

**Philippians 2:19-24 Part 1**  
**The Importance of the Occupation of the Attention of the Mind Part 1**  
also Matthew 6:24-34

We are in the book of Philippians chapter 2. We have a study guide for you verses 19-24, actually verses 19-30 is a complete section about The Proof of Character in Fellowship. Remember Philippians is all about fellowship. We have been given Christ as the example: how His mindset was and was toward this earthly life. That He surrendered up His own glory, His own reputation, His own success. Took upon Him the form of the slave or servant, and even surrendered and volunteered Himself unto death, even the death of the cross.

Our first example after Christ was Paul, who came and said, as we saw last week, but he says, **But if I indeed am being poured out upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice, and I rejoice with you all.** Paul saw himself as a libation offering, that is when they would come and pour the wine on top of the sacrifice, the animal sacrifice. Of course, the heat would cause it to dissipate and to rise up in the form of a mist or steam, as a sweet-smelling offering to the Lord. Paul saw himself as basically saying, **If I am being poured out over your sacrifice and service of your faith,** that was his satisfaction. But also his message to us - just like Christ did for us, and Christ did for Paul, so Paul is doing for them. And his message is, "This is what it takes for believers to have fellowship together."

Some Christians are easier to fellowship with than others, in case you have not noticed that yet, just thought I would tell you. It takes sacrifice. The attitude should be, when I walk into a church and fellowship, not looking for what this church and fellowship is going to do for me but basically how God is going to minister to me, and how God will cause me to lay down my life as a sacrifice for the others. Love is not for the recipient; love is for the giver.

And as I mentioned last week, can you imagine Christ on the cross after suffering the beating that He did and then they crucified Him, can you see Him hanging on the cross and basically saying, "You know I do not really feel the love. So I am down off the cross, forget you guys!" He sacrificed himself for sinners. And Paul saw himself as an offering that was being poured out upon the sacrifice and service of their faith. It is not religious; it is basically faith. Teaching people how to walk with Christ, without the accompaniment and necessity of physical things - I call them props - just trusting by faith.

But as we go into today's section, The Proof of Character in Fellowship. We will see in the next couple of weeks that Timothy has been proven. His character has been proven.

Reading at verse 19, **Now I hope in the Lord Jesus, not just *I hope humanly*, but I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you quickly, in order that I also might be of good comfort, whenever I should know the things concerning you. For I have no one likeminded, who will genuinely care for the things concerning you. For all the ones are seeking the things of themselves, notice that literal translation, they are seeking the things of themselves and not the things of Christ Jesus. And you know the proof of him, that as a son with a father, he has served with me for the gospel. Him, therefore, I hope to send**

**immediately, as soon as I see how it is going to go with me. Now I hope in the Lord that I myself shall come to you quickly.**

So this little section has to do with Timothy. Paul is going to send Timothy to them. Verse 19 tells us Paul's concern for the spiritual welfare of these believers. Paul is concerned about them. How are you doing? He was not concerned about how the church is doing financially, or whether the church is growing in numbers, or any of these things. But rather concern for their spiritual welfare so that he can be comforted. He could be of a good mindset. So in order for this to happen he is going to send Timothy to them quickly, so that Paul can receive word and know of their condition and have himself put at ease about their spiritual welfare.

But secondly in verse, 20 Paul's Concern is in verse 19, Timothy's Character is in verse 20. Verses 20 and 21 are just fascinating verses, containing some Greek words and some biblical concepts that we have taught over the years and even made a series on it called, Satan's Only Weapon Against the Believer. Only one weapon. That is called **μέριμνα** (merimna), which means *the occupation of the attention of the mind*. That is it. I mean that is enough, but that is it. The occupation of the attention of the mind. After Christ, His Spirit comes into your spirit, you belong to Christ. From that time we grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We now have interaction with Him in His Word and the energy force of His Spirit with our minds, in our minds. And His Spirit is ministering to us in and through our minds.

In fact Paul said in Romans 12:2 that we should be involved not in being conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. So it is God's design that God's Spirit through His Word transforms and changes people's minds. The healing of the sins of the past, the healings of the abuses of the past, all come through God's Spirit in a consistent hearing of God's Word as He renews our minds.

