

# Philippians 2 - Examples of Humble Service: Jesus, Paul, Timothy, Epaphroditus; The Kenosis

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## Philippians 2

### III. Humility (Phil 2:1-30)

Paul now changes subjects to deal with a lifestyle and mindset of servanthood. God wants Christians to see themselves as servants. We don't exist for ourselves, but rather for the benefit of someone else. Paul will make the point that servanthood has everything to do with joy in the believer's life because the most joyful people you will encounter in life are those with a servant mindset (Cf. Prov 11:24-25; Luke 6:38; Acts 20:35).

- (1) Introductory exhortations (2:1-4)

- 1** Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any **fellowship of the Spirit**, if any affection and compassion,
- 1** Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion,
- 1** Therefore, if there is any encouragement in the Messiah, if there is any comfort of love, if there is any fellowship in the Spirit, if there is any compassion and sympathy,
- 1** If *there be* therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies,
  - "...fellowship of the Spirit" - there was a fellowship of the Spirit issue in Philippi between two women who were not getting along (Cf. 4:2-3)

— If there is anything that will destroy joy in your life, it is animosity and division within the body of Christ

2 make my **joy** complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.

2 make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.

2 then fill me with joy by having the same attitude, sharing the same love, being united in spirit, and keeping one purpose in mind.

2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind.

- "...joy" - Paul's overriding concern and purpose for writing this epistle is that the Philippian church did not have joy

— Joy is the well-being that a person can experience, regardless of their circumstances

— All Christians should experience joy in their lives as a divine right, regardless of what they may be going through at any given time in their lives. If that is not the case, then the believer is living beneath their privileges in Christ.

- The Philippian church did not have any doctrinal issues, their theology

J - Jesus

O - Others

Y - Yourself

3 Do nothing from selfishness or **empty conceit**, but with humility consider one another as more important than yourselves;

3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves;

3 Do not act out of selfish ambition or conceit, but with humility think of others as being better than yourselves.

3 *Let nothing be done* through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

- Selfish ambition was likely the root cause of the division in Philippi; there are no doctrinal issues brought up by Paul that the church needed to address. This issue was personal, driven out of their flesh/selfishness.

— When believers put themselves on the throne, not only does it destroy joy in the body of Christ, but it also destroys unity within the church

- "...empty [vain] conceit" - self-centeredness never produces the lasting fulfillment that God wants for us

4 do not *merely* look out for your own personal *interests*, but also for the *interests* of others.

4 do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

4 Do not be concerned about your own interests, but also be concerned about the interests of others.

4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

- The Bible always assumes self love; it never tells us to love ourselves, it assumes that we already love ourselves

— Our problem is not making sure our needs are met, we're fed and clothed, we get enough rest, etc. as this all comes very naturally to us. Our problem is taking the basic self-centeredness that we already have and transferring that to someone else.

— Modern psychology (and many churches) tell you that you need to get in touch with yourself and learn to love yourself, but that's a waste of time according to the Bible because we already love ourselves.

— Many people will say, I hate myself because I'm ugly, and I'm a failure. But if you hated yourself, you should be happy that you're ugly and a failure. Many of the statements that we promote as self-effacing are really self-promoting and evidence of our natural love for ourselves.

## (2) Examples (2:5-30)

### (A) Christ (2:5-16)

#### (a) Humiliation (2:5-8)

5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,

5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,

5 Have the same attitude among yourselves that was also in the Messiah Jesus:

5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

- Jesus Christ was the penultimate example of humble service...

6 who, as He *already* existed in the **form** of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,

