

Philippians 2:19-30

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[0 : 00] Tonight we'll be teaching on this text, and it's an interesting text for a lot of reasons, because it's more narrative than some mysterious meaning.

! We look at this text and there's so much going on there, but it's not like chapters 1-2 up to verse 18. It's really more narrative than some esoteric theology, where we're looking for, well, what does this mean?

And it's pretty clear. You can read it. And what he says is that he hopes to see the Philippians soon, and that he's going to send Timothy and Epaproditus to him. So, we can read that, and pretty much that's what it's saying.

And it's interesting because the last time I taught, I taught on something that was kind of similar to it, where it was really just straightforward. This is what the Bible says. It's not like we really have to do some cross-references and look all over Scripture to see what this means.

And so, I think because of that, maybe I'm prone to believe that God is trying to teach me something, that I make these really short and simple and sweet texts.

[1 : 07] I pass over them a lot of the times. And I really like the bigger ones that you have to look all over and understand, well, what does this text mean? I think that's kind of what the Lord's trying to teach me, is that I enjoy these big theoretical texts, but when it comes to very straightforward Scripture that you don't really get around, because you can't really interpret it five different ways.

It means what it means. Don't grumble. You can't interpret that. Well, I think Paul might be saying when it comes to when you're in the church, don't grumble, but when you're outside, it's okay, or whatever.

Like, it's not like that. It's just very straightforward. And so, this is the second time. So, I get this text, and I'm wondering what God's trying to teach me. And it's not wrong for us to search for these bigger texts and to like these texts that have a lot going on there.

It's not wrong, because it's good. We're actually commanded to search the text for deeper meanings. There's so much going on in Scripture, and we're commanded to look into it. But it is wrong if we start putting the scale, or we start saying, okay, well, these are the more, like, bigger texts, like 27 through 30 of chapter 1, but then these verses in 14 through 18 aren't that important, because it's straightforward.

But, kind of in, like, Christian circles, we tend to do that. We easily kind of put a balance and a scale and see, well, this text means more, because we can really examine it more.

[2 : 32] And the reason why this is so hard is because it's like simple texts reminding people that it should be really above these texts, that we should have these down, that these are basic Christianity points.

We should have these points down. And it should be something that we're still trying to cover, but the truth is that we still all struggle with being humble. We all still struggle with not grumbling. And for someone to say, well, you're not really giving those texts enough attention that they need, it's kind of like reminding a college student about the golden rule, which is something that you learn when you're in preschool.

And it's kind of humbling. It's like, well, I know not to put others before myself, but I learned that in preschool, so why are you reminding me of that now? And so we have pride. And the truth is that our pride hates being reminded that we so oftentimes neglect the small, simple things that we're commanded to.

And so kind of the best way that I can illustrate this in my own life is that if you've ever learned a really, really simple, basic truth to Christianity later on in your life and you realize that you probably should have known that a long time ago, for me that was, I don't think it was until a year ago that I

understood that the reasoning why Jesus needs to be born of a virgin.

I just didn't understand that. I always just kind of accepted it. I was like, okay, yeah, Jesus is born of a virgin, and that's the way things are. And then when I realized, oh, he needs to be born of a virgin so that he's completely pure and free from sin.

[3 : 57] And then I realized, well, I can't let anyone know that I just figured that out because then they won't think that I'm some like theologically solid rock who knows everything. Like I can't do that. I just have to play it off cool.

And yeah, I knew that the whole time. So the thing is that there are a lot of things that we pass over in Scripture. So we read this, and I think our natural kind of, if you were to read this in your own time, if you were to read this on your own, and we read this, we're kind of going to read this and keep going.

It's not like you're going to spend 30 minutes just looking at this text and trying to understand, well, what does it mean? How does it apply to my life? And so on. We're probably going to move on to chapter three. But the thing is that we move, we tend to pass over things consciously or subconsciously.

And there's a lot of examples that we can go into this. And so that's where we're going to kind of go tonight. Really, I can give a couple examples of these that are going to be kind of tough.

But we neglect the simple things that either Jesus says or Paul says or someone says that we're just not being faithful to. I'm going to list off three. It is better to give than it is to receive.

