

Faithful Ministers

“The content is important, but so is the conduit. You cannot separate the messenger from the message.”

John Goetsch

Let's take a close look at those that have served with the mind of Christ, and examine the life of a Faithful Minister

Philippians 2:22-30

I. Timothy was Faithful in Ministry

Philippians 2:22-23

A. He had an Approved Reputation (v. 22)

A Reliable Servant

1 Corinthians 4:17 KJV 1900

For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.

C.H. Spurgeon preached to thousands in London each Lord's Day, yet he started his ministry by passing out tracts and teaching a Sunday school class as a teenager. When he began to give short addresses to the Sunday school, God blessed his ministry of the Word. He was invited to preach in obscure places in the country side, and he used every opportunity to honor the Lord. He was faithful in the small things, and God trusted him with the greater things. "I am perfectly sure," he said, "that, if I had not been willing to preach to those small gatherings of people in obscure country places, I should never have had the privilege of preaching to thousands of men and women in large buildings all over the land."

It is expedient that we recognize the value of simply being faithful.

1 Corinthians 4:2 KJV 1900

Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

A submissive son

Philippians 2:22

Paul had invested in Timothy's life and often counted him as a son in the faith:

1 Timothy 1:2 KJV 1900

Unto Timothy, *my own son* in the faith: Grace, mercy, *and* peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

2 Timothy 1:2 KJV 1900

To Timothy, *my dearly beloved son*: Grace, mercy, *and* peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 Corinthians 4:17 KJV 1900

For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.

B. He was an Available Replacement

Philippians 2:23a

“Although young and timid, Timothy stayed behind at Berea with Silas while Paul moved on to Athens and Corinth. He rejoined Paul, then was sent back to Thessalonica to strengthen the congregation there. After another sojourn with Paul, Timothy was sent to Corinth to straighten out some of the many problems distressing the young congregation there. Timothy later looked after Paul during Paul’s imprisonment. Timothy subsequently was asked to go to Ephesus to represent Paul and received the two letters from Paul that bear Timothy’s name. One of the last things we learn about the Faithful minister, Timothy was that He was imprisoned for the faith, but finally released.” (Barker, William P. *Everyone in the Bible*)

Galatians 2:20 KJV 1900

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

II. Paul was Faithful in Trials

Philippians 2:23b-24

2 Corinthians 11:23–28 KJV 1900

Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I *am* more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.

Of the Jews five times received I forty *stripes* save one.

Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;

In journeyings often, *in* perils of waters, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils by *mine own* countrymen, *in* perils by the heathen, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren;

In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.

Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

A. The Present Trial

Phil 2:23b

He witnessed to those around him.

Acts 28:23–24 KJV 1900

And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into *his* lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and *out of* the prophets, from morning till evening.

And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.

He wrote letters of encouragement.

Through this time of imprisonment, the Lord used Paul to write the prison epistles of Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon.

B. The Anticipated Release

Philippians 2:24

Romans 15:23–24 KJV 1900

But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you;

Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your *company*.

Committing your life to Christ is a risk to everything earthly and an investment in everything eternal. The question you may ask is, “Is it worth it?”

Missionary Jim Elliott said, “He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”

Mark 8:35–36 KJV 1900

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it.

For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

Preachers will often tell you, “The benefits to serving God aren’t that great, but the retirement plan is out of this world!”

Revelation 3:20 KJV 1900

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

Paul got to the end of his life and confidently said:

2 Timothy 4:6–8 KJV 1900

For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith:

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

So I urge you as Paul did the church of Galatia:

Galatians 6:9 KJV 1900

And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

III. Epaphroditus Was Faithful in Battle

Philippians 2:25-30

A. A Fellow Worker

Epaphroditus was from Philippi and was sent to carry collected money for Paul during the apostle's imprisonment in Rome. Epaphroditus stayed with Paul, helping until he took seriously ill and nearly died.

The phrase *companion in labour* is translated from the Greek word *sunergos* which means “a companion in work, a fellow worker.”

Philippians 4:18 KJV 1900

But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things *which were sent* from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.

“Don't waste your time and longing for large opportunities which may never come. But faithfully handle the little things that are always claiming your attention.” —F.B. Meyer

B. A Fellowsoldier

The word *fellowsoldier* here means “an associate in labours and conflicts for the cause of Christ.”

Ephesians 6:12 KJV 1900

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*.

2 Corinthians 10:14 KJV 1900

For we stretch not ourselves beyond *our measure*, as though we reached not unto you: for we are come as far as to you also in *preaching* the gospel of Christ:

C. A Faithful Messenger

Others-centered

Philippians 2:25c-27

Respected Reputation

Philippians 2:28-29

Paul instructed them on how to receive Epaphroditus back at Philippi:

- In the Lord—as their brother in Christ
- With all gladness—they should be glad because he had recovered from a terrible sickness
- Hold such in reputation—they were to regard him as an honored guest

The word *reputation* is translated from the Greek word *entimos* which means “held in honour, prized, precious.”

“None of us are apostles, but we are all epistles!”

2 Corinthians 3:2 KJV 1900

Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men:

Conclusion

“I know of nothing which I would choose to have as the subject of my ambition for life than to be kept faithful to my God till death; still be a soulwinner; still to be a true herald of the cross, and testify the name of Jesus to the last hour.”—C.H. Spurgeon

Titus 3:5 KJV 1900

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

Romans 6:23 KJV 1900

For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.