**Lessons from a Lockdown**

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**Day 8**

**Philippians 2:19-30**

I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. I have no one else like him, who will show genuine concern for your welfare. For everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how things go with me. And I am confident in the Lord that I myself will come soon.

But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, co-worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs. For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill. Indeed he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow. Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you may be glad and I may have less anxiety. So then, welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor people like him, because he almost died for the work of Christ. He risked his life to make up for the help you yourselves could not give me.

*Questions for Personal Reflection:*

1. How do you know if you have genuine concern for the welfare of others?
2. How would you compare your discipling relationship with that of Paul and Timothy? What do you think you can do to make it better?
3. Who are the Christians you know who make great sacrifices to serve the church? How do you think you can show your appreciation to them?
4. In your relationships with Christians, are you more of a brother/sister, co-worker or fellow soldier? In what aspect do you need to grow in?
5. Have you been like Timothy or Epaphroditus to other Christians? Why do you say that?

*Insight:*

Paul wanted to send Timothy to them because he wanted to find out how they were doing. Because Paul could not go himself, he found a way to get the information he needed. As Christians, we need to be concerned about how *everyone* in our groups are doing. Do we know how they are doing spiritually? Are they having quiet times? What are they learning from their quiet times? Do we know how they are doing physically? Is anyone sick? Do they have enough food or medicine? If they are parents, how are their children? Do they have the money to buy what they need? We cannot simply assume that people are doing good now simply because they were doing good before. Our circumstances can change suddenly and some people are too shy to voice out their needs. So, we need to ask. Who have we asked lately? Is there anyone in our group we have not contacted recently?

Paul also sent Timothy because he had genuine concern for their welfare. Sometimes we need to check our hearts to see if our acts of service come from a “genuine concern.” As brothers and sisters serving one another, are we acting out of sincere love?

Timothy was like a son to Paul and served with him in the work of the gospel. Paul also sent Timothy to Corinth (1 Co 4:17), Thessalonica (1 Th 3:2), Ephesus (1 Ti 1:3) to preach and teach. If we read Paul’s letters to Timothy, we can see how close their relationship was (2 Ti 1:4). How are our discipling relationships today? Do we have a Paul in our lives? Do we have someone we listen to and learn from? Do we have a Timothy in our lives? Do we have someone we are helping to be more like Christ?

What makes Paul’s relationship with Timothy even more amazing was the fact that if either of them did not become a Christian they may have never been friends. Paul was raised as a legalistic Pharisee while Timothy was a half-breed Jew with a Gentile father (Ac 16:1). In the church, God enables us to have friendships we would never have had we never become Christians. As Christians, we can have deep and meaningful relationships with anyone.

Epaphroditus risked his life to take care of Paul’s needs and almost died for the work of Christ. There are people in our churches who serve at the cost of personal sacrifice. We should honor such people. We should never be ungrateful for people who serve. There are people who make the effort to encourage us and meet our needs. Let us thank them today for what they do and what they have done.

Epaphroditus was described by Paul as his “brother, co-worker and fellow soldier”. This describes how our relationships in the church should be. First, we are *family*, so each one is our brother or sister. Secondly, we should all be working together for Christ. But for some of us, it’s hard for other Christians to consider us as co-workers because we haven’t really been working for Christ. In the body of Christ, everyone must do their part. Finally, we are all soldiers in a spiritual battle. We need to watch each other’s back. We need to protect each other and fight together against our common enemy – “against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil” (Eph 6:12). We should not be fighting each other. Let us be an encouragement like Epaphroditus was to Paul and the Philippians.

During the lockdown, let us be like Timothy and Epaphroditus.