

First Sunday after Pentecost ~ June 3, 2012



PHILIPPIANS: To Know Christ and Make Him Known

“Band of Brothers and Sisters” Philippians 2:19-30

We have come to the end of our study of the book of Philippians. I hope God has spoken to you through this book about knowing Christ and making him known to people around you.

This week we are actually going backwards in Philippians. Several weeks ago I caught the flu and we skipped a section of the book (2:19-30). You might think this section is relatively unimportant. Paul is simply paying tribute to Timothy and Epaphroditus, two men who encouraged him in the work of the gospel. In reality, this passage speaks movingly about the importance of the church. In a culture that glorifies self-effort and individualism, we need this reminder that we were designed by God for community, not isolation.



KNOWING GOD

Why, in the middle of Philippians, does Paul take a “time-out” to commend his friends Timothy and Epaphroditus?

Timothy was a younger man whom Paul had mentored. Epaphroditus was a member of the Philippian church – possibly the pastor – who had traveled to Rome to encourage Paul. Why did Paul need the partnership of these men?

What was it that motivated Timothy and Epaphroditus to serve Paul with such selfless devotion?



GROWING TOGETHER

Who has been one of your “fellow soldiers,” like Epaphroditus was for Paul (vs. 25)? What has this person done to “take care of your needs”?

Philippians 2:21 is an indictment of our self-absorption: “For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.” What needs to change in order for you to become more concerned about the needs of people around you?



SERVING OTHERS

Paul is modeling something very important for us in this week's passage. He is showing us that people are more important than programs. Churches are tempted to become enamored with the three B's: "bodies, bucks, and buildings." But God is calling us to genuine community. Are you in community? Are you giving some of your time each week to encouraging and caring for others in the family of God? If not, what's preventing it?

In verse 29, Paul tells the Philippians to honor men like Epaphroditus. Think of someone at UPC whom you could honor because of his or her faithfulness in the service of God. What can you do to benefit that person?



IN YOUR FAMILY...

One of the temptations facing Christians today is the idolization of the family. While it's important to protect family time, some Christians are unwilling to get sacrificially involved in the lives of others in the name of "family." It's obviously a matter of balance. Ask yourselves whether other priorities (such as attending Sunday worship, meeting neighbors, deepening friendships, etc.) have gotten lost because of an over-emphasis on family time. What can you do to bring things into better balance?

Here's a project for you and the kids: Think of a family in another city with whom you have not connected in a long while. Pick an evening this week and give them a phone call, send them an email, or Skype – just so they know they are not forgotten.

SERMON NOTES