

SERMON NOTES

By Pastor John Paul Miller

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Philippians

Philippians 2:25-30 – “Men Who Model Christ (Pt. 2)”

We are looking together at a group of men who model Christ: Paul, Timothy, and now, Epaphroditus.

Philippians 2:25-30, “Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants. For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick. For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful. Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation: Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.”

Our text brings us face to face with a man in whom the example of Jesus Christ shines so brightly.

All we know about him is found in Philippians.

His name means: belonging to or favored by Aphrodite (the Greek goddess of love whom the Romans called Venus).

He was a member of the Philippian Church who risked his life to carry their offering to Paul in Rome.

Verses to set the context:

Philippians 4:18, “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.”

Philippians 2:25, “Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.”

Philippians 2:29-30, “Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation: Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.”

There are four things about Epaphroditus I want to focus on:

I. His Character (vs. 25)

Philippians 2:25, " *Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.*"

1. His Brother – they shared a common spiritual life
2. Co-worker – K.J.V., "...*companion in labour...*"

They had a common spiritual effort

They were both working out what God had worked in (vs. 13)

3. Fellowsoldier – they had a common spiritual enemy

Its' a spiritual war (Ephesians 6)

Epaphroditus was a balanced Christian.

- a. Philippians 1:5, "...*fellowship in the gospel...*" - my brother
- b. Philippians 1:12, "...*the furtherance of the gospel;*" – companion in labour.
- c. Philippians 1:27, "...*the faith of the gospel;*" – my fellowsoldier

Illustration – the balanced Christian – like Nehemiah who rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem with his sword in one hand, and his trowel in the other.

4. Your messenger – Greek, *apostolos* (apostle) or ambassador

He had a trustworthy godly character

5. Minister – its servant

We get our word *liturgy* – used of official, and sacred service to God.

Background – He brought the offering

Philippians 4:18, " *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.*"

All that we do is a sacred service.

A brother, co-worker, fellowsoldier, messenger, and minister

Are you?

II. His Concern (vs. 26-28)

Philippians 2:26-28, "For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick. For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful."

Epaphroditus was not only a *Balanced Christian*, he was a *Burdened Christian*!

He was a man who truly looked not on his own interest, but on the interest of others (vs. 4).

This is seen in the details surrounding his sickness

1. His Compassion (vs. 26)

a. His longing – it speaks of a prolonged duration of intense desire.

It's the same as Paul's (1:8)

Philippians 1:8, "For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ."

b. His heaviness – "...was full of heaviness..."

It's the same term used of Christ's agony in Gethsemane.

Matthew 26: 39, "...O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt."

Why the longing and heaviness?

Not because he was tired of serving Paul, homesick, or restless for a change.

The reason: "...because that ye had heard that he had been sick."
(vs. 26)

2. His Sickness and Healing (vs. 27)

Notice he was:

- a good and godly man
- suffering with sickness
- almost died

Notice God's mercy on both Epaphroditus and Paul:

Lamentations 3:22-23, "It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness."

God's one act of mercy was in different ways kindness to two men equally helpless.

Paul would have had sorrow upon sorrow, but God showed mercy.

3. His Reunion (vs. 28)

Philippians 2:28, "*I sent him therefore the more carefully...*" - connotes speed rather than caution – so more eagerly.

Epaphroditus return would accomplish two good results:

1. *that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice,*
2. *that I may be the less sorrowful.*

We see a glimpse into the heart of Paul!

William Hendriksen – Easing the mind of his dearly beloved Philippians and imparting to them gladness of heart meant more to him than any personal service he might be able to derive from Epaphroditus.

Paul found joy in giving others joy.

Jim Elliot's parents didn't support his decision to be a missionary to Ecuador.

Jim Elliot (Martyred Missionary in Ecuador) wrote - "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

III. His Commendation (vs. 29)

Philippians 2:29, "Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation: Paul wanted the Philippian Church to do two things for Epaphroditus:"

1. Receive him (vs. 29) "Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness;..."

2. Honor him (vs. 29) "...and hold such in reputation:"

Why was there a problem?

Hold such in honor... such is in the plural; so its honor all men like him.

It's to hold in high regard (spiritual leaders)

It's to publicity - so appreciation for those who manifest the Mind of Christ.

IV. His Commitment (vs. 30)

Philippians 2:30, "Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me. "

Notice the word, because – three reasons for Paul's commendation:

1. He worked for Christ (vs. 30) – He was not an apostle, not a pastor, but a layman who worked for Christ.

He served Paul and carried the letter.

To do the work of Christ we need the Mind of Christ.

2. He risked his life (vs. 30)

N.I.V., "risking his life,

Other translations: he gambled with his life; hazarding his life

Revelation 12:11, "...they loved not their lives unto the death."

How about you?

Matthew 16:24-25, " Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. "

3. He supplied substitute service

Epaphroditus was a balanced, burdened, and blessed Christian:

- to Paul
- to his church
- to us today

These three men lived in a pagan world, but they all had the mind of Christ.

It's the great need today.

We need to stop offering excuses and offer ourselves.

Romans 12:1-2, " I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

Lets hazard our lives for the sake of Christ!