[5 : 03] That's something that's very basic, can't get around it, and it means what it means. But so many of us have such a hard time grasping that truth and really living it out in our lives. It almost seems like we like to take these truths and we know them, but then keep going and learn the more complex things.

Another thing would be love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. And that's something that we know is true. We know it's true because it's a very simple, straightforward text. But how often do we live that out in our lives?

If someone hates you where you're at right now, we're definitely probably not going to turn around and love that person. Someone that might be making fun of us or whatever. It's just that's a simple truth and somehow we pass over that because it's not necessarily deep.

Another one, and I think this one's really timely, is 1 Timothy 2, verse 1 through 2. You don't have to turn there, but he says, Real talk.

we cannot, for most of the people, if you're in the South, most of the people cannot stand the recently re-elected president. And if you don't believe me, then you should have been on Facebook the day after the election day.

[6 : 31] So much of it blew up. There's not a single status that wasn't about that. People are so frustrated, and if you grew up in a Christian home, probably your parents still kind of were on that same side of definitely not, at least, I'm not going to say as far as how much we may go into it, but we definitely don't pray and intercede for President Obama.

I can't remember the last time that I was in my house, and my parents and my family were like, well, let's pray for President Obama. We really need to pray and intercede for him. It's a simple thing like that. That is so simple, but somehow we make it this very, very complex thing.

And unfortunately, a lot of those comments were from a lot of Christians, from a lot of people who would say they're Christians. And so we're looking no different from the world in that. So why do we do that?

The truth is that pride has caused us to blatantly pass over simple truth that's in God's Word. And God's Word, as much as we love it, and as much as we say we love it, is so inconvenient to our lives.

It is really tough for us to follow. We deal with these inconvenient texts like pray for, like honor the emperor in 1 Peter, or pray for kings, make intercessions for them. And we make it this very complicated theoretical, theological truth. They're like, okay, well, this is what he meant in this context, and we really need to probably look at the Greek root of that and understand, well, what's Paul actually talking about here?

[7 : 57] And it's very straightforward. Paul is saying, you need to make intercessions and pray for the king. And our king in this country is at least President Obama. And so we kind of, what we do is we kind of insulate ourselves from these tough truths like loving your neighbor, or loving your neighbor, loving your enemies, praying for kings, praying for Obama, and we turn into this complex

theoretical jargon, and we insulate ourselves by that so we don't have to follow that truth out.

And so it's a phenomenon, actually, that was very common in Jesus' time. The best example that I can give from this is Luke 10, 25 through 37. So if you want to turn there, we're not going to read all of it, but just so you can get kind of equated with the story, what's going on here.

So in Luke 10, Jesus is talking to his disciples, and then someone walks up, and this lawyer walks up to him and asks him, he says, what must I do to wait, sorry, let me turn to it, actually, I'm going to kind of look at my notes.

Okay, so he says, what is written, he says, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And so we know the story, Jesus says, what is written in the law, how do you read it? And so he says, you know, I should love my neighbor, I should love the Lord my God with all my heart, soul, and mind.

And Jesus says, you've judged correctly. And so I'm going to give a little excerpt from Martin Luther King Jr. He wrote this in one of his books called Strength to Love. He kind of wrote about this, and he called this phenomenon of where we overanalyze something, and we don't act on it.

[9 : 38] He called this the paralysis of analysis. So we know the story, we know that this lawyer is talking to Jesus, and he says, teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

So Martin Luther King Jr. picks up right here, he says, the ethical concern of this man is expressed in a magnificent little story which begins with a theological discussion on the meaning of eternal life and concludes in a concrete expression of compassion on a dangerous road.

Jesus is asked a question by a man who had been trained in the details of Jewish law. Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? The retort is prompt. What is written in the law?

How readest thou? After a moment, the lawyer recites articulately, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind and thy neighbor as thyself.

Then comes the decisive word from Jesus, thou hast answered right. This do and thou shalt live.

Desiring to justify himself and to show that Jesus' reply was far from conclusive, the lawyer asked, and who is my neighbor?

[10 : 46] The lawyer was now taking up the cudgels of debate that might have turned the conversation into an abstract theological discussion. But Jesus, determined not to be caught in the paralysis of analysis, pulls the question from midair and places it on a dangerous curve between Jerusalem and Jericho.

He told the story of a certain man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among robbers who stripped him, beat him, and departing him, left him half dead. By chance, a certain priest appeared, but he passed by on the other side.

