



GracePoint: A Weekly Sermon Discussion

12 – Genuine Concern

9/17 @6:30
Grace Group at
3513 Northpointe Dr

9/19 @6:00
Grace Group at
2070 Corley Dr

9/19 @6:30
Grace Group at
1710 Mariposa Dr

ICE BREAKER: Do you have a “hero” from Scripture? (someone you admire and seek to be like... besides Jesus... that’s too easy!)

REVIEW: Was there anything covered or said on Sunday that you had any questions or comments about?

READ: Philippians 2:19-24

One of the beautiful things about Scripture is that God is faithful to give us many wonderful examples of people that we can and should emulate in their faith and life (“therefore since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses...” Hebrews 12:1). Timothy is certainly one of those people. And while there is much that we could seek to imitate, I would like to spend our time tonight looking at just one thing in particular. His “genuine concern” for the Philippian church.

While I am not always a big fan of just pulling out the dictionary (part of the reason for that is when I was growing up if I would ask how to spell a word I was told to look it up in the dictionary... I am still confused about how to look up a word that I don’t know how to spell...) but looking at what words mean can be helpful. So when we ask: what *exactly* is genuine concern, knowing what these words mean is a good place to start. So genuine means: “truly what something is said to be; authentic. When spoken of a person: sincere.” Similarly, concern (among other definitions) means: have a specific connection with or responsibility for. So to start, what does it mean that Timothy has a genuine concern for the Philippian church? It means that he is authentic in his care. He is sincere in his love. And that care is a connection *with* and even a feeling of some sort of responsibility *for* this church. He really cares for them.

DISCUSS: in what ways are we called to show “genuine concern” for the people around us? What might be the limits of this (if any)?

The real payoff of what Paul says here comes in the next verse. Because he tells us exactly what makes the concern of Timothy so important and different from what others might show. Let's start with what it DOES NOT look like. There are some who Paul has around that he does not seem to trust with the task of ministering to this church. In particular because they are seeing “their own interests”. There is certainly a warning here. We can deceive others, and possibly even ourselves, into thinking that we are being concerned for others, when in reality it is our own selfishness on display. We help others because of what they can do for us. We seek the betterment of others, because we think that it also means some good for us. We are thinking about ourselves when we should be selflessly being humble (like Jesus!) and lying aside those things! So the simple exhortation is to not be like that!

DISCUSS: In what ways might we be guilty of serving others while seeking our own interests? What is the solution to this type of thing?

But then let’s look to the counter-point. They seek “their own interests” whereas Timothy looks to the interest of... The Philippian church? Nope. Other servants? Nope. They seek their own interest, Timothy seeks those of Jesus Christ! In other words, Timothy’s care is not in himself, or even (fundamentally) about the Philipians in and of themselves. Instead he cares about Jesus, and that motivates him to have this “genuine concern.” Our love for Christ becomes the fundamental motive for our love and concern for one another. While there are a lot of ways we can explore this, to keep it in line with Philippians I will say it this way: As you have the mind of Christ, and that motivates you to live like Christ, and glorify Christ, it also helps you to love with the selfless love of Christ. If ever there was an example of looking not one’s own interests it is Jesus. The end result then is this: we should imitate Timothy, as he imitates Christ. If we do, our lives will be marked by a “genuine concern” for those around us.

DISCUSS: How is it that looking to Christ helps every other thing to fall into place like this? How can you look to the interest of Christ (how can you even know what that is)?