

The Disciple

JUNE 7, 2020

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LCCPASTORV@GMAIL.COM*Sermon for June 7, 2020*

FRIENDEMIC

We live in two realms, the physical and the spiritual. We are citizens of Heaven, yet we live here. In our minds, we look forward to the bliss of Heaven, but our hearts are attached to the love and beauty we find here. We are spiritual and we are human. Paul wrote: “to live is Christ, but to die is gain” (Phil. 1:21), yet here we have the human side of Paul’s attitude toward his death.

“I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. I have no one else like him, who will show genuine concern for your welfare. For everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel.”

Phil. 1:19-22

Paul let his friends in Philippi know that Timothy is the most qualified leader to send back to them in their time of need. There was no one else who cares about them as deeply. There was no one else who has proved his loyalty as much. Then, after this buildup of how great Timothy is, Paul lets them know that Timothy stays with him. Why? Why not send back the most qualified person? I think it is because of something personal. Paul’s relationship with Timothy had developed into a father-son relationship. Timothy’s character, his heart for the gospel and his paternal love for Paul has manifested in this letter. Unlike Mark (Acts 15), Timothy was loyal no matter how difficult life had become. Through it all, Paul and Timothy had become remarkably close friends. And now, as a prisoner of Nero, Paul was attentive to the reality that this could be the end of life here for him.

“I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how things go with me...” Phil. 2:23

Paul didn’t know how things would go, so he wanted Timothy to stay. Paul did not know if he was going to die or not. If he was going to die, he wanted Timothy there with him- by his side.

What happened to: “To live is Christ, but to die is gain.”? Paul was a man of great faith and courage for the Lord. Yet, he was just a man. His mind was made up about who he would serve- come what may, life or death. Yet, his heart wanted his son (in the Lord) with him just in case his time on earth was up. Paul cared deeply about his friends in Philippi, but Epaphroditus would have to do. Timothy stays. There is a saying that goes: “Everybody wants to go to Heaven, but nobody wants to die”. Paul looked forward to being with Christ but if he was going to die, he wanted Timothy near. Even if Timothy could not be in the same room during the execution, Paul wanted to know he was right outside.



Finally,
all of you,
be like-
minded, be
sympathetic,
love one
another, be
compassionate
and humble.

1 Peter 3:8

“But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, co-worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs.” Phil. 2:25

Let’s step into Epaphroditus’ shoes for a moment. His church sent him on an important mission. A journey that took him at least six weeks (over six hundred miles) to complete. There was no Uber to be found, let alone a pair of memory foam walking shoes. He made the exhausting journey to bring Paul donations. The second part of his mission was to stay and take care of Paul. That was his mission. Now, Paul is sending him back. Why would the apostle do that? Doesn’t that seem unkind?

“For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill. Indeed he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow. Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you may be glad and I may have less anxiety.”

Phil. 2:26-28 (emphasis added)

Epaphroditus almost died from an illness and Paul wants to send him home. The apostle who healed the sick in Jesus’ Name sounds “worried sick” about Epaphroditus’ health. Paul, the prisoner with unrelenting joy, would like to avoid adding onto his pre-existing anxiety.

Paul’s unrelenting joy coexisted with his sorrow and anxiety.

We live in stressful times. For many of us, the death of Ravi Zacharias and more recently, George Floyd has brought sorrow upon sorrow. The riots and looting on top of a pandemic has added to our pre-existing anxiety.

Paul’s unrelenting joy coexisted with his sorrow and anxiety. Maybe it’s spiritual to have sorrow and anxiety. Maybe, part of being spiritual is being honest about being human. And maybe the underlying message here is that we, like Paul, need the kind of friends that will be there for us through the difficulties of life.

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.” Dr. Martin Luther King

I need friends that are loyal and true, don’t you?

“A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who stays closer than a brother.”

Proverbs 18:24

Sometimes it may seem like the world is spinning out of control. The future is so uncertain. But we know that no matter how bad things get, there is nothing to be compared with the glory that awaits us (Rom. 8:18). And along the way, it really helps to have loyal friends. Keeping close to our friends has probably never been more challenging than during social distancing. Yet we need to make time for our friends. We need to be loyal and true to others in order to attract friends that are loyal and true.