6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,

6 In God's own form existed he, and shared with God equality, deemed nothing needed grasping.

6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

- "...form" - *morphe*, external appearance

- He existed from eternity past in the external appearance of God, but at the incarnation, He "emptied Himself" (set aside His equality with and form of God, v7) and took on (added) the external appearance of a bond-servant
- In this "emptying" nothing was removed/subtracted from Christ. His incarnation was an "addition" not a "subtraction."
- It was also not an exchange: Jesus did not exchange His deity for humanity in any way, shape, or form. He simply added humanity to His already deity, and voluntarily set aside His divine rights and prerogatives.
- Jesus "setting aside" of His divine rights and prerogatives is better stated that He submitted them to God the Father
- Understanding what the incarnation was and wasn't is necessary in order to understand Satan's strategy during his temptation of Christ (Matt 4:2-3)
- After Jesus was fasting for 40 days in the wilderness, Satan tempted Jesus to command stones to become bread. Satan attempted to drive a wedge in the Triunity of God, between the Father and the Son.
- Satan tempted Jesus to give up the independent exercise of His attributes, which Satan knew that Jesus retained. Satan wanted Jesus to use those attributes independently of God the Father.

7 but **emptied** Himself by taking the form of a bond-servant *and* being born in the likeness of men.

7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men.

7 Instead, poured out in emptiness, a servant's form did he possess, a mortal man becoming. In human form he chose to be,

7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

- "...emptied" - *kenoō*, Christ laid aside His equality with or form of God
- Of what did He empty Himself? Not deity, because God never changes (Cf. James 1:17); He repeatedly claimed deity during His incarnation (John 8:58). His incarnation simply added humanity to deity, without subtracting deity.
- In His incarnation, Christ took on the limitations of humanity, which involved veiling His glory (John 17:5), and He gave up the voluntary/independent exercise of some of His divine prerogatives, such as omnipresence and omniscience (Matt 24:36), which He could've used to stop the crucifixion, but instead He submitted those to God the Father.
- So the *kenosis* ("emptying") may be properly understood to mean that Christ surrendered no attribute of deity, but that He did voluntarily restrict their independent use in keeping with His purpose of living among men and their limitations [Walvoord]

— Christ is the penultimate example of humility because He set aside His preincarnate glory so that He could serve humanity. In His incarnation, He paid the penalty for the sins of the world so that all people could have eternal life.

8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death: death **on a cross**.

8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

8 and lived in all humility, death on a cross obeying.

8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

— "...on a cross" - dying on a cross was the reason why God became a man

— Ps 22:16, written 1000 years before Christ, speaking of Christ, says "They pierced my hands and my feet." They couldn't have pierced His hands and feet until God had hands and feet.

— Jesus became a man to have His hands and feet pierced, through His death by crucifixion

#### (b) Exaltation (2:9-11)

9 For **this reason** also **God highly exalted Him**, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,

9 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,

9 Now lifted up by God to heaven, a name above all others given, this matchless name possessing.

9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

— "...this reason" - because of Jesus' death on the cross

— "...God highly exalted Him" - because of Jesus' humility in setting aside His divine rights and prerogatives of deity, God "highly exalted" Him

10 so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

10 And so, when Jesus' name is called, the knees of everyone should fall, wherever they're residing.

10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth;

- Jesus often taught that those who are servants will be exalted, but those who elevate themselves will become slaves (Cf. Mark 10:35-45; John 13:2-5,14,17)

— Jesus makes it clear in John 13:17 that the blessing doesn't come from just understanding that humility is necessary to be exalted; it comes from actually doing them.

— The theology that we learn (Christology) only becomes valuable when it changes the way we behave, think, or act. Theology is never meant to just be known, it always must be worked out in our lives.

11 and *that* every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

11 Then every tongue in one accord, will say that Jesus the Messiah is Lord, while God the Father praising.

11 And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

- Verses 10-11 are completely misinterpreted and taken out of context by universalists, who believe that in the end, all will be saved

— What this really means is that every creature, either volitionally or coerced from their lips in hell, will acknowledge verbally that Jesus Christ is Lord

— This demonstrates how exalted God has made His Son, based on the humility He displayed by setting aside His deity and becoming a man, then dying on the cross

Verses 5-11 are the highest Christology in the entire NT. And Paul shares this theology with us, not so that we become more knowledgable about Christ (although that is indeed a benefit to us), but to use Christ as an example to a church that was dividing into factions and lacked joy in their lives. Paul uses the example of the incarnation as an example to us of the humility we must have (v5) in order to avoid divisions in the church and maintain unity, along with a recipe for having joy in our life. This demonstrates the practicality of theology.