Paul says in verse 20, **I am sending Timothy to you because I have no one who is likeminded, who genuinely will care for the things concerning you.** So *likeminded*, two [Greek] words. The first word is **ἴσος** (isos) for *equal*. And the word *mind* is not the word **φρήν** (phrēn) or **φρονέω** (phroneō) that we have talked about in this chapter, but the **ψυχή** (psuchē) the *mind, the soul. Equal souls together*. What he is telling us is that if you talk to Paul and then talk to Timothy it is like talking to the same person. Like or equal souls together. That if you hear from one you will hear the same thing from the other. You will not hear any differences, but they will be the same.

In Philippians 3:17-19 Paul says that as we have him as an example, compare what you are hearing and what you are seeing. Because I have no one likeminded like Timothy that basically will teach, and do, and say as we have, as we are an example to you. So to talk to Timothy or Paul at this state and condition of their relationship together, it does not make any difference, you are going to hear the same thing.

But Paul says in explanation, in verse 21, **I am sending Timothy because I have no one who is likeminded who genuinely will care for the things concerning you.** The word *care* is this word **μέριμνα** (merimna), *the occupation of the attention of the mind*. Those of you that

have sat through the hearing of the series once maybe twice of Satan's Only Weapon Against the Believer, this will be a reminder to you but there is additional information now that we want to provide for you for understanding this concept. Now Paul is using it in a good way.

We have always studied it over the years by saying Satan studies us, and tries to get the attention of our mind occupied in things other than Christ to get us distracted and to get us going down, at least mentally going down, a different road so that the maturing, and growing, and healing process that God has for us will not take place, because we are too busy with our minds. We are too caught up. We are too occupied. Even the things of necessity as we would like to think.

So Timothy is the only one who will genuinely be occupied with their spiritual condition. See, it is not a matter of defensively watching out for things to occupy the attention of our mind and get us away from Christ. There is something there, it is not defensive, it is also offensively in the sense that Christ wants us to be occupied with Him.

Look what verse 21 says, **For all the ones**, everybody other than Timothy, **all the ones are seeking the things of themselves and not the things of Christ**. There is a lot there. We are not talking about people who profess to be Christians and believers and basically said, "I am not going to church anymore," or, "I am not going to read my Bible anymore." We are talking about people who participated together but in their own personal life they were occupied with the things and seeking the things of themselves, and not seeking the things of Christ. They were not looking to have the attention of their mind occupied with the things of Christ. They were seeking and looking for the things of themselves.

This comes out in our conversations. What are the most important things going on in our lives right now? I do not want to know; we will be here all afternoon. What is occupying the attention of your mind? It is usually the things of ourselves and not the things of Christ, because we are too busy living this life. Well, I will see you in church and I will see you at Bible study, but I am so occupied with the things of this life, rather than the things of Christ.

For me, it would go something like this. "I just do not know what I am going to do." You see, I am occupied with the things about myself rather than, "I am really seeking out what the Lord is doing." Remember I told you before, He does not give us messages and signs about what to do. He is not an information booth where we come to Him and say, "Lord, I want You to show me what You want me to do." Because what we are supposed to do is follow Him in what He is already doing. He does not say, "Go up here two blocks, and turn left, and the first street turn right." And we go, "Thank you, Lord. I will call on You again when I need directions." I am supposed to be following Him, that is His will for my life. But what if He is not doing anything? Then He has not gone anywhere, and He has not done anything, so there is nowhere to go. It is seeking out Christ and the things of Christ without allowing ourselves to be distracted with the cares of this life.

So we see in this text that the word **μέριμνα** (merimna) is used in a positive way. Timothy is totally occupied with your spiritual welfare. I do not have anybody else that is like

that. There is lot other people in fellowship but they are occupied with the things of themselves and not the things of Christ.

In II Corinthians 11:28 Paul presented himself when he was presenting a list of qualifications for being an apostle; because false apostles had come into Corinth, and he was comparing himself with them. Only what he what he listed were all the things that he suffered for the sake Christ, versus their success presentation. He says in II Corinthians 11:28, **Besides all these things that I am suffering outside of my physical body, my circumstances, there is also that which comes upon me daily the care of all the churches.** The word care is the word **μέριμνα** (merimna). He says, "I am completely occupied in prayer, and in concern for the spiritual welfare of all of these churches and the people in them."

