

Hallelujah Anyway, Part 11

Pastor Steve Berger June 14, 2015

“I wanna be like...”

- who did you want to be like as a kid? who was your hero?
- as an adult follower of Jesus, when you read the scriptures, who is there that, “I wanna be like...”
- we would do well to imitate heroes in the Bible
 - with Gospel realization, through His grace, we can become like the heroic character of Jesus
- contrasted with Bible zeros, who we definitely don’t want to imitate

Two unsung heroes of the Bible

Philippians 2:19-30

But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state. For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus. But you know his proven character, that as a son with *his* father he served with me in the gospel. Therefore I hope to send him at once, as soon as I see how it goes with me. But I trust in the Lord that I myself shall also come shortly. Yet I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier, but your messenger and the one who ministered to my need; since he was longing for you all, and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. For indeed he was sick almost unto death; but God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. Therefore I sent him the more eagerly, that when you see him again you may rejoice, and I may be less sorrowful. Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such men in esteem; because for the work of Christ he came close to death, not regarding his life, to supply what was lacking in your service toward me.

Timothy — first unsung hero

- **Philippians 2:20,22** — For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state...But you know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel.
- **no one like-minded**
 - one in mind and spirit with Paul
 - what Paul said, Timothy grabbed hold of in humility, submission, and obedience
 - no one else emulated Paul quite like Timothy did
- **sincerely cared for people**
 - genuinely cared for people’s spiritual condition
 - sought to impact people for the kingdom of God
 - gave encouragement and rebuke; preached whole Gospel, what they needed to hear
- **proven character**
 - integrity, responsibility, dependability
 - had been with the Philippians three times before, including starting of the church
 - he could be counted on
- **as son with father he served with Paul**
 - reason for like-mindedness was Timothy was Paul’s son in the faith
 - called and discipled by Paul himself
 - served with Paul, teammate, not easy, circumcision, opposition, imprisonment, etc.

**Every one of us needs to have a mentor discipling us
and we need to be a mentor discipling others.
This is the biblical model and mandate — raise the bar!**

- **2 Timothy 2:2** — And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.
- **few things**
 - Timothy was Paul's protégé, submitted to adult circumcision, constant missionary partner, co-author, messenger, stomach sickness, imprisoned
 - summoned as Paul awaited execution
 - became Bishop of Ephesus
- **love most**
 - **2 Timothy 1:6-7** — Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

Observation — *Timothy was a guy who pressed through his own doubts and fears! Heroes aren't people without doubts and fears, heroes are people who don't let doubts and fears keep them from doing God's will!*

Beloved — *let's be people who sincerely care for others; let's have proven character; let's serve with others; and not be served by others! Let's start father/son, mother/daughter spiritual relationships — let's be heroes not zeros!*

Paul's sobering commentary — Timothy is only one like-minded

- **Philippians 2:21** — For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus.
- **people in church circles**
 - those who want to do own selfish things while playing church
 - in church to see what can they selfishly take from it, rather than what they can sacrificially pour into it
- **Philippians 1:15-16**
 - motivated by envy, selfish ambition (seek own exaltation)
 - John wrote of Diotrephes who loved to have preeminence
- **2 Timothy 1:15** — This you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes. (seek their own comfort).
- **2 Timothy 4:10** — for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world... (seek their own pleasure).

Three questions —

Are you one who seeks your own exaltation, comfort and pleasure?

Are you only into this church/Jesus thing so long as it suits your own interests and agenda?

Are you one who is seeking the things of Christ Jesus no matter what it costs you?

Epaphroditus — his name means “lovely” — and he is...

- **Philippians 2:25** — Yet I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier, but your messenger and the one who ministered to my need...
- **brother**
 - favorite word of Paul; used 9 times in Philippians
 - Timothy was Paul's son
 - Epaphroditus was Paul's brother, eternal family member; united through mutual faith in Jesus Christ.

Family is so dysfunctional today that biblical family terms can lose their weight. Paul used family terms to highlight the importance of our relationships in Jesus. When we see each other as eternal family members, it should absolutely effect how we treat each other. In Christ, we're more than acquaintances or even friends, we're family, and we should be sincerely caring for each other as such.

- **fellow worker** — another common phrase for Paul.
 - Epaphroditus is a team member not a bleacher sitter, there's kingdom work to do, there's a harvest to gather, he's part of solution and not part of problem
 - **Luke 10:2** — Then He said to them, "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."
 - laborers are few because too many seek their own

Notice — *it's great if you're a brother/sister, now progress and be a fellow worker — pull your load as a family member, and help gather the harvest.*

- **fellow soldier** — brothers and workers must progress and adopt a soldier's attitude
 - We need a soldier's attitude because we're at war.
 - **Ephesians 6:10-12**— Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.
 - We need a soldier's attitude to stay focused on what really matters.
 - **2 Timothy 2:3-4** — You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.

It's great if you're a brother/sister and worker, now progress and be a fellow soldier. Epaphroditus risked his health and life for the gospel, like any good soldier would.

- **your messenger** — apostle, ambassador, 700 mile journey to deliver your message of encouragement and update to me.
- **my minister** — servant, he came and ministered to me, hands on, personal, sincere care. He brought your gift and he was a gift himself.

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There's nothing too menial, small, insignificant for this brother, worker, soldier; he'll be a messenger, minister, servant, whatever the cause requires.

Many were called brothers, fellow workers, fellow soldiers, messengers, and ministers... but only Epaphroditus was called all five! Hold him in esteem! Acknowledge his heroic behavior, receive him home with gladness, "well done good and faithful servant!"

Discussion Questions

1. Is there a specific Bible hero/heroine that you would like to emulate? Why?
2. Do you really believe that you have the capability to become heroic in the biblical sense? Why or why not?
3. Philippians 2 outlines Timothy's proven character of integrity, responsibility, and dependability, in the body of Christ. Could the same be said of you?
4. "Every one of us needs to have a mentor discipling us, and we need to be a mentor discipling others." "There are no spiritual lone rangers." Is this biblical model active in your life?
5. Read 2 Timothy 1:6-7. How does this verse show that Timothy was not always "heroic in his feelings"?
6. Read Luke 10:2. How can you progress from just being a part of the biblical family, to being a fellow worker — pulling your load in gathering the harvest?
7. Paul called Epaphroditus his "fellow soldier." Why did he need to adopt a soldier's attitude? (Ephesians 6:10-12).
8. Read 2 Timothy 2:3-4. How can we apply this verse to us as followers of Jesus?
9. Epaphroditus personally went to tend to Paul's needs. Can you tell of a time in your life when being Christ's hands and feet, giving the gift of yourself, was meaningful?
10. Many were called brothers, fellow workers, fellow soldiers, messengers, and ministers... but only Epaphroditus was called all five! Which of these would you be called? Which do you want to aspire to?

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We pray for requests for one month, and at our weekly prayer meetings.

**Please come join our House of Prayer,
Tuesday, June 16th at 6:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary.**