(c) Accompanying exhortations (2:12-16)

(i) Progress in practical sanctification (2:12-13)

**12 So then, my beloved**, just as you have always **obeyed**, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation** with fear and trembling;

**12** So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling;

**12** And so, my dear friends, just as you have always obeyed, not only when I was with you but even more now that I am absent, continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling.

**12** Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

- "So then" - connects v12 with v5-11 and Christ's example of humble service
- "...my beloved" - demonstrates that Paul viewed the believers in Philippi as more than just donors supporting his ministry
- This also confirms their status as believers (Paul would not have called unbelievers "my beloved." The principles that Paul is outlining in this epistle are not for the unbeliever. An unbeliever cannot accept or understand the principles here as their flesh will rebel against them.
- Unbelievers are controlled by the world system, where you don't humbly serve others but rather dominate others in an effort to try to get ahead. The name of the world's game is not how many people you are influencing, but how many people are under your command.
- "...obeyed" - *hypakouein*, contains the idea of hearing and submitting to what is heard
- "...work out your own salvation" - refers to working out what they already possessed rather than working for what they were yet to possess
- This is a sanctification verse, not a justification verse, which is clear by the preceding context, which presumes their prior obedience (v12a)
- The verb "work out" (*katergazomai*) is a verb in the present tense, middle voice, imperative. This means that the subject (my beloved) is both an agent of an action and concerned with the action. The imperative mood means it is a command, not a suggestion.
- Not a self-help or works salvation; on the contrary, because you are already saved, because God has already entered your life in the person of the Holy Spirit, because you, therefore, have His power at work within you...you are now to strive to express this salvation in your conduct.
- It does *not* say "work for your salvation," or "work toward your salvation," or "work at your salvation;" it says "work out your salvation"
- "salvation" - used in the present tense, indicating that Paul is not talking about our justification (past tense), but rather our sanctification
- We obtain salvation as a gift (Eph 2:8), but having received it freely, we have a responsibility to cultivate it
- In justification and glorification, God does all the work (Eph 2:9; Jude 24), but we have a part to play in our (progressive) sanctification. We "work out" our salvation by cooperating and obeying the Holy Spirit, who leads us in the will of God (Gal 5:16).

- In context, the particular aspect of sanctification in view involves achieving unity through humility
  - If you debate a Roman Catholic, they will throw this verse at you because they believe that we contribute to our justification. God did 95%, I need to kick in my 5%...I have to pay, pray and obey. I have to supplement what God has done.
  - This is one of their favorite verses. If you don't understand the three tenses of salvation, you'll be confused by this verse and what the Roman Catholic church teaches. If you understand the three tenses of salvation, and understand that the phase we're in now (sanctification) is always used in the present tense, you can easily understand this verse.
  - Paul acknowledges that the Philippians are making progress in their practical sanctification because they were not only obeying while Paul was with them, but they were much more obedient after Paul left.
  - Paul's first example for the Philippians on how to apply Christ's example of humble service (v5-11) is to make progress in practical sanctification
  - The fastest route to Christlikeness is to submit yourself to God in the area of practical sanctification

13 for it is God who is at work in you, both **to desire** and **to work** for *His* good pleasure.

13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for *His* good pleasure.

13 For it is God who is producing in you both the desire and the ability to do what pleases him.

13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure.

- Paul doesn't instruct the Philippians to grow in their practical sanctification through their own willpower, to "white knuckle" it, or to put their flesh through a bunch of self-discipline rules or religious rigors in order to "work out" their salvation/sanctification

— Instead, he tells them that God is at work in them and will accomplish this in their life, if they rely on Him and the divine resources He provides

— He wants the Philippians to volitionally acquiesce their will over to God's will. The Christian life can only be lived through reliance on divine resources (Cf. Gal 3:3).

