyalty to Jesus the Lord
    - b) Humility like Jesus the Lord
- C. Keep your head in the game. 2:12-18
  - 1. God is at work willing and working within you

**III. Paul reveals how his faith works in daily life, how he lives 2:12-13. 2:19-30**

**A. I hope (in the Lord Jesus) to send Timothy soon. 19-24**

- 1. Paul wanted to reach out to the Philippians. 19
  - a) I want to hear from you and about you, to be encouraged by news of you.
  - b) Cheered/encouraged by news of you. It would be encouraging for him in prison to hear that they were standing firm.
- 2. Yet, he had a dearth of good pastoral messengers to send. 20-21
  - a) People like-minded in spiritual concern for the believers.
- 3. But he did have Timothy, who was tried and true. (like seasoned troops)
  - a) Proven worth = tried and tested and found valuable.
    - (1) Timothy had been there when the Philippian church started.
- 4. But he didn't send Timothy this time!
  - a) *There must have been other priorities for Timothy at the moment*

**B. I am sending Epaphroditus now. 25-30**

- 1. A solid brother, fellow worker, fellow soldier. 25-26
  - a) Had been your messenger to me and minister to me on your behalf.
- 2. Who longed for home (Philippi) very deeply. 26
- 3. Who had been sick to the point of death. 26-27
- 4. Note about Paul and physical illness.
  - a) He did not simply heal Epaphroditus at will. Otherwise it wouldn't have gotten to the point of death. He probably prayed that the Lord would heal him, and He did.
  - b) 2Tim. 4:20; He left Trophimus sick at Miletus
  - c) Gal.4:12-15; Paul's severe physical illness, recuperated slowly
    - (1) "physical illness (NIV) = "most common NT expression for physical sickness."
  - d) 2Cor. 12:7-10. He asked the Lord 3 times to have a "stake in his flesh" removed and the Lord said, "No." a greater purpose in it.
- 5. Two conclusions:
  - a) Apparently miraculous healings are not entirely up to the healer. Even an Apostle must wait on the Lord's mercy and timing.
  - b) Apparently, it is not the Lord's will to heal every time.
    - (1) Paul did not take this healing in stride, for granted.

**C. So that you might rejoice in the Lord. 28**

1. Joy is not the complete absence of sorrow or anxiety; it is the presence of God within the sorrow/anxiety.

**D. Two thoughts on these good men.**

1. Their Character was more important than their giftedness.
2. Their Commitment to Christ was their defining characteristic.

**IV. Do you want clarity as you navigate God's will and work (2:12-13)? Consider how clarity comes:**

**A. The emphasis is on what is good for the kingdom and the people in it. 20, 30**

1. Finding the Lord's will in our lives is a byproduct of putting everything and everyone in our lives on the altar. Rom.12:1-2.
2. Tim was genuinely concerned for their welfare in Christ.
3. Epaphroditus was radically committed to fulfilling his service to the Lord.

**B. The context is within genuine, relational, spiritual life with other believers. 20; 26**

1. Both of these men were deeply and tangibly related to the body of Christ, the Church.
2. The context of spiritual guidance is the broader reality of the larger body of Christ.
  - a) If you are seeking God's will for your life, connect with a body of believers who are Christ-centered and missional.

**C. The method involves "hoping in the Lord, trusting in the Lord." 19-24. Three paradoxes when living out Phil.2:12-13**

1. **Providential planning.** Jas.4:13ff
  - a) If providence is in play, does that mean that we don't plan and execute? It does not.
  - b) Planning for what looks like the right thing, is the right thing.
    - (1) He was planning to send Timothy and come himself.
    - (2) He did send Epaphroditus
  - c) *But his plans were not set in stone...*
2. **Uncertain Confidence.** Ambiguity as to how it will actually happen.
  - a) Hope in the Lord (19); I hope (23; I trust in the Lord (24).
  - b) Confidence without certainty. Lacking certainty about details of the future, while trusting that what will happen is in God's hands.
  - c) *But living with uncertain confidence will stretch our faith and the stretching of our faith feels like STRESS.*
3. **Faithful Stress 26-29. Distress, sorrow, anxiety, while still trusting God?**
  - a) Is all anxiety faithless? Is that what Jesus meant in Matt.6:25-34?
    - (1) No. There is such a thing as faithful stress/anxiety/sorrow. **Ps.34:18-19**
  - b) Sorrow: lupen = grief, pain, sorrow, emotional distress
    - (1) Epaphroditus almost died! This was stressful for him and Paul (and everybody else no doubt)
  - c) Distressed: ademoneo = "extremely heavy." Strong word for internal stress.
    - (1) Jesus in Gethsemane Mk.14:33; Matt. 26:37
  - d) Paul "less anxious?" (Matt.6:25-34)
    - (1) Paul was anxious? Sorrowful? Yes. 2 Cor.4
4. *There is no plan that you can make that will not include difficulty, anxiety, sorrow, and grief in this world. If you think that "finding God's will" means finding a stressless or trouble-free life, you aren't listening to Jesus. Jn.16:33*

**D. Our security is not in our ability to "find God's will" but in God's ability to find us in the first place. God has found us and put us into Christ. Rom.8:31-39; Col.1:13-14**

1. He has already rescued us through the Cross. As we seek to navigate God's will, we must trust in His finding us before we trust in our skill at doing what He wants.
2. Hoping and trusting *In Christ Jesus* is a statement of reality, ontology and destiny, God has rescued us and put us in his kingdom and his life.