In I Corinthians 12:24-26 when Paul talked about the various members and parts of the body of Christ. He said, **For the better parts** (that is in the human sense) **that have no need: but God has tempered or mixed the body together, having given more abundant honor to the parts which are lacking. That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, or one member be honored all the members rejoice with it.** All the members are functioning together with the same care, occupied with the things of Christ.

So in the Scriptures you should know that this word **μέριμνα** (merimna), for *anxiety* or *worry*, is not only emphasized in a negative sense to not take thought for your life, or not to be anxious but we are also told to be occupied with the things of Christ. Not just during church. This is according to daily life.

Now if have your Bibles, please turn with me to Matthew chapter 6. Matthew chapter 6 where the Lord himself is the one who established the importance and necessity of this basic concept. This word that is found all the way through the Scriptures. Matthew chapter 6 beginning at verse 24. Jesus said, **No one is able to serve two masters.** The word *able* or *can* is the Greek word for *capacity*. No human being has the capacity to serve two masters. That is the way God made us. **For either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold (or cling) to the one and despise the other. You are not able to serve God and mammon.** Again the word *able* or *cannot* is the word *capacity*. You do not have the capacity to serve God and mammon.

Mammon is translated from the Aramaic word **μαμμωνα** (mammōna), which has to do with the things of the physical life. Material objects, even ambitions, and careers, and dreams about what I want to do with my life here on the earth. No human being has the capacity to serve two masters.

Now here is quiz time. Do not worry I am not going to call you by name, I will just point to you. No. Quiz time. The principle of deception. You have not heard me present that title before. But I am just wondering if somebody can remember what I always talk about when I talk about the fact that we only have the capacity to serve one master God or mammon. What is Satan's principle of deception in functioning with one capacity in light of handling the things of this world and seeking the things of God at the same time? What is the principle of deception?

Anybody tell me? I am asking you this so that you will remember it, so that we can repeat it over and over again.

Here is the principle of deception. Since I cannot serve God and mammon at the same time I will do the mammon part to the glory of God. You cannot serve yourself, or serve the human, or serve the physical, and serve God at the same time. The deception is, I will just serve the physical in the name of Jesus for His glory, of course. That is the deception. God is not glorified by that. One is not serving God by serving mammon. One is not justified in serving mammon by dedicating it to God. It does not work. So remember that concept, one concept that we have been created with the capacity to serve one and one only.

Now look at what verse 25 says. **Therefore, or on account of this.** It is making reference back to this principle in verse 24. It says, **On account of this**, this is Jesus speaking, **I say unto you, Take no thought for your life.** Literally, do not allow yourself, the attention of your mind to be occupied. I like the way the King James says *take no thought for your life*. That is kind of hard to do, is it not? That is exactly what he is saying. Your thought processes get all occupied with the things of this life and it becomes a distraction. Satan has got you. **Take no thought or do not be occupied for your life, what you should eat, or what you should drink; nor for your body, what you should put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?** He is just talking about the basic necessities. I need food. I need clothing. Do not get occupied with it. The Lord will take care of it. Hard to do, since all day long every day that is what we are occupied with, is the things of ourselves. Cannot be occupied with the things of ourselves and the things of Christ at the same time. It is impossible.

Jesus says, **Look at the birds of the heavens (or the air): because they sow not, neither do they reap, neither do they gather into barns; but your heavenly Father is feeding them. Are you not more worth than they? And which of you by taking thought can add one cubit to his stature?** A cubit is eighteen inches. You know, if you are five foot five inches, and you want to play center on the basketball team, you are going to have to grow a little bit. Worrying about it, thinking about it, striving to be taller than you already are, will not do you any good. You are occupied with something that is beyond your control and it is occupying your mind. So being occupied with it, you cannot change your height. You can wear platform shoes, but you cannot wear those out on the basketball court.