And after that, a Levite also passed by. Finally, a certain Samaritan, a half-breed from a people with whom the Jews had no dealings, appeared. When he saw the wounded man, he was moved with compassion, administered first aid, and placed him on his breast and brought him to an inn and took care of him.

Who is my neighbor? I do not know this man, says Jesus in essence. He is anyone to harm you or neighborly. He is anyone who lies in need at life's roadside. He is neither Jew nor Gentile.

He is neither Russian nor American. He is neither Negro nor white. He is a certain man, any needy man, one of the most numerous Jericho roads of life. So Jesus defines a neighbor, not in theological definition, but in a life situation.

[12 : 02] So, that's the most amazing thing about Jesus, is you have this lawyer who's trying to trap Jesus and just talking about theology for a second. Well, let's just talk about, you know, Jesus, what do I need to do to inherit eternal life?

He's like, you know, I've done those things, what else? And Jesus doesn't allow him to get away by asking the question, who is my neighbor? He doesn't allow it because he knows this lawyer is trying to insulate himself from action.

And the unfortunate thing is that we're kind of in the same place as that lawyer. This lawyer kind of wants this new revelation from Jesus. Yes, he's trying to test him, but he also wants a new revelation from him.

Who is my neighbor? Tell me something I don't know right now. And Jesus doesn't let him do that.

And the thing is that we want that new revelation all the time. We want to know what's next.

We want to learn more and it's good and that's great. We want to learn more about the Bible. But the truth is is that what we don't want to learn is we don't want to be faithful to the things that we

already know.

[13:03] We want to learn something new from a pastor, a book, a sermon, anything. But we definitely don't want to take a break from those things and leave everything else and just ask God what are the things you've taught me lately that I'm not being faithful to right now.

We don't want to be faithful to those things. It's much easier to keep going and learn new things than it is to be faithful to things that we already have. And the reason why we do this is because we fooled ourselves into believing that we can separate intellectual knowledge from belief and obedience.

We believe that we can separate the two, that we can divorce them, but they're never meant to be like that. And so, you're kind of wondering how that is going to apply to the text tonight. I promise I'm going somewhere with it.

But, so tonight, the direction that we're going is tonight we're going to look at two examples of men who love Christ so much and they love the Philippians more than themselves and why that matters to us.

I'm really excited about it. I'm going to pray for us before we get started. Father, thank you so much for tonight. God, I pray that your spirit would be here actively working in the hearts of everyone who's in this room.

[14:21] Father, what I'm so afraid of is not things running poorly or not running smoothly, but God, what I'm afraid of most is us coming here and leaving unchanged because we haven't met with you tonight and you haven't been here with us and we haven't invited you in to change our hearts.

So, Father, would you please change our hearts tonight by this text? We know that your word is powerful. There is nothing wise that I can say because your power doesn't rest in so-called eloquent wisdom but God, it rests in your power.

And I pray that it would be here tonight actively working in the hearts of everyone here. And we ask this in Christ's name knowing that you're going to do it. Amen. Okay.

So, Philippians. If you've been here so far, it's a very encouraging book. It's a very encouraging book. But, every single one of us is going to say, every one of us is lying if we say that this book has not been difficult to swallow.

There's a lot in here. That, there's a lot of difficult themes that are running through Philippians so far. And there's a lot of difficult verses that I just wish were not there. Let's deal with the first problem.

[15:38] Is that Paul is imprisoned for selling Girl Scout cookies? No. He's preaching the gospel and he's in prison for that. But don't worry. We get that privilege too of suffering.

Paul hasn't just left us to not partake in that. He's allowed us to. Verse 29 of chapter 1 if you're following that. So those are two things. Paul is imprisoned.

We also get to suffer. What else? Tell me more good news. Well, Paul says to live is to be like Christ and to die is much better. That's hard.

Even though we just say it so flippantly. That's verse 22 of chapter 1. So those are three things. And then finally another point that I could list would be don't be selfish.

Don't look to your own concerns but look to the needs and concerns of others above yourself. And don't grumble while doing it. So these are tough pills to swallow.

[16:36] These are tough verses. If we're just saying this has been flowers and sweet tea the whole time then we're lying to ourselves. So let's just be real with that. These are tough texts to follow with.

