

**A MOST UNUSUAL SERVANT OF JESUS CHRIST**

Philippians 2:19-24

**Intro:** I feel highly honored this morning to be here at Sunrise Baptist Church, and to have a part in this installation service for Jason Matthews whom you have chosen as your new Youth Pastor. For several years I had the privilege of being the Pastor of Mark Brotherton's grandparents when I was at the West Memorial Baptist Church in Vancouver, B.C. And Mark's father was in our youth group at that time. That was back in the late 40's and early 50's.

It was during those years that I first heard about Sunrise Baptist Church. Several of us who were pastors of Baptist churches in British Columbia met with a number of Baptist pastors here in Washington, and your Pastor at that time was one I met in those meetings. His name was I saw his picture outside in the hallway with your other pastors. However, I had never been here until one Sunday night not too long ago when we were here visiting Jason and Andrea. Then it was that I saw again Jon and Linda Aldrich whom I had as students at Multnomah.

It was your Pastor's father who invited me to join the faculty at Multnomah back in the 50's, and that led to our acquaintance with all of the Aldrich family, and I couldn't begin to measure the blessings that have come to me and my family through the Aldrich family through the years from those days until now. I have many wonderful memories of your Pastor, but I will have to say that one of his greatest achievements was in choosing Linda and asking her to be his wife.

So Lucille and I are happy and honored to be here to share with you in this service when Jason is to be installed as your Youth Pastor. And I know that I speak for Jason's parents and Andrea's parents when I say that. We are all delighted to be a part of this service.

You have made a good choice. And the Lord has blessed Jason and Andrea by giving them the opportunity to serve under Jon and Linda and with all of you here at Sunrise Baptist Church. I believe that the Lord is going to make this a very special relationship for all of you, one that will bring glory to the Lord, and one that will touch many lives by the power of the Holy Spirit. And I should add that little Kelsey is the cherry and

whipping cream on this whole situation.

So again let me say how happy I am to be here.

When I got word from your Pastor that he would like for me to come for this service, he got to me just as I was completing Philippians 2 in my Tuesday Bible Class. In that chapter Paul mentioned two of his fellow-servants who were with him in Rome where he was a prisoner. One was a man by the name of Epaphroditus who probably was a Philippian. He had come from Philippi to Rome with a gift of money for the Apostle Paul, and it was he who took the Philippian epistle to the Philippians church. Some feel that he was the Pastor of the church at Philippi. In verse 25 of Philippians 2 you will see that Paul called him “my brother, and companion in labor, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants,” meaning *my needs*. That is a list of titles that any Christian would like to have after his name. Obviously Epaphroditus meant a great deal to the Apostle Paul.

I don’t know how old Epaphroditus was, but I would think that he was older than Timothy, but probably not the age of the Apostle Paul.

However, just before Paul mentioned Epaphroditus, he mentioned another man, a younger man, who had been Paul’s companion for some ten or eleven years. His name was Timothy.

Timothy had a mother who was a Christian. Her name was Eunice. And he also had a grandmother who was a Christian. Her name was Lois. They are mentioned in 2 Timothy 1. The only thing that we are told about Timothy’s father is that he was “a Greek” (Acts 16:1 and 3). Timothy’s mother was Jewish. So it seems that while Timothy had a godly mother and grandmother, his father was not a Christian. However, his mother and grandmother had taught Timothy the Scriptures from his early childhood, and it must have been good teaching because in 2 Tim.3: 14 and 15 Paul told Timothy this:

14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;

15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Paul called Timothy “my own son in the faith” (1 Tim. 1:2), but whether

that meant that it was under Paul that Timothy ultimately was saved, or that Paul had nurtured Timothy as a spiritual father would nurture his spiritual son, we cannot say. But these men were very, very close, like a father and a son. The Apostle Paul must have filled a place in Timothy's life that his own father had not filled, and could not fill because it seems, as I have said, that he did not know the Lord.

