**A Genuine Concern for Your Welfare**

**The Word**

Read together Philippians 2:19-30

**The Big Idea**

Paul offers Timothy and Epaphroditus as tangible examples of living “the Jesus life” of love, care, sacrifice, and service to others. We are called to honor people like that, and we are called to seek to imitate them so that we become tangible expressions of God’s love and care for others.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. Philippians 2:19-30 is not a well-known passage to most of us. What specifically from the example of Timothy or Epaphroditus stood out to you most and why?

2. Paul offers a sobering description of humanity in v. 21: “For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.” Self interest takes various forms (e.g. pursuing our own possessions, our own recognition, our own comforts, etc.) but every form can become a barrier to genuinely loving others. As you look at your own life, what form does selfish-interest take for you, and how does that make it hard for you to love and serve those around you?

3. On Sunday we were encouraged to consider the key people God has sent into our lives who have really loved and cared for us and been tangible expressions of God’s love. Share a story of one person who has been that for you? What specifically did he/she do that was particularly meaningful to you?

4. As you consider your life at this time, is there a specific person you think God might be calling you to come alongside and love in a more intentional way? What might next steps be with that person?

**Digging Deeper: Sermon Outline**

I. Introduction

A. The Christian life is not a solo journey. We are called to walk alongside each other

1. The Jesus life is as much caught as it is taught

2. We learn through seeing living examples of sacrificial love and service

 B. Paul’s mention of Timothy and Epaphroditus

1. At first glance, this section seems out of place, but these two men are living examples of the life of love and service Paul has been talking about in ch. 2.

2. See Philippians 2:3-4. The rest of the chapter gives us three examples of that kind of life: Jesus, Timothy, and Epaphroditus

II. The Example of Timothy

A. A “genuine concern” for your welfare (v. 20)

It’s easy to fake concern in our culture today, and it is refreshing to meet people like Timothy who truly and genuinely care for and look out for others

B. Most people look out for their own interests (v. 21)

1. Our natural default is to get caught up in our own interests, and in the pursuit of our own needs, we are not actually free to stop and consider what others may need.

2. But Jesus had changed Timothy’s heart and freed him from his own selfish neediness so that he could actually look out for other’s needs

C. He has “proved” himself (v. 22)

 1. We all know the difference between casual friends and “proven” friends

2. “Proven” friends are those who have walked with us through the hard times in life, and they have proven the genuine-ness of their love and support (through prayer, conversation, questions, tangible/practical help, staying with us through thick and thin, etc.)

III. The Example of Epaphroditus

A. Background: Epaphroditus traveled over 750 miles from Philippi to Rome to deliver financial gifts to Paul, and he got sick on the journey and almost died.

B. There’s great comradery between Paul and Epaphroditus (v. 25): brothers, co-laborers, fellow soldiers

C. Notice the care that everyone has for each other

1. The Philippians are distressed about Epaphroditus’ illness. Epaphroditus is distressed because the Philippians are distressed and haven’t yet heard that he is now well. Paul cares about the whole situation so he’s sending Epaphroditus back.

2. There is this wonderful circle of loving concern and care for each other

IV. Conclusion

A. Jesus frees us from the “rat race” of pursuing our own interests so that we can genuinely care for others.

B. The heroes of the faith are those unsung heroes who come alongside others and faithfully serve in ways that often go unnoticed.