

"MAKING A DIFFERENCE"

Philippians 2:19-24

Is it fair to say that in America today, television and films help to shape the culture? The impact of certain programs can be tremendous as they relate to filling the minds of people. When I was a kid growing up you didn't go to Blockbuster to rent a movie, you either went to the movie theatre or waited around for the season of the year to watch certain movies made for TV that had become classics- the likes of *It's a Wonderful Life* and *White Christmas* during the Christmas season and, around Halloween, *The Wizard of Oz*. You could bank on it that my entire family would be glued to the TV set. At Easter time you could bet that films like *The Ten Commandments* and *Ben Hur* would be aired that starred the man who played the key characters- that man being Charlton Heston who played Moses and Ben Hur.

Maybe you heard that Charlton Heston died this past April 5th. He was 84 years old.

There have been a lot of things written after he died and one thing that was highlighted was that he was a cultural icon. He was an award winning actor having made 100 films over a 60 year time span. In 2002 he went public and announced that he had been diagnosed with that dreaded disease known as Alzheimer's.

Some of you have known about Charlton Heston from his movies, but did you know that he was an activist? I was interested to note that he was a staunch supporter of civil rights and he marched with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and stood nearby as Dr. King delivered his immortal, "I Have a Dream" speech. He did this at a time when much of Hollywood and much of America just didn't care. He was the President of the National Rifle Association and this brought him supporters and detractors. Later in his life he took hits because he took up the cause of Second Amendment rights and protecting kids from an increasingly course culture. In his later years he stood up at a Time-Warner shareholders' meeting and read aloud the complete lyrics of

rapper Ice-T's "Cop Killer" CD that Time-Warner had just released. Later he reported, "When I read the lyrics to the waiting press corps, one of the said, 'We can't print that.' 'I know,' he replied, 'but Time-Warner's selling it.'"

Two months later, Time-Warner terminated Ice-T's contract. Heston said, "I'll never be offered another film by Warner, or get a good review from *Time* magazine. But that wasn't important to him. Doing what he knew was right was. Now whether you agree with some of the causes he took on or not my point is this- He was willing to stand up for his beliefs, even against the popular trends of the day, even when he could lose out as a result of his stand.

Now you may be wondering why I am beginning my sermon talking about Charlton Heston but it is this- He was willing to take a stand in order to Make A Difference. I wonder, are we willing to do the same?

No, we might never have the opportunity to have the kind of platform and the spotlight that Charlton Heston stepped out to, but have you ever thought about making a Difference in your part of the world?

This morning after this sermon we are going to celebrate someone who has given 28 years of her life to a, and I am going to call it ministry, to small children and their families. Gerry Reynolds has been the director of our own Hope Child Care Center that occupies the downstairs of this church Monday through Friday from early in the morning to early evening. There were days that Gerry would be pulling in at 6:20 a.m. when I was pulling in for an early morning Men's Group.

A little over a week ago I was talking to Gerry and I asked her how many children over the course of her 28 years as the Director of the Hope Child Care Center, did her path cross? She started throwing around some numbers and she said, "Only when I think about it and see all those files in the filing cabinet" does it begin to add up.

We figured that she has come in contact with some 2,800 children and their families during the course of her time here. I asked her what has meant the most to her in what she has done as the Director and this is what she said, and I hope I am capturing it Gerry- "The thing that has meant the most is that the children had a safe place to be and that they were happy." She reflected on children whose parents brought them in crying and by the end of the day didn't want to leave. She shared with me about parents who brought in their child who were dealing with difficult situations- needs, issues, problems and what meant so much to her was that they left that child knowing they would be cared for. What mattered to Gerry was that she could contribute in making a difference in a child's life, no matter how small. There it is- Making a Difference.

In our scripture passage today, the Apostle Paul is unable to come to Philippi because he is in prison facing trial and the possibility of execution and so he intends to send young Timothy as his emissary.

Timothy was exceptionally close to Paul and whenever Paul wanted information from some Church or wanted to send advice, encouragement or rebuke and he couldn't go himself, Timothy was his man to send. Timothy's tremendous asset was that he was willing to go anywhere and Paul knew that if a message was to be delivered it was as safe as Paul himself delivering it. **There is a wonderful characteristic of Timothy that I want to hold up today and that Timothy was unselfish.** There was no selfish ambition or agenda that Timothy had other than to serve. Timothy was willing to settle for second place, he wasn't in it for himself but for Christ, the Church and others.

As many of you know, during our Summer's Best Two Weeks day camp for youth grades 3-7 that we have run for the past 8 summers, we have a motto that goes something like this: **Jesus, Others, You.** And if you take the first letter of each of those three words they spell **JOY.** And the saying at Summer's Best is this "**I Am Third.**" Jesus, Others and Me.

Here in our passage, verse 20, the Apostle Paul tells the church at Philippi that "I [Paul] have no one like him who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare."

In our day and age we tend to elevate those who are in the power places, the power positions. Those who are the movers and shakers. Someone once asked, "Have you ever noticed how we subtly shift the values of the world around us into what we suppose is important to God? We baptize position, power, and prestige with spiritualizing and rationalization and are sure that God wills for us what we want to achieve. Yet the frenzied scramble for these very things often clogs our effectiveness for Him." (Lloyd John Ogilvie, *God's Best for My Life*, November 24)

There is a lesson to be learned from young Timothy that we should all try and emulate. **Caring for others.** Paul tells us in verse 21 that, "All of them [whoever the "them" is- maybe his other associates in ministry] are seeking their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ."

Timothy had a relationship with the people at Philippi. He had accompanied Paul on his first visit there and had gone ahead for a second visit. And now he is going again to bring comfort to the people. Interesting, the name **Timothy means "good comfort."**

Friends, we all are busy people. We have so many cares and concerns. Our calendars and schedules have appointments and you name it written all over them. What is important and what is not? What was at the forefront for Timothy, what was at the top of the list for him was Christ. And caring for others was right underneath Christ. I'd like us all to think for a moment who we could come along beside and make a difference in their lives? When I think of Gerry Reynolds and the staff of Hope Child Care they are coming alongside a host of children so that at a very young age, they can make a difference in their lives and be a part of a chain of people that we pray will come into their lives and make a difference. That there will be a host of these kinds of Timothys who really care about them and will not be

too busy to hear the cry of human need and make a difference. Just one person, just one person you coming beside could make all the difference in the world. Who needs you to be a Timothy in his or her life today? Amen.

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Did you know that Heston was an activist?

A man willing to stand up for his beliefs, even against the popular trends of the day...

Celebrating a person who made a difference- Mrs. Gerry Reynolds

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**Jesus, Others, You=JOY
I am Third**

Verse 20- "I [Paul] have no one like him [Timothy] who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare."

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Timothy means "**good** _____"

We are all busy people...

Conclusion: Who needs you to be a **Timothy** in his or her life today?