And so I think the camps that we fall into is we read this and we either say that's impossible and that's nice but it's impossible. We can't follow this.

Or we say that is a beautiful text and we become hopelessly idealistic and we don't even really take the time to apply it to our lives. We just kind of say that's a great text to read.

And so I think because most of us find ourselves in that camp unless you are so holy that you're doing all these things perfectly right now. We're finding that these texts are hard to live out.

And so I think that there's a reason why Paul pauses here. If you're familiar with scripture at all you kind of know that verse 19 through 30 that's kind of out of place.

[17:36] Usually Paul will write a letter and then he'll add this bit at the very end. So look at Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, Timothy, all those books. And this is kind of out of place because

we usually call these travel plans or greetings or shout outs.

But it's right in the middle of the book. Literally right in the middle. And I don't think it's just because Paul just got sidetracked. I think he puts it there for a reason. I think because God has his inspired hand on Paul in this.

The reason why I think that is for a lot of reasons. I'm going to go on. But obviously he keeps going in chapter 3 so there's a reason why he pauses here and he gets narrative on us.

He doesn't really do that in a lot of his other letters. So the two themes of Philippians so far have been, the first one has been stand firm and have unity amongst the body.

And then the second one would be look to the interests of others ahead of yourself by looking to Christ as that model. And so we said that's tough. Those are tough things to follow. And the thing is I think he stops because he wants to give examples of men who are doing this.

[18:46] He doesn't want us to get discouraged and bogged down or to become hopelessly idealistic and not follow through with this. I think he wants to stop here and give examples of men that are doing this.

It's almost like Paul is saying, hey stop. It's not hopeless. I know this is big and I know this is a lot going on but you don't have to lose hope by such heavy things that are going on in this text.

I think Paul is saying just pause for a moment. I promise you this is not a lost cause. I'm not wasting my time. I'm not wasting your time with something that you can't do. Paul pauses here because he's going to give examples of guys who are doing this.

He's already given the example of Christ. And so ultimately Christ is our example. Timothy and Epaphroditus are going to get to them and they're great guys but they are not our goal. They're not our motivation.

They're not our motor. They're not the end goal of things. And so Christ is. We kind of clay went over that not too long ago when he went through verses 5 through 11.

[19:48] So Christ is the reason that we're doing this. He's our aim. He's our goal. If you're not waking up and Jesus is the motivation for why you are living a godly life then we need to reassess and reevaluate what we're doing.

And so here's why I say that. I promise I'll back that up. I think Paul is pointing these guys for a specific reason. I don't think it's random. So you can be the judge of that.

I think there's a lot of similarity in language in verses 3 through 4 of chapter 2 and then in verse 21 and so on in this text.

So Philippians 2, 3 through 4, it says do nothing from selfish ambition or vain conceit but in humility count others more significant than yourself.

Is it coincidence that Timothy in verse 21 is seeking the needs of other people? He says this same language. He says for they all seek their own interests but not those of Jesus Christ.

[20:51] Timothy has proven his worth. So Timothy is doing that. Epaphroditus he also sought the needs of others so much that he almost died by risking his life. life. He almost died risking his life there.

It's not a coincidence that Paul urges the unified church body in verse 27 and then goes on to say that Timothy is caring more about the affairs of the church than his own life in verse 21.

It's not a coincidence that Paul says to live is Christ. That is a tough thing to say. He says that in verse 21 of chapter 1. And then Epaphroditus nearly died for the sake of the gospel.

I don't think it's coincidence that he's placing these verses right here. And the thing is that a lot of times we read scripture with skewed lenses.

We read Philippians and we say that's beautiful, let's talk about it, let's have discussion groups about it, but I don't want to live this out because it's just too hard, it's unrealistic. And the thing is that that is common and paralyzing.

[21:55] All of us face that. That's very common. And it's very paralyzing. It paralyzes us from doing any work. And I think that's why Paul places these verses here so that we don't become paralyzed.

So, it is so vital for us to be around men and women like Timothy and Epaphroditus. If we don't do that, let's just say we just take this and we just cut out that verse, man, we're going to lose sight that the Bible was intended not just to be picked apart and talked about, but it was to be lived out every single day.

It's vital that we surround ourselves with godly men and women who are striving for the gospel for the long haul. people. I want to surround myself with those men.

