

# Kings Norton Baptist Church

Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2023 10 am

More about Jesus (Godly Timothy) - Philippians 2:19-24

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Welcome to all.

Opening Scripture

Hymn MP 1259 Bless the Lord O my soul

Scripture Psalm 146 (page 632)

Prayer of praise and thanksgiving.

Children's talk me first tray.

Chorus MP 590 Seek ye first the kingdom of God

Notices

Prayer time

Reading Philippians 2:19-24 (page 1179)

Haggai chapter 1 (page 948)

Hymn MP 632 Thank you for the cross

Sermon More about Jesus (Godly Timothy)

Hymn MP 889 More about Jesus (congregational)

Closing Prayer from back of the book

Close

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## Exordium and Prayer

As we continue in Paul's letter to the church at Philippi we come to 2:19-24. Paul loved God's people and is concerned for their progress in the faith.

Paul saw the church in Philippi start when the Lord opened Lydia's heart on an earlier visit. Then when Paul was imprisoned the Lord opened the jailer's heart and set him free, and the church was formed and grew. Paul wrote this letter from another prison cell, he's now in Rome but his heart is for God's people in Philippi.

**Epaphroditus** the pastor of the church had been to visit him, we read about that in v25-30 we will look at him another time. Now Paul wants to send **Timothy** to them to see how they are getting on and to bring back to him some good news of their progress to cheer his heart.

Paul speaks to them of Timothy <sup>20</sup> **I have no-one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare. For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.** Timothy a Christian from one of Paul's missionary journeys now has a genuine interest in the welfare of others. That is what you would expect you might say, of course we are saved and given a new heart to love Christ and his Church. But Paul is very candid about the matter, sadly even among those who profess to be followers of Jesus, this love is rare. **I have no-one else like him** he says **for everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.** how could that be? x2 The sermon title is:

'more about Jesus' x2 = and less about me = Godliness. x2

When it is 'more about me' this is not to be Godly but to be worldly, to live carnally, to live selfishly. This is what the world does:

## Selfish world

Self-centredness is part and parcel of how the world works. As the Christian influence in our country wanes - so selfishness reigns – and is encouraged.

■ "self love made easy" boasts Booksey on a bill board, another advert says 'indulge yourself' another 'it's time to be your own boss'. A gift card tries to persuade you to 'Get what you want today' a huddle has the words 'Love yourself' a girl walks past carrying bag saying 'show who you are'.

Gen X has given way to Gen Z, the Me, selfie generation. Seeing people self-absorbed, seeing people oblivious to those around has become the norm.

■ Ever wondered what it is like to be invisible? Then try holding the door open for people, I remember doing this outside a school, very few said thank you - most didn't even notice I was there.

1b

- That's the parents, no wonder children are not taught to ask about and take interest in the welfare of others.

Almost every media post is about me, how I look and what I am doing. Some people's pics so doctored "I think that hardly look like you at all!"

- Tim Chester in his review of Facebook points out that research has found the more people use Facebook the more self-centered the more self-promoting, the more narcissistic and the more superficial their behaviour is. He says it has become 'My Image, My Space, My friends, My World, we are all the heroes taking centre stage in our own story!'
- A team of psychiatrists in assessing a teenage who killed his parents and then went on a spending spree diagnosed him as having "Narcissistic personality disorder" (*diagnosed!*) (BBC News 29<sup>th</sup> June 2005)

The most recent expression of this is the change of: my gender, my age, my ethnicity, my disability. I will change reality to suit ME. A fantasy world.

- It is like King Canute who set up his throne by the sea shore and commanded the incoming tide to stop. What happened? He got wet!

This pull towards 'self' puts me up to be God and requires that everyone else bows down to me, to my whims & wishes - acknowledging my fantasy world.

- Book "the rise and triumph of the modern self – Carl Trueman and has chapters on the reimaging of self and the reimaging of culture.

This is the adamic lie. Satan in his attack on God offers YOU centre stage. He then leaves you to die there. It is a wicked ploy. Please realise that Satan comes to **kill, steal and destroy**, and he leaves a trail of misery in his path.

The more our nation removes the truth of God the more this ugly trait pervades. People fifty year ago didn't talk about themselves, they were generally self-effacing. Not now, "let me tell you about my problems, aches and pains", etc, etc. it reflects a self interested heart.

Before people would see themselves as a smaller part of the whole. Whether a community or tribe or nation. I am one person in the nation, a small cog in the big wheel of the world. This is God's creation. He is central to it and I am just a small and temporary part in it.

This centre has now changed from God - to me. It's a *Copernicus shift*.

