

## HIS TROPHIES

(Philippians 2:17-30)

Series: "Philippians: The Joyful Letter" (Part 15)

...The old expression, "A picture is worth a 1000 words," is so true. How much simpler it is to see a visual lesson, than to read the instructional manual. Think about the times when you assembled a child's toy by trying to read the directions, usually found with the words, "A little assembly required." If you are like me...  
...God through Paul's pen has been strongly urging us as Christians to yield our lives to Jesus and serve Him by having the same mind that Jesus had when He died for us. We are told to "Work out your own salvation...for it is God who is working in you to both will and do of His good will." We are His work from beginning to end...  
...Though it seems impossible for us, it is not for God. To encourage us, God through Paul's writing presents three men whom were made, saved, sanctified and greatly used by the Lord. Be encouraged, God is working in YOU!

### THREE TROPHIES OF GOD'S WORKMANSHIP THAT FLOOD OUR HEARTS WITH THE HOPE OF GOD'S WORK IN US.

..."The eye is a better learner than the ear." These men shout to us that we are God's trophies for His glory.

#### I. Paul: The Joyful Prisoner Of The Lord. (vv.17-18)

- A. Remember his story: He is a "Jew of Jews." He was zealous for Judaism and had Christians killed, prior to his salvation. The Lord Jesus called and saved him. (Acts 9)
- B. His present situation: He is in prison in Rome, having been a prisoner for the past 4 years and now awaits the outcome of his trial. He may be martyred for Christ.
- C. Yet he is filled with joy. (Here: 4 x he used the word joy/rejoice) Note the source of his joy:
  1. His joy was found in seeing the Lord at work in the lives of others. (vv.17-18)  
...He gave no thought about himself, "He was a drink offering poured out..." Humble!  
...The Gospel had advanced in the palace at Rome and in the churches there.
  2. Paul's joy was not based upon circumstances, but on what God was doing through them.
- D. Paul tells of his desire for the believers at Philippi to rejoice with him over what God was doing.  
...One reason praise of God is so encouraging is because as you hear how God is working in the lives of other people, you often start to recognize His working in your own life.  
...Our focus shifts from ourselves and how things may not be the way we would like them to be, to seeing God at work in the midst of the circumstances of our lives.

#### II. Timothy: The Young Faithful Servant Of The Lord. (vv.19-24)

- A. His story: He is born of a Jewess mother and a Greek father. He lived in Lystra (Turkey), and became a Christian under Paul's preaching of the Gospel. (Acts 16) He took John Mark's place on Paul's 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey and became Paul's understudy. He was with Paul in Rome...
- B. Paul chose to send Timothy to Philippi to learn of them (v. 19) and to report to them his situation. He hoped this would cause them to share his joy.
- C. Timothy's character: This is what the Lord had worked in his life...
  1. He had a kindred spirit with Paul. (v.20) "No one like him..." He was Paul's protégé.
  2. He had a genuine concern for others. (v.20)
  3. He sought Christ's interests; he is contrasted with "all seek their own interests."  
...But not him, he put first Christ and His work in the lives of others.
  4. He had proven his worth by working side by side with Paul in the Gospel work. (vv.22-23)

- D. Scripture tells us in other places that Timothy was affectionate yet timid by nature and fearful. (2 Timothy 1:4) But God was making him into a choice vessel to succeed Paul.  
...One has written, "Timothy's weaknesses are as apparent as his virtues." He was God's trophy!

### III. Epaphroditus: The Compassionate Servant Of The Lord. (vv.25-30)

- A. His story: He is from Philippi (Greece). He is a Gentile. Born far from privilege...
- B. Paul begins by telling why he is sending him back from Rome to Philippi.  
...Paul writes this almost as a letter of commendation introducing him to them.  
...Perhaps, word had got out that he was malingering and had become a burden to Paul. (Tongue)
- C. Paul tells of his value to him: He is my brother, my fellow worker, and fellow soldier. (v.25)  
...In Jesus he was family, co-worker in the work, and fellow fighter in advancing the Gospel.
- D. Paul tells them to receive him as a hero. "Receive him with all joy and hold him in high esteem."  
...He too is a trophy of grace. Each of us is different, but all are for His glory and purpose.

### SO WHAT? WHAT DIFFERENCE SHOULD THIS MAKE IN YOUR LIFE?

1. Be encouraged, if you know Christ as your Lord and Savior then you are His project, He is working in you, making you desire His will and giving you the power to do it. You are His trophy raised up for His glory. So work out your own salvation, knowing that it is really Christ working in and through you. Be encouraged.
2. Each of us is different by God's design. Just as Paul, Timothy and Epaphroditus are different and served in different capacities, so we are different one from the other. Yet, it is Christ, His character that is being formed in each one of us. Though we are to imitate those more mature in the faith, remember, you are unique, and designed to fulfill a different purpose from others. Be content. Grow!
3. Encourage others to offer their praise and thanksgiving to the Lord. Doing so, not only honors the Lord, but causes us to think differently about life. We begin to yearn for Him to work in our lives and wait expectantly as He does so.
4. Jesus is calling you today to receive Him as your Savior and Lord. The Bible tells that the wrath of God hangs over you, and death will send you into a Christ-less eternity. Jesus died on the Cross to make the only payment for sin. It can be for your sins if you confess your sin and receive Him today as your Savior. Why wait?

### Life Group Questions

1. Paul had joy under the most terrible circumstances. Joy is such a beautiful quality, yet it seems so illusive. How do we get it? Have you had times when joy simply flooded your heart? Is it possible to have joy every day, or is it beyond our ability?
2. If you know Christ, then you too are a trophy of His grace. When you think of your life, why were you too, early on, far from grace and a very unlikely candidate for the Gospel? Do you often think about it? Does God's grace in your life still bring amazement to you?
3. Does hearing the praises of others encourage you? How so? What has God done recently in your life that you would like to share with us? Are you expecting Him to work in you and yours?