- "...to desire" - *thelō*, to will; to be willing

- "...to work" - *ergeō*, to be operative or at work; to put forth power or energy

(ii) Do not grumble or dispute (2:14)

**14** Do all things without **complaining** or **arguments**;

**14** Do all things without grumbling or disputing;

**14** Do everything without complaining or arguing

**14** Do all things without murmurings and disputings:

- "...complaining" - *gongysmos*, murmuring; a secret displeasure not openly avowed

- A great biblical example of complaining is the Israelite wilderness generation. From the time of the Exodus, they complained nearly non-stop for 40 years (Cf. Ex 14:11-12; 15:24; 16:2; 17:3; Num 11:1; 14:1-2; 16:41; 21:5).
- At one point, they were in such rebellion against their existing leadership that they would've killed Moses if they could have
- After seeing the miraculous hand of God during the Exodus, and receiving the Law at Mount Sinai, they had an 11-day journey to get to the Promised Land (Cf. Deut 1:2), where they complained even more.
- After finally arriving in Kadesh-Barnea, sending in the spies, getting the report from the spies about giants in the land, and deciding against moving forward, God washed His hands of them and allowed them to die out in the wilderness, and instead fulfill His promises to the next generation.
- "...arguments" - *dialogismos*, a dispute; questioning what is true

(iii) Be blameless in the world (2:15)

15 so that you will prove yourselves to be **blameless and innocent**, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and **perverse generation**, among whom you appear as **lights in the world**,

15 so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world,

15 so that you may be blameless and innocent, God's children without any faults among a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine like stars in the world

15 That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;

- "...blameless and innocent" - we cannot ever be sinless, but the third application of Christ's humility and emptying is that we are to be blameless (*amemptos*) and innocent (*akeraios*, "unmixed")

- "...perverse generation" - it's interesting that the biblical writers never say or even imply that the world is going to get better (Cf. Acts 2:40)

— They give no hint that the world is going to overwhelming come to Christ, or even become moral or partially good in their conduct, thinking, and actions

— The only thing that will bring about the conversion and morality in this world is the dethronement of Satan, the ruler of the world, and the enthronement of Jesus Christ, to rule with a rod of iron

— However, living in this crooked and perverse generation gives us the opportunity to stand out for good

- "...lights in the world" - when do you need a light? When the sun is shining during the daytime? No, when it's dark and there is little or no light around. A flashlight during the daytime is useless, but during the nighttime it's invaluable.
- The Bible uses salt and light (Matt 5:14-16) as metaphors for the Christian life throughout the NT. Those metaphors become diluted if everything in the world is rosy and perfect.
- A preacher named Adrian Rogers is quoted as saying: *The world is growing gloriously dark.*
- Things are not falling apart, they are falling into place

(iv) Remain loyal to Christ (2:16)

16 holding firmly the **word** of life, so that on **the day of Christ** I can take pride because I did not run in vain nor labor in vain.

16 holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.

16 as you hold firmly to the word of life. Then I will be proud when the Messiah returns that I did not run in vain or work hard in vain.

16 Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

- "...word" - *logos*, refers to Scripture (Cf. Gal 6:6)

— It's the word "of life" because it is because of the Scriptures that we become saved (Rom 10:17)

— Paul is saying that if you want to remain loyal to Christ, you must remain loyal to the Scriptures

— But *logos* doesn't only refer to the Scriptures, it also refers to Jesus Christ Himself (Cf. John 1:14). The "word of life" fits Jesus as well (Cf. John 14:6).

— So Paul is telling us to remain loyal ("holding firmly") to both the Scripture, which testifies about Jesus, and to Jesus Himself

— For someone to say that they are not into the Bible, they are just into Jesus is an exegetical, grammatical, biblical, theological, and linguistic impossibility. Jesus can never be separated or divided from His Word.

- "...the day of Christ" - the Rapture

- If, at the Rapture and subsequent *Bema* Seat judgment of believers, the Philippian church is found to not have held firm/remain loyal to both the Word (*logos*) and Jesus Himself (*Logos*), then Paul cannot take pride, and he labored in vain

— Paul is looking at salvation differently here...today we think that getting people saved is the end-all-be-all destination. Check the box, get them water baptized, count them in our numbers, then move on to the next unsaved person. And of course salvation/justification

and baptism is important, because if one is not saved, they have no possibility of eternal life or progressive sanctification. But if you're saved/justified, but not walking before God and growing in your progressive sanctification, and at the Bema Seat judgment you are unrewarded (1 Cor 3:15), then Paul says that they have wasted his time.

