

# Two Great Guys

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[ 0 : 00 ] in this series in Philippines. We've got a great passage this morning looking at these two great men that we're going to look at that Paul talks about. Now, I don't know if you had a role model growing up.

I think everyone, most people have a role growing up, a role model, don't they, when they're a child. I don't know who yours was, but even Naomi, at such a young age, she likes to dress up as Elsa from Frozen and sing Let Go and do twirls.

But you see it as well, just from little kids, they start, they have role models, but you see it, don't you, in the park, playing footy in the park, when you were young, when your mates as a kid, you'd pretend to be your favourite player, and maybe not Gareth, but everybody else wanted to be Cantona.

Everyone has someone that they aspire to be, and in some ways, that doesn't stop, does it? We have role models when we're kids, but there are still people that, now that we admire, perhaps it's slightly different to when we were kids, now it's more connected, probably, to people who have achieved great things, or it's normally drawn to someone's character, either today, people that we know that are still alive, but even more so, for myself, you might think of historical figures, people who've done great things.

You think, Rosa Parks is one that comes to mind, for me, you know, standing up for herself, against that institutional racism, in the early 20th century, it's the courage, isn't it?

[ 1 : 35 ] You're amazed, like, what a courageous woman. It's inspiring. Another one, think of, is Marie Curie, the determination to find a cure for cancer, that perseverance that she needed to have to make a scientific breakthrough.

I don't know who it is for you. We need role models. We have role models. And the purpose is they inspire us. In this passage this morning, we get two great role models, two fantastic role models, two men, that actually, as we look at them, they should inspire us of what it means to be followers of Jesus.

The reason they should inspire us is because what they represent and what we see in their lives is faithful Christian living. What it looks like, not just in the abstract, the kind of what we think it might be, but actually what it looks like on the ground.

And what they demonstrate, it's the thing that you might have heard me banging on about every week, it's this gospel mindset. That is what they demonstrate, the gospel attitude, the mindset of Christ, the Saviour's mindset, that we saw a few weeks ago.

And it's just worth bearing in mind as we look at these two guys, these two blokes, they're just ordinary people. They're just ordinary people. Ordinary people like me and you.

[ 2 : 56 ] They're ordinary sinners, saved by God's grace. They're people who trusted in Jesus' death in their place to be saved for all eternity. There is nothing special about them per se.

They made mistakes, like we do. They needed forgiveness, like we do. They experienced fear and pain and messy relationships, just like us.

There's nothing special about them, per se. And it is helpful when we think about that, because it means that when you see someone that you can identify with, which we should be able to, because they're just ordinary people, it means that if they can do it, maybe God could work in our lives so that we could live like they do.

Paul both writes about them. He wants to send them to the church. That's what he wants to do. He wants to do that. That's why he sends them as examples, as role models. And what it really demonstrates, that it is possible to be totally imperfect, and yet to be extremely effective for Jesus.

You can be totally imperfect, a sinner, and be extremely effective for the kingdom of God, for Jesus Christ. These two men, Timothy and Epaphroditus. And so this morning, what we're going to look at is their character, their mindset, and importantly, what concerns they have.

[ 4 : 15 ] I think that's how it comes through, is what concerns they have. And it should give us an indicator of what that might mean as we seek to live for Jesus Christ. Three things. They're concerned for the church.

They're concerned for one another. And they're concerned for the name of Jesus. This whole section continues, as I've reminded us every week, from verse 27 of chapter 1.

It's the headline verse that sort of governs all these passages. Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. And how that comes out, the conducting yourself, comes really importantly in that chapter 2, verse 5.

In your relationship with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus. Conducting yourself is having that gospel mindset. The situation of the church in Philippi, Paul's in prison.

And what we see here, as we read through, is Paul is giving almost like a ministry report. He's in prison. And he's telling the church who's supporting him, as you probably get into modern missionaries and people, they send reports of what's going on, of what's happening.

[ 5 : 26 ] He's saying he's going to send Timothy, but he needs him right now. And so presumably, he'll send him once he can, once he's released from prison. And so he's sending Epaphroditus back.

And so he wants, as he talks about these two men, to show why they're such role models for the church. The first thing is a concern for the church.

We see a concern for the church, not just in Timothy and Epaphroditus, but we see it in all three men, in Paul as well. Paul's in prison, let me remind you, but he wants to hear about the church. He wants to hear about the Philippine church and how they're doing. Look with me in verse 19. I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon. Why?