John MacArthur has estimated that Paul and Timothy were probably about thirty years apart in age. When Paul wrote to the church at Philippi the two men had probably been serving the Lord together for ten or eleven years. They had been very happy years, very fruitful years. And what Paul said about Timothy here in our text, indicates that the younger Timothy was A MOST UNUSUAL SERVANT OF JESUS CHRIST! When Paul said what he did in verse 20, I don't think for a moment that he was minimizing the life and character of Epaphroditus. Epaphroditus would not have been included in the statement, "I have no man." Epaphroditus was not one of Paul's men. The only time he is mentioned in the NT is right here in Philippians. But of Paul's men, Timothy was the most outstanding as a man of God and a servant of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now what I want to do this morning is to seek to answer the question, "In Paul's mind, what made him say the outstanding things that he said about Timothy?" Even at my age, this passage has been a great blessing to me because I am always looking for ways in which I can be a better servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verses 20 and 21 and 22 are the verses I want us to concentrate on this morning. And I want to begin with the last of these three, verse 22. Here we have:

### **I. THE PROOF OF TIMOTHY (Phil. 2:22).**

(Read verse 22.)

"The proof of him" is the way it reads in the KJV. The NKJV has "his proven character." The NASB has translated this expression as meaning "his proven worth." The NIV says, "But you know that Timothy has proven himself."

If you ask many experienced pastors what is the greatest problem they

have faced in the ministry, after acknowledging their own failures and limitations, you will find that many of them will say, “My staff.” This is because so often men will join the staff of a church, not planning to adapt themselves to what is going on in the church, but they come with their own agenda and usually cause a lot of disruption in the work. They may feel that their training puts them above those they are working with, including the pastor. They may feel that they have special gifts which suit them in a particular way for the job they have been asked to do. But Paul made this simple statement of the evidence that could be seen in Timothy’s life and manner of service: “As a son with the father, he hath served with me in the Gospel.” What are we supposed to see in that statement?

“As a son with the father” is a statement that Timothy was a humble person. It would be hard to find a more delightful characteristic in a young man than humility.

Secondly, this expression, “as a son with the father,” speaks of a willingness to be led. Timothy did not join Paul to tell Paul what to do, or to show Paul what he ought to be doing. One of his main purposes was to learn from Paul. Paul said “he hath served with me.”

Third, the father and son relationship in Scripture is most often portrayed as a loving relationship. Timothy had a deep love for Paul. He stood by him from the first to the last. There was a bond between those two men that people could not help but notice.

And then in this statement there is evidence of Timothy’s attachment to the Word of God. “He hath served with me in the Gospel.” Paul was not just talking about the preaching of the Gospel, although that would be included, but it has to do with the full extent of the Gospel – that he got his guidance from the Word of God.

Let me say just a word to Jason at this point. I think you know, Jason, that the tendency in church work today as far as working with young people is concerned, is to feel that you have to treat them in a different way from those who are older than they are. Youth leaders who believe that young people need to know the Scriptures, and to know how to live by the Word of God, are very rare. It is so easy to fall into the trap of entertaining young people instead of teaching them. In many churches the

youth work is like a separate work from the rest of the church. You can't find that that was ever the case with the Apostle Paul or any of the other apostles. Young people are people. They need teaching. They need to know their Bibles. They need to learn how to live in a way that is pleasing to the Lord. The strength of the church tomorrow depends upon how well we are teaching our young people today. They need to be made to feel that they are a part of the church, and in time they will find their places in the leadership of the church. So you are to do with these young people exactly what their pastor is doing with the whole congregation. Being a youth leader doesn't mean doing something different. It means being able to supplement the pastor's ministry by being able to deal with the young people in more of an individual way. You will prove yourself to be of immense value to the whole church if you are standing shoulder to shoulder with Pastor Jon in the work that he is doing.

I know you well enough to know that you do have a humble heart, and that you truly want to serve the Lord by ministering to people. So get your guidance from the Word because that is where the Pastor gets his guidance, and then serve "with him" in seeking to help the young people of this church to be conformed to the likeness of Christ.

But let me point out one more thing about this expression. "As a son with a father" ought to remind all of us about the greatest Father-Son relationship that there ever has been. And that is the relationship between the Son of God and His Father. The Lord came to this earth with one primary objective, and that was to do the will of His Father. That was all that mattered to Him. Seek to be like the Lord Jesus in your service, and the people of this church will thank the Lord for the day He brought you here to have a part in what He is doing in the lives of the people here. What we all need is God's blessing, and this is the path that leads to it. Seek God's approval first, and there is no doubt but that you will have Pastor Jon's approval too.