— Paul desires to rejoice on that day, not just because they are believers and will spend eternity in heaven, but because they made progress in the salvation/sanctification tense of their salvation and will be rewarded handsomely at the *Bema* Seat judgment of Christ.

(B) Paul (2:17-18)

17 But even if I am being poured out as a **drink offering** upon **the sacrifice and service of your faith**, I rejoice and share my joy with you all.

17 But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all.

17 Yet even if I am being poured out like an offering as part of the sacrifice and service I offer for your faith, I rejoice, and I share my joy with all of you.

**17** Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all.

- The prospect that Paul might receive a death sentence when he appeared before Caesar arose again in his thinking. He compared his present life to the pouring out of a drink offering in Israel's worship.

- "...drink offering" - OT imagery (Cf. Num 15:1-10; 28:4-7) that Paul applied to himself to depict his sacrificial service (Cf. 2 Tim 4:6)

— After the priest offered a lamb, a ram, or a bull as a burnt offering, he poured wine beside the altar. This was the last act in the sacrificial ceremony all of which symbolized the dedication of the believer to God in worship. The pouring out of the wine pictured the gradual ebbing away of Paul's life, which had been a living sacrifice to God since his conversion.

- "...the sacrifice and service of your faith" - a figure of speech called a hendiadys, meaning "the sacrificial service arising from your faith"

- In Paul's words here, the Philippians were the priests; their faith (or their good works arising from their faith) was the sacrifice; Paul's life-blood was the accompanying libation (drink offering poured out on the sacrifice)

18 You too, *I urge you*, rejoice in the same way and share your joy with me.

18 You too, *I urge you*, rejoice in the same way and share your joy with me.

18 In the same way, you also should rejoice and share your joy with me.

18 For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me.

- Paul urges the Philippians not to sorrow over their own trials, but to rejoice as they worked out their salvation and adopted his attitude toward their situation in life (Cf. 1 Cor 11:1)
- The Philippians could share their joy with Paul as they communicated with him and assured him of their joy in the Lord
- What brought Paul joy was not deliverance from his circumstances, but rather hearing that his spiritual lineage/children were walking in joy (Cf. 3 John 4)

(C) Timothy (2:19-24)

**19** But I hope, in the Lord Jesus, to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition.

**19** But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition.

**19** Now I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon so that I can be encouraged when I learn of your condition.

**19** But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state.

- Paul desired to learn that the Philippian church was walking in joy, as that would bring joy to him

- What brought Paul joy was the obedience of his spiritual children

**20** For I have no one **else** of **kindred spirit** who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare.

**20** For I have no one **else** of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare.

**20** I do not have anyone else like him who takes a genuine interest in your welfare.

**20** For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state.

- Timothy was a person who always sought the interest of others above himself; Timothy was more concerned about the Philippians and their walk of joy, than he was about his own self interests

- "...of kindred spirit" - *isopsychos*, equal in soul; likeminded

- The "souls" of Paul and Timothy were "knitted together"; they were both walking in joy and following Jesus, and both were focused on the needs of others

**21** For **theyall** seek after their own *interests*, not those of Christ Jesus.

**21** For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus.

**21** For all the others look after their own interests, not after those of Jesus the Messiah.

**21** For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.

- "...they all" - refers to believers; this is not a comment about the unsaved world. It would not be front page news if unbelievers only sought after their own interests; that's all unbelievers know to do.

— Paul is talking about those who proclaim Christ, and are out there doing these things ("serving the Lord") out of selfish ambition (Cf. 1:15-18)

22 But you know of his proven character, that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like **a child serving his father**.

22 But you know of his proven worth, that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child *serving his father*.

22 But you know his proven worth—how like a son with his father he served with me in the gospel.

22 But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel.

- "...a child serving his father"- a metaphor also used in 1 Tim 1:2; it's likely that Paul had a role in leading Timothy to Christ, and in his spiritual growth. Now Timothy is serving his spiritual "father" while Paul is under house arrest in Rome.