So that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. He's in prison, but one of the reasons he's sending Timothy is so that he can get a report back to say he'll be desperate to find out.

[ 6 : 28 ] Tell me, come on, Timothy. How are they doing? How are they getting on? Let me know. Let me warm my heart with how the church are getting on. We see the same in Timothy.

That's what he says about in verse 20. Paul says about this man that he will send. I have no one else like him who will show genuine concern for your welfare.

We see it in Epaphroditus. Epaphroditus becomes ill, nearly dies, but he's not worried about his own life. But he's worried that his sending church, you send him to Paul, he's worried that they'll be worried about him.

I'd better get back so they stop worrying about me. Verse 26, He longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill. It's amazing concern.

These three men, concerned about the church, they want to hear that they're making progress. They don't want them to be anxious, but full of joy. And the reason, the real reason, Paul, Timothy, Epaphroditus, they're concerned about the church is because that was Jesus' concern.

[ 7 : 40 ] You see, they see, when they looked at Jesus, they see the blueprint in him and make it their own. Just recently, we had our, not recently now, it's quite a while back, it's nearly a year, we had our house renovated and we had the drawings before it all got started work on it.

The blueprints, you might say. That's normal, isn't it? For any kind of construction, you have some drawings, blueprints. They're there to say, this is what it's going to look like. This is what you need to replicate.

Jesus is the blueprint. And when we look at Jesus, the blueprint, what we see is that Jesus' heart is that he's concerned for his people.

He's concerned for the church. And actually, what we really see is, if we're to see the interests of Jesus Christ, that is to seek the interests of others.

Because it's one of his central interests. If we're to seek the interests of Jesus Christ, to seek his interests, it means to seek the interests of his people. Paul wants to know that they really matter to him.

[ 8 : 58 ] And what is astounding is he is willing, I think he loves these two men, Timothy and Epaphroditus, so much, yet he's ready to send his best people.

That itself would come at a great cost to Paul. He wouldn't have them to do ministry alongside him. As soon as he's out of prison, he's saying he's sending Timothy, and he's going to send Epaphroditus in the meantime.

When it comes to seeing the good news of Jesus, Paul doesn't want to keep the most useful people to himself, but wants to send them on. He knows how effective they will be.

It's very countercultural to our world, isn't it? Very countercultural. You think of that in business. A company wants to fight to keep their best people and let go of the ones that are deemed not pulling their weight.

That's how it normally works. You're not, you know, somebody who's not pulling their weight, we see they're expendable. It's not how it works in the church.

[10:00] It's the opposite. That actually, you get rid of your best people. Because you know how useful they'll be of where they're going. And you trust that God has got it covered.

And then you rejoice when you hear about the impact that they have. That's part of the reason we're here. Part of the reason we're here is because we have, you know, City Centre Church, St. Columbus, who care about the gospel all around Edinburgh.

And so they sent out their best people to come and who lived here. It's why there's a movement and has been since the start of the New Testament to look to start new churches where bigger churches sent their best people to start new churches where the gospel was not being heard or where there were areas where the gospel needed proclaiming.

And so, actually, as we read this, what it reminds us is that in the future, wouldn't that be a great thing that we could aspire to be a sending church at some point? To send our best people, God willing, either to train for the ministry, what a joy that would be, or maybe even to start another church where there isn't one.

Sending our best people, we give people away to see them bless other people and other places. What a joy. So, a concern for the church.

[11:27] Second thing we see is a concern for one another. That's what we see is these three men, they have, particularly what we see is from Paul's side, we see the relationships that he has with both Timothy and Epaphroditus, they're intensely personal.

You look at the way he describes his relationship with them. Timothy, verse 22, but you know that Timothy has proved himself because the son with his father he served me in the work of the gospel. Timothy, he's like a chip off the old block. Paul is like a spiritual father to him. They share the same gospel mindset and Paul cares deeply. Epaphroditus, what does he say but I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, co-worker, fellow soldier who's also your messenger who you sent to take care of my needs.

That word there for my where it says my brother is actually connected to all the others. It is my brother, my fellow worker, my fellow soldier.

They are brothers together, sharing the same heavenly father race spiritually, in the same way. They've worked together, they've been in the gospel trenches side by side and he's ministered to Paul when he needed him.