Jesus told his disciples that he no longer calls them servants, but friends (John 15). When He was in the garden of Gethsemane praying for his life- all He asked of them was to stay awake and pray. When Jesus’ soul was overwhelmed with sorrow, they slept. And Jesus said: “The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matt. 26).

Jesus was left alone, so we would never be. Jesus was abandoned on the cross, so that we would be brought near. He was despised and rejected, so that we would be accepted and made righteous.

We live in two realms. In one realm, Jesus has strengthened our spirits (1 Tim. 1:7), and for the other, Jesus has given us our friends (John 13:15). And it doesn’t stop there. We are to love everyone as ourselves. Friendship takes work. It must be made a priority. We count everyone as our friends. We live in a “friendemic”.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Zoom Bible Studies

Wednesday
10:30am

Thursday
7:00pm

Contact Pastor Vincent to get the Zoom information.

Church Re-Opening
Tentatively Scheduled
Sunday, June 21st

Call to Worship

BASED ON GALATIANS 3: 27-28

L: We are created by God

ALL: **in the image of God.**

L: *All* people are created by God

ALL: **in the image of God.**

L: In our glorious differences,

ALL: **we reflect the Holy face of God.**

L: All who gather in Christian worship—

across the country and around the world—

ALL: **are brought near to God through Jesus.**

L: We are not Jew or Greek,

ALL: **low class or high class,**

L: male or female,

ALL: **black or white,**

L: citizen or immigrant.

ALL: **We are one in Christ Jesus.**

L: We are made in God's image.

ALL: **So let us love each other and worship our God with joy.**

Prayer of the Day

Dear Lord,

Help us reflect on the power of God the father, the son, and the holy ghost. We are reminded that you are "up there", "down here", and everywhere all at the same time.

Please continue to remind us that we can find you in the midst of every crisis if we only open ourselves to looking at each other through your eyes.

Even in the shadows of grief and violence, God calls us to love and respect. We are called to work

on our relationships with each other, person to person, neighbor to neighbor, community to community.

You have set before us difficult and worthy work and we look to the guidance of the trinity to help us along the way.

Let us start by praying the prayer Jesus taught the disciples....Our Father, who art in heaven...

A PRAYER

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You can also donate by mailing your contribution to:

Louisa Christian Church

P.O. Box 1344

Louisa, VA 23093

We thank you for your support.

WHATEVER IS *true*,
 WHATEVER IS *honorable*,
 WHATEVER IS *just*,
 WHATEVER IS *pure*...
 IF THERE IS ANYTHING
worthy of praise,
 THINK ABOUT THESE THINGS.
 PHILIPPIANS 4:8, NRSV

Hymn as Poetry

What a Friend We Have in Jesus

JOSEPH SCRIVEN, 1855

What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear!
 What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer!
 Oh, what peace we often forfeit, oh what needless pain we bear,
 all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.

Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere?
 We should never be discouraged, take it to the Lord in prayer!
 Can we find a friend so faithful, who will all our sorrows share?
 Jesus knows our every weakness; take it to the Lord in prayer!

Are we weak and heavy laden, cumbered with a load of care!
 Precious Savior, still our refuge, take it to the Lord in prayer!
 Do your friends despise, forsake you? Take it to the Lord in prayer!
 In His arms he'll take and shield you; you will find a solace there.

*Hear Our
 Sunday Service
 on the Radio*



I want you to get out there and walk—better yet, run!—on the road God called you to travel. I don't want any of you sitting around on your hands. I don't want anyone strolling off, down some path that goes nowhere. And mark that you do this with humility and discipline—not in fits and starts, but steadily, pouring yourselves out for each other in acts of love, alert at noticing differences and quick at mending fences."

EPHESIANS 4:1B-6
 THE MESSAGE

**Real Faith
 Today**

Every Sunday

8:30 AM

WJMA

103.1 FM