23 Therefore I hope to send him immediately, as soon as I see how things go with me;

23 Therefore I hope to send him immediately, as soon as I see how things go with me;

23 Therefore, I hope to send him as soon as I see how things are going to turn out for me.

23 Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me.

- Timothy was busy serving and blessing Paul during his house arrest and before his trial before Caesar, but Paul wanted to send Timothy back to Philippi in hopes of learning that the church was walking in joy.

— At this point, Paul is likely close to his trial date before Caesar, but he is unsure of the outcome and his future

24 and I trust in the Lord that I myself will also be coming shortly.

24 and I trust in the Lord that I myself also will be coming shortly.

24 Indeed, I am confident in the Lord that I will come to visit you soon.

24 But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly.

- There was a lot of ambiguity in Paul's immediate future, but he had growing optimism of his circumstances and the final outcome

(D) Epaphroditus (2:25-30)

25 But I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger and minister to my need,

25 But I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger and minister to my need;

25 Meanwhile, I thought it best to send Epaphroditus—my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier, but your messenger and minister to my need—back to you.

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.

- Epaphroditus was invaluable to Paul and his ministry, especially during this particular time in Paul's life

— Epaphroditus was selfless, traveling from Philippi to Rome to be with Paul and minister to him during his house arrest

26 because he was longing for you all and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick.

26 because he was longing for you all and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick.

26 For he has been longing for all of you and is troubled because you heard that he was sick.

26 For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick.

- While Epaphroditus was serving Paul in Rome, he missed his brothers and sisters back home in Philippi

- Epaphroditus loved the Philippians so much that he was distressed, not because he was sick, but because his friends and family in Philippi learned that he was sick

27 For indeed he was sick to the point of death, but God had mercy on him, and not only on him but also on me, so that I would not have sorrow upon sorrow.

27 For indeed he was sick to the point of death, but God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, so that I would not have sorrow upon sorrow.

27 Indeed, he was sick to the point of death, but God had mercy on him, and not only on him but also on me, so that I would not have one sorrow on top of another.

27 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.

- Epaphroditus, a "worker" and a "soldier" (v25) for the gospel and for Paul, worked himself to the point of sickness, which nearly resulted in his death

— God evidently had mercy and healed Epaphroditus, which was a blessing to him but also a blessing to Paul because Epaphroditus was so beneficial to Paul's work and ministry

28 Therefore I have sent him all the more eagerly, so that when you see him again you may rejoice and I may be less concerned *about you*.

28 Therefore I have sent him all the more eagerly so that when you see him again you may rejoice and I may be less concerned *about you*.

28 Therefore, I am especially eager to send him so that you may have the joy of seeing him again, and so that I may feel relieved.

28 I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful.

- Paul is not worried about Epaphroditus, his sickness, or himself...he is worried about the Philippians, and their worry about Epaphroditus

— So Paul decided to send Epaphroditus, who had been a huge help and blessing to him, back to Philippi because both he (Paul) and Epaphroditus were concerned about the Philippians

— Epaphroditus was concerned about the Philippians concerns about his health; Paul was concerned whether or not the Philippians were walking in joy (v23)

29 Receive him then in the Lord with all joy, and hold people like him in high regard,

29 Receive him then in the Lord with all joy, and hold men like him in high regard;

29 So joyfully welcome him in the Lord and make sure you honor such people highly,

29 Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation:

- Paul wanted the Philippians to warmly welcome Epaphroditus home, and hold this lowly, selfless servant in high esteem

30 because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to compensate for your absence in your service to me.

30 because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was deficient in your service to me.

30 because he came close to death for the work of the Messiah by risking his life to complete what remained unfinished in your service to me.

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

- Epaphroditus got sick, and nearly died before God healed him, and all along he was right in the center of God's will. God didn't make Epaphroditus sick for the purpose of spiritual discipline, or as a consequence of some sin issue in his life.

— This is a counter to the "health & wealth" gospel taught today (Cf. Gal 4:13-14; Rom 8:19-22; 1 Tim 5:23; 2 Tim 4:20; 2 Cor 12:8-9)

- Paul needed financial help, and the Philippians sent that to Paul via Epaphroditus