- Nicolas Copernicus (1473-1543), all though he was not the first, did at the time of the renaissance (1514ish) revolutionise the way people thought. He showed that the earth was not the centre of everything. Instead the sun was the centre of our solar system and the earth and other planets revolved around it.

- Now in the last sixty years God has been removed from the centre, everything revolves around me.

Now everything revolves around my wishes. The government is essentially managing 67 million demi gods. Politicians are opinion managers, responding to those who lobby them, and often whoever shouts the loudest.

This is Britain in 2023. And it is no surprise, it is exactly what one would expect. I laboured the point though, to show just how ungodly it is.

- ✚ What is serious, is that - this mindset has entered the church. x2

### *Not in the church*

It shouldn't be in the church, it mustn't be in the church. We are different.

As Christians we acknowledge God's rightful place, and therefore we think differently, we act differently because God is the centre, it is His world, He started it He will end it, everything in it is to be for His Glory. He is complete in and of himself and doesn't need any of us to fulfil his eternal will and purposes. We are like a mist that comes and goes. As failed image bearers, as sinners we have no right to anything from God. For God to wipe us out send me to judgment would be to give me what I deserve.

But we also know that God in Christ has chosen to reveal his Glory in redeeming some people from the world. We are given the task of manifesting, reflecting this great and glorious God, as did Adam and Eve before the fall.

Now in Christ we are being remade in the likeness of the true Adam, Jesus Christ, to love God and to love others. For this we were made, and in this you and I function properly. For we are designed not to be self-centered, but other-centred. It is in serving the Lord and others I find true happiness and Joy.

So why is the world's way found among Christians, why is it in the church?

### *Yes - it is in the church*

Paul is talking about Christians at Philippi who are self-interested. Did they fall for the devil's lie that I will find happiness in serving my own interests? How can I believe that? But many do. Yes in the church this should not be.

So how did it come about at Philippi? Let us look at true conversion. When the church was formed at Philippi, Lydia the first convert to Jesus immediately opened her home to the Apostles. So too did the Jailer. They were both filled with joy and immediately had a grateful servant heart because of all that Christ had done for them.

They knew the pitiful state of their hearts – they knew what Christ the Son of God had suffered on the cross for them - and they knew His saving grace.

A Christian is a man or woman who is honest about his or her true sinful state. I grieve over it, I mourn over it, and I urgently long for that righteousness I do not have - and then I find rest for my soul in the finished work of Christ my Saviour. A Christian is a contrite man or woman, boy or girl. We are broken, there are tears, plenty of them. I cried a lot, .....

What a wonderful Saviour who lifted me up out of the muck and the mirh, who cleaned me up and allowed me the share in the riches of heaven. I have been raised up with Christ. I am now his grateful, humble, joyful servant. We say with Kings David: **Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked.** Ps 84:10

At the moment of conversion when Christ enters my heart he brings a flood of peace and of joy, self-love is replaced with a love for him, a love of others, a love for the lost and a love and a hunger for the things of God.

Jesus is my Lord and master and I now follow Him. How single-minded Jesus was when on earth, the world had no hold on him. He was never about His own business – He was always about his father’s business, and he loved people dearly.

So too should we, x2

But what happens?

Slowly and gradually the world creeps back in. Slowly and gradually my heart grows cold to the things of God, that white hot coal loses its brightness, the glow dies and fades back to darkness. I become cold to the things of God - and the work of the Lord – but warm in the pursuit of my own interests, my conversation becomes worldly, on me and my things.

Has the pull of other things choked the word of God planted in your heart?  
Has time hidden away with the lord become dry and less and less frequent?

Has your desire for the Lord faded? What has happened to that daily priority to do His will? Is the emptiness filled with TV, media, entertainments, hobbies, recreation trips and other busy-ness? The god of this age has a long line of things to put before you and I to keep us occupied and away from the Lord’s work. So when the Spirit of Jesus prompts you to take that initiative, that avenue of service, that good work, - there little or no response.

3a

When there’s opportunity to serve - you are not available. When there is activity for the kingdom of God, prayer times for the kingdom of God, you are not available, “Sorry, I can’t make it”.

✚ I repeat what Jonathan Edwards said: “It is impossible that the man who is devoted to self, should apply himself to the interests of the Church.”

This was the problem with the people of God in the days of Haggai. They had neglected the place of God and gone off to other things. The Lord spoke to them about this: **"Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your panelled houses, while this house remains a ruin? You have planted much, but have harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it."** And not to mention an empty heart. And why? **"Because of my house which remains a ruin, while each of you is busy with his own house.**

This is what the LORD Almighty says: **“Give careful thought to your ways.”** And he says it again: **“Give careful thought to your ways.”** Haggai 1:4-11

Timothy had – and it showed. Paul commends him for it. 20 **I have no-one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare.**

But Paul says it is *a rare thing* - Should it really be *a rare thing* to see genuine concern for others amongst the Lord’s people?