[12:43] Maybe when Paul felt flat in prison and low, given his situation and needed building it back up, Epaphroditus was there. Paul cares so much about Epaphroditus, he said if he died he would have been full of sorrow.

There is genuine love between these three men. Paul is concerned, he's concerned, one of his concerns as we share this, we see this intensely personal relationship, is that he's concerned that they should be honoured because of what they've done for Jesus.

You see about Epaphroditus, what does he say? So then, verse 29, so then, welcome him in the Lord with great joy and honour people like him. because he almost died for the work of Christ.

He risked his life to make up for the help you yourselves could not give. Like a victory parade. That's what he wants to happen when, when Epaphroditus arrives into town.

We see, we see those, right, at the end, it's just been the end of the football season, you see Celtic, Manchester City doing their victory parades, everybody out on the streets welcoming them, you know, all the buses and the streamers and the stages set up in the town centre.

[14:08] The reason those are done is to honour what has been achieved. And what we see here is the concern that Paul has that they are honoured because of what they've done for Jesus.

Part of that is a care that we actually do honour and welcome one another to celebrate what we're doing in each other for the Lord. We should do the same.

How do we do that? When we, when we look to what people are doing for the Lord, celebrate it, encourage one another and others in the church and don't hold back from doing that.

Send a text, write a note, say, say to someone, I see what you've done for Jesus and so does he and I'm so grateful for it.

We see how, I see how hard it's going for you at the minute in life and how you're persevering. If you, if there is someone, maybe in the church or another Christian that you know outside of the church, that you see the way they live their Christian life, the way they follow Jesus and you see them and desire in certain attributes of their life to be like them, go tell them.

[15:27] Say to them, you know, you really are a model to me of what it means to be a faithful follower of Christ and in those areas of your life, I want to imitate you.

How someone prays or the prayer life that they have, how someone you've noticed is able to say sorry and ask for forgiveness. Maybe someone has just real boldness and courage to tell us about Jesus or they're great at putting others first, hospitality, whatever it is.

If you see that in someone and you recognise it in someone and it's something that you'd like to grow in, imitate them and tell them, honour them by celebrating what God is doing in and through them.

And there's something in every person, even myself that I look at the church that I would love to imitate. I love Paul's gospel boldness.

I love Catherine's care in teaching the children. He's not here but I love Gary's honesty and openness. And I could go through the whole church and I've had something for everyone.

[16:43] Things that I myself see and think that God has gifted them in such a way with that that I would love to grow. I'd love to imitate. Do we want to be a model of faithful Christian living that we see in one another and want to imitate in one another?

And if we do, the question we need to ask ourselves is what would we need to do to be that person? You can start by asking God to help you because you can't do it on your own.

Remember, it is God working in us. It is not you doing it yourself. But he will help you so that you can be a faithful model to others. So concern for the church, concern for one another and the last one is concern for the name of Jesus.

It is no doubt Epaphroditus is concerned for the gospel and Timothy as well, Paul too, for the good news of Jesus. But particularly we see in verse 30, what do we read about Epaphroditus verse 30? He almost died for the work of Christ. He risked his life to make up for the help you yourselves could not give me. I take that to mean that something happened on Epaphras journey.

[18:00] The reason he was going to Paul was to give a monetary gift to Paul that the Philippian church wanted to donate to him. I take it to mean on his journey to give this monetary gift to Paul, which he considered Paul to be doing the work of Christ in aiding Paul.

In doing that, something happened and he nearly died. He was the messenger from the Philippian church and in doing that he was the one doing what the church couldn't do.

It emphasises, doesn't it, just how important he thought what he was doing was. And in other words, nothing was doing to stop him from getting to Paul, say death itself.

Nothing was going to stop him. For a Baphroditus, he must have thought perhaps that the advance of the gospel through Paul was perhaps in some way dependent on him getting to him.

Come on mate, I'm going to reach him. There's nothing going to stop me. It's that important. I need to get to Paul. I need to help him. I need to speak to him. I need to give him this gift. What if I don't get there?

[19:13] What will that mean for his ministry? I must get there. It's the same attitude, the same mindset of Paul that we see in chapter 1. For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain.

We see it in Epaphroditus. Why is the concern for the gospel so high? Why does it matter that much? Or does it matter as much to us?

We get concerned about lots of things. Genuine concern shows that something matters, doesn't it? I've got loads of sports analogies today. We do have the Euros and the Olympics coming up.