I know that y'all do too. I know that I'm not alone in that. I think a very dangerous thing that we could do as believers is we could make this perilous assumption that one day we will arrive, that we will be one of these men and women who are standing firm in the faith, who are here for the long haul, but we're not surrounding ourselves by those people.

I think that is a perilous thing to fall into. Say that, you know, I'm just going to coast into holiness. I don't think there's a single person, I could ask every single person here, do you want to turn from Christ in 40 years?

[23 : 24] No one's going to say no. Everyone's going to say, man, I want to be here for the long haul, I want to be in it for the long run, that we want to surround ourselves, but the thing is that we believe that we're just going to coast into that because we're not surrounding ourselves with those people.

We believe that as we get older, we're going to coast into holiness and we're going to get farther and farther away from heresy, from apostasy, from all those things, just because of the fact that we're getting older.

And I think that's a really dangerous assumption to make. And here's why I think why. I'm going to read something that John Piper wrote in his book called The Roots of Endurance. So he says, how my mind has changed.

As I complete my 50th year as a professing Christian, I feel the urgency of endurance more than ever. I used to think differently. I used to think when I was in my 20s and 30s that sanctification had a kind of cumulative effect that at 50, the likelihood of apostasy would be far smaller than at 30 or 40.

In one sense, this is true. Surely growth in grace and knowledge and faith helps us to no longer be taught to be children tossed to and fro by the ways and carried about by every wind of doctrine as in Ephesians 4.

[24 : 40] He says, I see more clearly now that even after the years of such growth and stability, shocking coldness and even apostasies are possible. This is John Piper.

I'm not saying he's the greatest man to ever walk the earth, but this is someone that a lot of us would say, this is a godly man that I would love to be surrounded by. He's saying this. He says, and I have known moments of horrifying blankness that made me realize my utter dependence on the mercies of God being new every morning.

He says, perseverance is a gift. That I will wake up and be a believer tomorrow morning is not finally and decisively owing to my will, but to God. I have known too many mornings on the precipice to think otherwise.

That I have been snatched back every time is sheer mercy. The human will cannot be depended on, because in the crisis of faith, it is precisely that same will that is weak and failing.

So John Piper even knows himself well enough to say that I don't trust myself to make it to the end. I need Christ. And so Paul gives this example of Timothy.

[25 : 54] I just want to take a second to look at the character of Timothy. I think Timothy is an excellent example of someone who has such endurance that John Piper is talking about.

And the thing is that Paul is writing this about Timothy, but not a lot of people, if you've read 2 Timothy, not a lot of people followed Paul to the very end. So Paul is executed in 2 Timothy, probably after he wrote that letter.

Turn to 2 Timothy 1, if you would, real quickly. Okay.

So this is the final book from Paul right before he's executed. And then, like we said, the end of the book usually has travel plans, what's going on in his life, kind of like small updates, kind of more narrative.

But 2 Timothy has a completely different theme. Imagine someone writing their last letter to you, most likely, knowing this is their last letter before they're about to die for the sake of the gospel. I would key in so much to hearing what they have to say.

[27 : 11] And so, it's kind of this very unsettling theme that's going through 2 Timothy, that Paul is talking about. The truth is, is that many have actually abandoned Paul.

I'm going to point out a few ones. Verse 15, you are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes.

So, all of Asia has turned away from Paul, or at least the believers that he knows. All of them have turned away from Paul, specifically these two guys, Phygelus and Hermogenes.

And then turn to, flip the next page, chapter 4, verse 9. Okay. So he says, do your best to come to me soon, for Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. Luke alone is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful for my ministry.

[28 : 15] Demas, I want to just, who is this guy? He left Paul, because he's fallen in love with the world. And the thing is, if you do a word search on Demas, he's actually someone who's been mentioned in Paul's letters before.

Where is he familiar from? Colossians 4, verse 14. Really quick. So, he says that Demas has left him. And then he says, this is before he wrote that, in Colossians.

So, kind of given the same orders of his travel plans, he says in verse 14, he says, Luke, the beloved physician, greets you, as does Demas.

kind of listing off all these people. He says, he lists Demas as someone who was actually with him, laboring for the gospel. One more place is in Philemon 1, verse 24.