Now let us go back to verse 21, and notice that Paul commended Timothy for something else.

## **II. TIMOTHY'S LIKEMINDEDNESS (Phil. 2:20).**

This is one of the main themes of this epistle. For example, you can see it very clearly in verse 2 of this second chapter. (Read Phil. 2:2.) For a

long time I thought what Paul had in mind was that we must all agree with each other. But who is going to determine what that will be? Was Paul saying that everyone had to agree with him. Was the church at Philippi free to choose its own way, and the Ephesian believers another way, and so on until there were as many different ways as there were churches?

No, not at all! Here is our answer right before our eyes. Paul wrote, “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5). All of Paul’s emphasis was that we must get in step with our Lord. It is His will that must be done. We don’t make our plans and then expect the Lord to bless them. We seek from the Scriptures His way, and then we walk in them. That was the life-long purpose of the Apostle Paul. Didn’t he tell the people in the Corinthian church, “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ” (1 Cor. 11:1)?

If there was a man whose life was a copy of the Apostle Paul, it was Timothy. And he was especially like Paul in Paul’s concern for the people of God – and that included young people. Paul said that he had no one who could compare with Timothy, whose very nature it was to be concerned for the Lord’s people. “Naturally” means *genuinely, really, sincerely, faithfully*. And what did Paul mean by the word “state” – “who will naturally care for your state”? He meant “who will naturally care *for you!*” I am sure that you young people will find that Jason is a person you will not only like, but you will need. And he will want you to enjoy yourselves in the right ways, but his main concern will be where you are spiritually, where you are in your fellowship with the Lord.

One more thing about Timothy, and then I will be finished. This has to do with verse 21. And it is the greatest way in which Timothy was a blessing to Paul, and it had to do with:

### **III. HIS PASSION FOR CHRIST (Phil. 2:21).**

We have no reason to believe that Timothy ever saw the Lord Jesus Christ while the Lord was here on earth. But to Timothy the Lord Jesus was a very real person. He knew the Lord. His mother and his grandmother had taught him about the Lord. And through the years Timothy’s knowledge of the Lord and his love for the Lord had been growing and growing. Timothy remembered how the Lord had opened his eyes and his

heart to see his own need, and then to understand that the only one who could meet his need of salvation from sin, was the Lord Jesus. And through the years of his still young life Timothy was devoted to the Lord and to making sure that other believers would love Him, and trust Him, and live for Him. And that those who did not know the Lord would hear the Gospel message. Timothy was not out to make a name for himself, but the burden of his heart was to know the Lord in an ever increasing way, and to minister Christ to others, that they might know Him. Timothy would really “amen” Paul’s words in 3:10 and 11.

**Concl:** Jason, my prayer for you is that the Lord would make you like Timothy. I believe you are on the way. May the Lord make you a blessing to Pastor Jon, and a real asset to his ministry. May the Lord use you to increase His ministry to the young people of this church. There will be trials along the way, but no trial will be greater than if you should see some of those to whom you minister turn away and walk no more with the Lord. I encourage you to pray for the young people of this church by name, and to ask the Lord to keep them from falling. It is your job to seek to strengthen them through the ministry of the Word.

And to you parents, let me encourage you not to turn the raising of your children over to the church. The responsibility is mainly yours. But you need to pray for Jason and for Andrea as she works with Jason, and as they work with the Pastor, that their work will supplement what you are doing at home, and that working and praying together you all will have the joy of seeing your children give real evidence that they know the Lord, and that they love the Lord and are seeking each day to please Him, and to be like Him.

Jason, I have always prayed for you, but when you and Andrea got married, I moved you on my daily list with her. And you can be sure that all of us in your home church will be joining with the people of this church that God will make you another Timothy, and that you will be a useful instrument in the hand of the Lord here in this place of ministry where you are to serve Him.

Thank you, Jon, for giving me this privilege today, and we trust that God’s blessing upon you and Linda will increase in the coming days as you continue to serve the Lord here.