

I Have No Man Likeminded
Philippians. 2:19-30

718

Theme: Friendship

Aim: To show the value of good friends and how to have them

1. Some years ago, a man ran for sheriff in Selma, Alabama and got only 55 votes of a total of 3,500. The next day, he was seen on the main street of town with a gun hanging from his belt. Two townspeople approached him and said, "Hey, you weren't elected. Why are you carrying that gun?" "Listen," he replied, "A man with no more friends in this county than I have needs to carry a gun."
2. This lesson has to do with Paul and his friendship with two men. The men are Timothy and Epaphroditus.
3. Phillipians 2:19-30.

I. The two men.

A. Timothy is the better known.

1. Meet him in Acts 16:1-3.
2. He becomes Paul's traveling companion for the rest of Paul's known life--a trusted messenger between Paul and the churches.
3. Paul calls him:
 - a. A fellow worker, Romans 16:21, I Thessalonians. 3:2.
 - b. My beloved son, I Corinthians 4:17.
 - c. My own son in the faith, I Timothy 1:2.
 - d. Faithful in the Lord, I Corinthians 4:17.
 - e. A man of unfeigned faith, II Timothy 1:5.
 - f. A man who knew the scriptures, II Timothy 3:15.
4. Look again at Phillipians 2:19-24.
 - a. No man likeminded.
 - b. Who will naturally care for you!
 - c. Why? Verse 21.
 - d. They knew his character!

B. Epaphroditus whom we only know from these verses.

1. Paul calls him:
 - a. A brother.
 - b. A fellow worker and soldier.
 - c. A man worthy to be held in esteem (honor, high regard).
2. I believe I would like to have known these two men.

II. Three things I would like to point out.

A. The value of true friendship.

1. David's friendship with Jonathan II Samuel 1:26.
2. John 15: 13.
3. During World War II, two Irish soldiers who were very good friends and part of that group whose lives were depicted in the movie *Bridge Over the River Kwai*, found themselves in an enemy prison camp in Japan. These two men were tall, athletic and in excellent physical health. All felt that if any were going to survive, it would be these two friends.

Soon, however, one of the men contracted malaria. The Japanese captors did little for sick prisoners. They would put the sick in a bamboo hut which was off limits to all well prisoners. They called it a "hot house." Most died there. The Japanese would then burn the hut around the victim and build a new hut.

But, this friend couldn't let his buddy die like that. So, in disobedience, he stole food and went each evening under cover of darkness to care for his sick friend. The sick man recovered, but the man who helped him contracted the malaria and died in a very few hours. But the man who lived, in tribute to the man's friendship, changed his life and lived as a Christian because of the friendship, he had enjoyed.

4. True friendship develops that kind of loyalty.

5. I am sure that those kinds of feelings were present between Paul, Timothy, and Epaphroditus.

B. The joy of true friendship.

1. Paul had confidence in Timothy, he knew Timothy.

2. There no doubt was joy in that relationship.

3. Wouldn't it be thrilling to see Paul greeting Timothy as they met after a period of separation?

4. He was likeminded, kindred spirit.

C. These kinds of friendships are often forged in adversity.

1. Paul and Timothy had been through rough times together. Shipwrecks, beatings, imprisonments, problems with the brethren.

2. Their relationship, though no doubt strained at times, deepened over the years--now there is not another friend to Paul like Timothy.

3. Paul's relationship to Epaphroditus forged in this sickness.

4. An additional factor is time!

III. Two concluding observations.

A. No man is an island, we need friends like these!

1. What a joy to have these kinds of friends!

2. The ones I have had have been my brethren!

B. But to have this kind of friend, relationships must be cultivated!

1. Proverbs 18: 24.

2. We need to move from the shallow relationships we often have to a deeper more meaningful level!

1. Paul and Timothy became friends because of commitment to a great common cause.

2. A general, aware of the presence of an invading army, was trying to get two feuding captains up on a high mountain where they could for the first time view the awesome invasion force. Struck by the spectacle, the general took their hands, put them together, held them aloft and said, "There is the enemy, we've got to be friends!"

3. We need that loyalty and fellowship Paul and Timothy had in the great cause of Christ today! .

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