There's lots of people concerned with sports stars fitness levels. The reason is because the result will depend on whether the individual or the team can compete at the right level.

We might be concerned about the upcoming election because we wonder which direction a newly elected government will take the country in. We're concerned because these things matter. It is right to have a godly concern about the good news of Jesus because it really matters.

[ 20 : 20 ] Where would we be without it? And without it being known, where is the hope for anyone else? the name of Jesus, the advance of the gospel really matters.

Two reasons. Firstly, Jesus' name is worth being honoured. You see, if Jesus gave his life for you, if Jesus, just let's just ponder over that.

If Jesus gave his life for you, which he did, you know, he doesn't want you ever to try and repay him, you can't, not in any way.

He doesn't want you to try and repay him, but is he not worth modelling because of what he's done? Shouldn't his name and what he's done be made famous by how we live?

Out of reverence and respect for the king of kings and what he has done for you in your life? Is his name not worth that? You imagine, you've seen this on the news, something happens, you hear a story, imagine, you know, some child's walking across the road and a man dies in front of the car, saves the child from oncoming traffic, from being hit by a car, putting his own life at risk.

[ 21 : 45 ] If that happens, it's on the news, everybody's looking at this act of heroism, it's on YouTube, it goes viral, everybody's saying, showing it to their pals and we do it, we magnify that, don't we?

We say, this is amazing because it's an act worth shouting about, you honour and magnify this man's name because of the heroism. Why would we not do that for Jesus?

Because he didn't just save a kid in the road, but his death is big enough to save all people. Why would we not do that? The gospel really matters because of who Jesus is and that his name is worth honouring.

He is worth being lifted high by us. That's the first, Jesus name. But it also matters because of people's eternal destinies at stake.

Heaven's glorious, but hell is real, and eternity is a really long time. Heaven's glorious, but hell is real, eternity.

[ 22 : 51 ] And eternity is a really long time. If a pastor dies, he's going to go to be with the Lord.

But there are people who die who won't be. That's why it matters to him. And if the gospel's going to save people, it needs people to take that to heart, to mull over.

Heaven is glorious, but heaven is real, and eternity is a really long time. And so, what does it mean to be more believer?

It means to look at Timothy and Epaphroditus, and it means to have the concerns that they have should be our concerns, that we should have a concern for the church, that we should love the church, not just us, we're not just building our own little kingdom and castle here, but the church, that we care for the church in other parts of Scotland, that we care for the church across the world, and that we care about it so much that we'd be willing to send our best people to further the gospel wherever, that we have a care for one another, that we have a care for one another, and we want to be models to one another, we have an intensely personal relationship with one another, and we care about how we live out and model that to each other, and then we care about the gospel, we care about the gospel because we care about the name of Jesus, and we care about the gospel because of people's eternal destiny.

Could we be that model? Could we be the model for one another, for the world watching on, even for our children here who see that, who see how we live?

[ 24 : 49 ] These two blokes were just ordinary guys, Paul as well actually. They're ordinary people, but they're obedient to Jesus. There's nothing special about them per se, they need forgiveness, they experience life just like we do.

God is at work in them, and he does great things through ordinary, obedient people. And we can be models. If we put our trust in Jesus, if we obey him, and if we consider that line we saw at Westley, to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, know that it's almighty God who's at work in you, then you can be a model.

We can be models to one another and to the watching world. let's pray. Let's pray. Almighty God, we thank you so much for the good news of the gospel.

We thank you, you have saved us, that you brought us to new life in your son, and we thank you for everything that you've done for us. We thank you that the blueprint that we have is Jesus Christ,

and we long to be like him.

But we do thank you for the models in our own life of Christian living. We thank you for Timothy and Epaphroditus, but even now we can probably remember faithful, godly Christians who we can think of in our own lives, who have modelled to us what it means to be godly, to be faithful, to have a concern for the church, for one another, and for Jesus' name.

[ 26 : 26 ] And Lord, we'd love to model that to one another and to watch your mother and to our own children. We pray that you would help us to do that. We know we can't do that without your help, so we ask, Lord Jesus, that you'd equip us and help us to be that.

Help us to honour one another by encouraging one another, by seeing how you're at work in one another, and calling that out and being sources of great encouragement as we build one another up.

And so we ask for your blessing now upon us, in Jesus' name. Amen.