And He says, **And why do you take thought for clothing? Observe the lilies of the field, how they are growing; they neither labor neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all of his glory was not clothed as one of these. Therefore, if God in this way so clothes the grass of the field, which today exists, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O little faith ones?** God takes care of the birds and the animals automatically. **Therefore take no thought (do not be occupied) saying, "What should we eat?" or, "What should we drink?" or, "Of what should we be clothed?" For all these things the Gentiles (or the heathen nations) seek after: for your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things. But you be seeking first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.** Supplied. You see, we only have one capacity so Jesus says, "Seek first the kingdom of God and whatever you need will be supplied." You do not have to worry about it.

You say, "Well wait a minute, if I focus my one capacity on the things of Christ, I look around me and He has not supplied." Yes He has. He supplies our needs not our wants. So He says, the people who do not know Christ, they are the ones who are worried and seeking after just the necessities of life. They are totally occupied with the things of themselves. But He says you, under the way you have been designed, because of your one capacity, you seek first the kingdom of God, and all these things will be supplied to you.

**Take therefore no thought (do not be occupied) for tomorrow: for the tomorrow shall have enough thought for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.** How many of us this afternoon, if we have not done it already, we are already thinking about Monday. We are already occupied and worried, "Oh, this could happen, that could happen, maybe this, maybe not." Sometimes before we go to bed on Sunday nights we are a nervous wreck. We have already lived out half the week and it has not even gotten here yet. There will be enough distraction for tomorrow. There will be enough evil. The word for *evil* is the word *adversity*. There is enough adversity waiting for us without us loading up ahead of time. God will give us grace when we get there tomorrow. We are not even to be occupied with tomorrow.

As I have said over the years, do you know there is no tomorrow? It is always today. Because when tomorrow gets here it will be today. This is it. This is our time to live right now. There is no tomorrow, except in my own mind. And like I say, when tomorrow gets here, then it is today. Then there is another tomorrow to worry about that is not here and we do not know what is going to happen. You see the trap.

So Jesus said, "You have a capacity to serve either God or mammon." What He is saying is you have the capacity to be either be occupied with the things of Christ, or to be occupied with the things of this earthly life. And the things of this earthly life come natural as far as being occupied with them is concerned.

So He sets the foundation for us to say, "This is going to be the real problem right here for those that are the Lord's people." Once Christ saves you, we need not worry about salvation, but rather the attention of the occupation of our minds. Because that is where the fellowship takes place. God's Spirit with His energy impulses ministering God's Word and ministering Himself to us as we fellowship with Him.

Now that does not mean that we drive down the freeway and pray the whole way with our eyes closed. We naturally have to work at a job. We naturally have to go to school. We naturally have to take care of the necessities of this life as God leads. I mean just the natural necessities influence us in a way that is averse to the things of Christ. Just the simple things. How much more when in our minds Satan helps them be blown out of proportion? When we do not seek the Lord and commit them to Him, rather than holding onto it and letting it snowball?

So we are going to follow this thread along with our added information as we go through these texts in the next couple of weeks. Not about the occupation of the mind but the occupation of the attention of the mind.

You might have seen books out on the market, you might have seen DVD series entitled something like The Battle for the Mind. That is what it is all about. The Bible says **As a person thinks so is he**. I am influenced by what I watch on TV, the electronic games we play, the people we are around, the literature we read. It is all influencing our thoughts, who we are, and how we respond to life. It is a very precious thing that we have, and we have to watch out that we are not taken away and distracted from the things of Christ.

With the comfort, remember the first hour in Jerusalem? God's people had the comfort that God is going to protect us but they developed an attitude of we do not have to obey Him, we do not have to seek Him. And what happened? God brought judgment while they were partying. He called them to weep, and to mourn, and to repent, but they decided to have a party. "Let's eat and drink because tomorrow we are going to die!" They were resigned to the fact that judgment would destroy them, they were not willing to repent.

And yet in our situation, if you have received Christ, if you have been born of His Spirit, you belong to Him. It is from that time, salvation is the starting point of our relationship with Christ. His Spirit from within me then ministers the truth of His Word to the cortex of the brain. It is spiritual not psychological, it is spiritual. The power impulses of His Spirit take the truth of His Word and change me as a person. Heals me as a person from the sins and abuses of the past. And if I neglect it, thinking that is just a religious practice, then we have been deceived.

Let's close with prayer.