

**Sermon Series: A Love Letter for a Church in Peril**  
***Today's Message: Paul's Messenger: A Son***  
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Have you ever had to work with a messenger-- someone who represented you? In our society we often have to do that. E.g., if we have a real estate agent, we want to be sure he/she represents our investment interests in the way we want them to be handled. Sometimes that works out, and sometimes not. I recall advice given to me about real estate transactions with agents is that they are good to have but always remember the only person looking out for us getting the best deal is us. The selling agent wants a high price to get a commission from it and get the sale for their client; the buying agent wants to get a good price and a commission off of it, and get the sale for their client. The seller and buyer is looking to get a great deal-- and are not concerned with the commission for the real estate agents. E.g., I was once in a board meeting of a organization that was trying to sell some property, and the real estate agent was in the meeting, and someone in the meeting asked what is the lowest price for which we would sell the property, and a businessman spoke up and said that should not be discussed in front of the agent. It is interesting-- we had an agent representing us, but we could not trust that agent completely. We all have probably had a situation with that when we are presented-- whether it is real estate, legal counsel, financial advisers, etc. Wouldn't it be nice to find someone whom we could completely trust to represent us? Paul has such a person, and from our text today we can learn how to be that type of person.

READ Philippians 2:19-24 (p. 197)

**CONTEXT:** Paul has just emphasized not looking out to the Philippians not to look to their own interests and empty glory, but to the interests of others and consider others as more important than yourselves. We are to have the same mindset as that of Christ, who though He was in the equal with God did not view that equality as something to be exploited, but He emptied Himself, taking on the form of a human being, even a slave, and dying a slave's death on the cross. Therefore God has given Him the name above all names, so that every knee will bend and tongue confess that Christ is Lord. Thus they are to work out their salvation with fear and trembling, shining light stars in purity while they live in a world that is bend and perverted.

“Who is Timothy? He is from Lystra in southern Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey, where Paul was stoned and left for dead; Acts 14:19); he was the son of a Jewish mother and a Greek father; Paul had Timothy circumcised and accompany him to Philippi (Acts 16); and Paul refers to Timothy as his beloved, faithful, and loyal son/child (1 Corinthians 4:17; 1 Timothy 1:2; 2 Timothy 1:2). Not only that, but Timothy has ‘slaved’ beside Paul in the work of the gospel-- but whose ‘slave’ has he been? Cf. 1:1. To whom are you and I Timothy? Do we have a Timothy?” It is clear that Timothy is, along with Paul, a slave of Jesus. Notice that they serve as slaves to Jesus, who Himself is the chief slave in 2:7-8! Is that the way you view the ministry where Christ has you? Are you His slave? Unfortunately today we see too many people “negotiating” Lordship with Christ. We live in a world where everyone wants to be in charge, it seems. E.g., I recall in high school there was some confusion as to what was going on, and our coach had a group of us sit in the bleachers and wait for further word from those in charge, and he muttered under his breath something I don't think I'll forget-- “too many chiefs, not enough indians”. This is a major problem in the Church today with Christ. E.g., whom should I marry?; what should my college major be?; what should my job be? how

should I use my money? E.g., a father did not want his children sharing the faith with others of a different world religion at the children's private school-- he was fearful of what others would think of him. So, to whom are you and I Timothy-- i.e., who has or is discipling us? Who is asking you how your quiet times are going? To whom do you share your spiritual struggles so the older Christian can pray for you and encourage you and teach you? E.g., my Dad and I did door-to-door evangelism uptown in New Orleans when I was in my mid-20's, and I recall our talking to some guys who were college-age and they smiled and listened to what we said but I don't think they took us seriously, but through that experience my Dad was discipling me and modeling for me what a godly Dad was like-- someone sharing the gospel with his child. E.g., I recall in college I was discipled by John Schmidt, our InterVarsity Christian Fellowship campus minister at UNO, and he met with me for one semester once a week-- that was a great time for me, and he helped me with many doubts and questions I had. I recall telling him about a victory I had spiritually-- I said that I responded to a struggle over lordship in a different way that made me feel good. Instead of exploring my options of how I can get out of my relationship with Christ I started exploring how I could obey and stay close to Christ. And do you have a Timothy in your life-- a young Christian whom you are mentoring in the faith? We need to think about having some more 12-week Discipleship classes here again.

READ v 19. "Paul could use a little cheer/encouragement. Could you and I?" For many of us, verbal encouragement is not our primary love language. Acts of service or gifts may well be. Nevertheless at some point, everyone needs verbal encouragement. At this stage in Paul's letter he has been in prison for about two years. He must have been emotionally exhausted and longing for an encouraging word, to hear how the Philippians had responded to this letter in particular. E.g., I recall a youth who was surprised in a worship service by other youth who

prepared a part of the service just to say how much they appreciated her. She was overwhelmed and truly appreciative of their love for her! You too can probably think of times people encouraged you. Whether it is a Sunday School teacher or friend in the church who has touched your life, you and I need to let that person know.

READ vv 23-24. “Notice that Paul’s schedule is based on his hope and confidence in the Lord; cf. vv 19, 23-24. Who is in charge of your and my schedule?” Paul uses this phrase “in the Lord” as though he is making decisions in the sphere of the Lord’s rule over him, and the Lord will see that his plans happen or not. I.e., Paul, even in his plans and schedules, humbles himself before the Lord. E.g., I encourage us this week if you make out a list of things to do for the next day (which is a good thing to do) to pray over them and ask for His guidance.

“What can we do to encourage ‘Timothies’ to exist and flourish at Lake Vista UMC?” We ask the Lord to whom we need be a Timothy, and whom we can take under our wing as a Timothy.