■ Valdir a church worker here years ago said it was ‘a rare thing’ - but he had experienced among some Christians in Birmingham true trust, acceptance and interest in him. “It’s rare” he said “it impacted me”.

There are only a few like Timothy. **For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.** Clearly there were not many in the church a Phillippi. **That is a terrible indictment and challenge to us all**

Paul had to say to them v3 **Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.**

Didn’t Jesus show this through his humiliation, through becoming a servant that we too should likewise serve: 5 **Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!**

✚ Those of us who profess to be Christian - must be like Jesus Christ.

3b

Easy to say – but serious action is needed - the killing off - of self, it won't happen with some overnight surgery. To serve God's purposes, to serve others, to be selfless, will only happen when there's an ongoing battle against self.

### *This was clearly seen in Timothy*

How did he have it? If you review Timothy's life you will have the answer.

It starts in Acts 16 and his conversion. Paul comes to the city of Derbe in Asia Minor and finding Timothy takes him under his wing. Timothy then accompanies him on his Missionary journeys through Macedonia, Greece and back to Asia Minor (see Acts 17 & 18). Plenty of time on that long road to ask questions and learn from his mentor, not just in his wise words but in seeing how he lived.

Then in time Paul sent Timothy on Mission. Acts 19:22 He sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he stayed in the province of Asia a little longer. Then he returned to Jerusalem with Paul Acts 20:4

Paul calls Timothy his **fellow-worker** in Romans 16:21 and sends him off to northern and southern Greece on a Gospel mission. 1 Thess 3:2 **We sent Timothy, who is our brother and God's fellow-worker in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith,** - and he returns: **Timothy has just now come to us from you and has brought good news about your faith and love.** 1 Thess 3:6

To the church at Corinth Paul says that **Timothy is carrying on the work of the Lord, just as I am.** 1 Cor 16:10

With Paul he co-authored letters to the church, **Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi,** Phil 1:1, also to Corinth, also to Colossae, also to Thessalonica. And to Philemon.

He became Paul's **Henry Kissinger** his special envoy: **I am sending to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.** 1 Corinthians 4:17

And of course He received at least two letters full of sound advice from Paul Timothy also had his turn behind bars for the faith, I suspect it was Paul again writing saying: **I want you to know that our brother Timothy has been released. If he arrives soon, I will come with him to see you.** Heb 13:23

**His was a life of serving = training = strengthening and progress in the faith.**

Paul had said **train yourself to be Godly => More of Jesus – less of me, x2**

4a

No wonder Paul could say 22 **that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel.**

See the long years of saying yes to serving meant he grew. Once saved, he was mentored, he became a Co-worker, he was sent on Mission, he preached the gospel, his training and serving had made him fit for Church leadership. He became the Pastor at Ephesus. The bottom line is that he continually died to self. **To go up^ up^ you have to go down down!** He took on the hard work – here's the training - the constant unrelenting killing off - of self. More of Jesus 'Lord make me more like Jesus'

*That's the answer for you and I too.*

- I remember a time came when I was not doing anything in my life which was of me.
- Let us all serve, serve in the work of the Kingdom, the gospel:, get involved, join in, everyone should have an avenue of service, OM etc.

Let us learn from Timothy – more of Jesus - less of me. Let us obey the words of Jesus:

✚ **Be dressed and ready for service and keep your lamps burning *Motto***

It takes time and training to be Godly, it's the great fight of our faith to train myself to look to others first. It is a battle to the very core of my being!!

This is a real battle because all around people are saying “NO think of your self first, your health, your safety, your rights, your, your...” and as I said last week even those close to us, our nearest and dearest can try to instil this self-protective attitude which leave us as lukewarm, ineffective and God dishonouring Christians.

✚ **As that champion of the faith Brother Andrew said “don't say take care - say take risks”**

If Jesus Christ died for you then you no longer belong to yourself - you belong to Him. **You are not your own you were bought with a price** – and Oh what a price! **He who redeems now owns what he has paid for.** Has he died for you? Then you are no longer your own - but now the Lord's servant.

How great was Christ's labour for others! As His co-workers we should strive too, to spend and be spent until Christ be formed in others. Gal. 4:19.

Let it be seen that we are heaven bound in that we too give up of myself, my rights, my wants my all for Him. Let us make God the centre, not me, not the world, that indeed all things and I revolve around Him. Lord Jesus be the centre of my life. May 2023 be less about me and more about Jesus. \_\_END

4b