So, he's giving more commands at the end of this book, and he says, Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ, Jesus sends greetings to you. So, we're talking about prison here. Like, he's listing off his prisoners.

[29 : 24] So, he says, Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ, Jesus sends greetings to you. And so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow workers.

So, this is a guy who's in prison with Paul. We're not talking about a guy that, when the going gets rough, I'm going to peace out. Like, he's not like that. He's not, this is not a guy who was just here because Paul is doing a lot of cool things.

He's doing miracles, and he agrees with them, and he's there. But as soon as things get tough, he backs out. That's not Demas. Demas, that's not him. This is the guy who's been in prison with Paul, and probably through a lot worse.

And then at the end of his letter in 2nd Timothy, he's fallen in love with the world, and he's left Paul. So, if that's not unsettling, that we can be in prison for Christ.

And that doesn't mean anything. It's like, man, and so the truth is that we don't know if Demas comes back.

[30 : 27] He might. He might have come back. But as far as we're concerned, as far as we know in Scripture, there's no indication that he does. It's kind of this unsettling thought that you can be in it and around people and not endure, and not be this example that Paul's giving in Philippians.

And so, Timothy stays. And as far as we know, so does Epaphroditus. Is Timothy flawless? No. Timothy's not flawless, man. He's, in fact, a majority of 1 Timothy that Paul writes to Timothy, I mean, it sounds good because it's a book, but it's also because Paul's writing this to Timothy as instructions to Timothy.

Here's some of the things that's going on with Timothy. Timothy is most likely backing down from preaching the gospel, so Paul says, don't back down from preaching the gospel. Preach it boldly. And then he's not being above reproach, and so Paul's saying, be above reproach.

And it's possible he's not tolerating dissension and ungodly teaching in his church. Timothy was a pastor in Ephesus, and so he's got a lot of cultural influence on him.

[31 : 37] And so, Timothy's by no means flawless. He's got a lot that Paul is instructing him on, and Paul is asking him to stand true to his teaching. But the truth is that Timothy endures.

God uses flawed, broken life to be an encouragement to the Philippians in this text. Not just the past two chapters, but because he doesn't intend those things to just be theoretical.

He gives this example of broken, flawed Timothy, and Epaphroditus, who I'm sure he's got a long list of things. But he gives this example of these guys that are living this out.

And the question is, why? Why does Paul, Paul does this, and God puts this there because God has never intended his word to solely be theoretical.

He, God has always intended to be applied to our love and not just our minds. And so, the thing is, is that as, if we read Philippians like it's a biology experiment to be dissected, pulled apart, studied, and philosophized over, and that's it, we miss the point completely.

[32 : 57] So, it's kind of nice that we have this pause here because Paul is writing this letter, he's giving all these hard things, and I can imagine Paul just kind of saying, I know this is tough, I know

this is tough, but I'm going to give an example of this.

And Paul is saying, don't miss the purpose of these two chapters. Don't miss the point of it. Don't overanalyze this, and just let this be theory. This needs to affect your life like it's affected Timothy and Epaphroditus.

So, if you're kind of sitting here, and we've been reading through Philippians, and we've been talking about it in our discussion groups, and you've kind of gotten discouraged because there's so much going on, and it almost seems impossible to live this out.

Don't be discouraged. Paul is begging us, don't be discouraged. Here are two guys who you know. Jesus is someone who we've heard about, and we read about, but these are two guys that we know.

And so, he's giving first-hand examples of Timothy and Epaphroditus. And so, we want, every single person in this room wants to be like Epaphroditus and Timothy.

[34 : 01] We want to endure to the end. And the question is, and how do we do that? If we've got so much here in the text that Paul is giving us, and then we've got this example of Timothy and Epaphroditus, and I definitely don't feel like a Paul and Epaphroditus, or Timothy and Epaphroditus all the time.

I don't feel like, I wonder what I would do in these situations that Timothy was put in. And I think it has two responses for that. How do we keep this when we know that, Lord, we're prone to wander. I'm just as capable of sin and apostasy as Demis is. And if we tell ourselves that we're not, we're fooling ourselves. And so, I'm going to finish out, actually, what John Piper says here in the next page.

He says, that is my cry. He says, let your goodness, O God, bind my heart with a chain to you. Seal my will to yours with an unbreakable application of your eternal covenant.

Is this the way that Christians should pray? Keep me. Preserve me. Defeat every rising rebellion. Overcome every doubt. Deliver me from every destructive temptation.

[35 : 16] Nullify every fatal alignment. Expose every demonic deception. Tear down every arrogant argument. Shape me. Incline me. Hold me. Master me. Do whatever you must to keep me trusting you and fearing you until Jesus comes or calls.

So, I think we keep that by crying out to God. I think it always starts in the heart. If we go straight to hands after this, like if we just go straight into applying this to our lives and just thinking of practical ways that we can do this, that we can be a Timothy and a Paphroditus, we're going to burn out. You will not make it. Because we're focused so much on our actions and we're not focused on our hearts. And so, I think along with that cry that John Piper is talking about, it has to start in our hearts.

It has to start when we go home tonight and just thinking about, Lord, I want to be kept by you. I want to be all these things that you're talking about in these first two chapters of Philippians. I want to be like Timothy and Epaphroditus, but I need you to keep me.

And so, that's our text for tonight. The thing is that we need to surround ourselves with godly men and women. And Nathan said this a few times is that it is so important that we do more than just hang out with college students.

[36 : 37] It is so important that we get around people with families. It is important that I get around Chris and his family and that I get around to see them, how they operate. It is so important.

We need someone like that in our life. We need to not just see them on Sunday, but we need to be there around their lives to eat with these families, to break bread with them.

And so, as we're concluding this out, this is such a nice pause for our discussion groups tonight for just where we're at because we have really important questions to ask ourselves.

There's two questions, or there's three questions that I say, okay, just think about. Because that first part of tonight where I'm saying that it's easy to pass over what we're reading so far in Philippians. It's easy to pass over this part because it's a narrative. But the question is that with the knowledge that you know, knowledge is a very great thing, but it's also a dangerous thing, and everyone will tell you that.

[37 : 43] And the question is, is what you're learning here, what you're learning tonight, what you're reading from even your own time in the work, is it leading to a knowledge that puffs up like Paul talks about in 1 Corinthians 8?

Is it leading to a knowledge that puffs up, or is it leading to a knowledge that builds up in love? Our knowledge is worthless if we don't have love. So what are we doing with that knowledge that we already have?

You can see Timothy and Epaphroditus love Paul, and they love the Philippians. They're great examples. Christ is our ultimate example, but these are great examples.

The next question is, are you being faithful to the revelation that you already have? Or are we passing over these simple truths the Bible has made very clear to us?

Non-negotiable truth. And are we looking for a new revelation instead of being faithful to those things? Man, a practical way in my life is sometimes I have to just stop listening to sermons from like John Piper or John MacArthur or Matt Chandler.

[38 : 52] I have to stop because I just like to listen to those things, and I don't even think about the fact that, God, am I even being faithful to those things? Am I just stocking up knowledge because it's what I like to do?

And then, man, kind of a more deeper question is, have Jesus' words and Paul's words, have they lost their original intention to be lived out in your life?

And they're merely just words on a page that we are just analyzing and studying, and they have no application in our lives. Those are good places to start.

Let's just be thinking about those as we're worshipping Christ through our musical worship and as we get to talk to each other tonight. I love getting to be in these discussion groups because what I've loved is having guys and girls in the group that I get to know their name, I get to talk about this, but then I get to pray for them, and we get to ask each other, man, what's going on in your life?

Like, you're telling me what's going on. Like, just tell me something so I can pray for you. That is what I love so much about it, and so let's take this and let's ask ourselves those questions as Wes comes up and as we break out into discussion groups.

[40 : 11] Let me just pray for us. Heavenly Father, you are so good to us.

God, you have not just left us following a rigid and dogmatic religion that means nothing to us, that has no impact on our lives, but God, you have given us truth, and you've given us men to look to and women to look to that can encourage us to live this out.

Father, thank you that you love us more than any one of us in this room will ever understand, and I know I will never understand it. God, I beg you to change my heart over this text.

Would you please change the hearts in this room over this text? God, I just pray that tonight we would just pause and, God, invite you in to change our hearts, maybe in just a small way, Father, but God, I just pray that you would change our hearts before we try and start changing our actions. We love you, and you are so good to us. We pray this in Christ's name. Amen.