

**Epaphroditus - was willing to travel and risked his life to ensure Paul was provided for while out in the mission field.**

- Distance from Philippi to Rome was about 800 miles, 6 weeks journey

**Epaphroditus risked his life for Paul because Paul was evangelizing the gospel.**

**Phil 2:25-30**

**25** Yet I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier, but your messenger and the one who ministered to my need; **26** since he was longing for you all, and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. **27** For indeed he was sick almost unto death; but God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. **28** Therefore I sent him the more eagerly, that when you see him again you may rejoice, and I may be less sorrowful. **29** Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such men in esteem; **30** because for the work of Christ he came close to death, not regarding his life, to supply what was lacking in your service toward me.

**Notice again in verse 25. Paul says, “Yet I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus”**

- During his travel Epaphroditus became ill, to the point of near death.
- Paul sent him home.

**Not only was Epaphroditus ill, Paul says:**

**Phil 2:26**

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

“distressed” - “full of heaviness, anguish or distress.” same meaning as the word used of Jesus in the Garden when He urged Peter, James and John to pray with Him.

**Epaphroditus knew the meaning of sacrifice and service.**

**Verse 30 says it was for the work of Christ he came close to death, not regarding his life, to supply what was lacking in your service toward me.**

**Epaphroditus was Longing for the people back home - he was home sick.**

**Paul used the term in verse 8 of chapter 1**

- “He longed for them with the affection of Jesus Christ.”

**Most would agree,**

- if you're not feeling well
- it's best to be home and taken care of at home.

Paul didn't made a big deal of this,

- Instead he sent Epaphroditus home.

As we mature in the Lord

- we often become more understanding
- of other people's weaknesses.

Example: Paul's first missionary journey

- Paul, Barnabas & John Mark travel together

While in Pamphylia, John Mark deserted Paul & Barnabas,

Later, Paul expressed a desire in revisiting

- the places they'd been in the past,
- he invited Barnabas but said no to John Mark traveling with them.

Well, Barnabas and Paul couldn't agree, so they ended up going their separate way.

Paul may have lightened up because later he was willing to send Epaphroditus back home.

This should be an example to us of what grace should look like.

27 For indeed he was sick almost unto death; but God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.

How could this guy be sick almost unto death while in the presence of Paul! Paul couldn't heal at will." The Lord had to be in it.

In Acts 28 the father of Publius lay sick of fever and dysentery - (a disease characterized by severe diarrhea), after Paul prayed for him, he laid hands on the man and the Lord healed him.

Yet, in 2 Timothy Paul left Trophimus sick in Miletus. The Lord chose not to heal him at that time.

28 Therefore I sent him the more eagerly, that when you see him again you may rejoice, and I may be less sorrowful.

29 Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such men in esteem;

30 because for the work of Christ he came close to death, not regarding his life, to supply what was lacking in your service toward me.

Paul most likely shared story upon story with Epaphroditus of his experiences at Thessalonica, Berea, Athens and Corinth which Epaphroditus would have taken home and shared with the church.

**To not regard one's life means:** (to risk all, to throw the dice, to gamble on)

Paul is saying, listen guys,

- Epaphroditus gambled his life to bring provision to me.

Prov 16:33, we may throw the dice, but the Lord determines how they fall.  
The Lord knows what He's doing!

Verse 29 - receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such men in esteem:

1 Thess 5:12-13

12 And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, 13 and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves.

**Paul closes the chapter by saying:**

30 because for the work of Christ he came close to death, not regarding his life, to supply what was lacking in your service toward me.

This was not a complaint toward the church on Paul's part. He only wished he could have seen the entire church body.

**Paul gave us two great examples of two ordinary men**

- who chose to serve the Lord by serving others.

Calvary has a network which functions because of its servers.

Servers enable the computers, phones, tablets etc. to communicate with each other.

**Our capacity to maximize the use of technology is enhanced**

- because our servers are in place doing their job.

**God wants a networked church of hearts, people who love Him and one another**

- who give of themselves because
- they have received the manifold grace of God.

We have a choice whether to have joy or to be angry and miserable.

Phil 3:1-6

1 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. For me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but for you it is safe.

2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation! 3 For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, 4 though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: 5 circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; 6 concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

**Phil 3:1**

1 Finally (Furthermore), my brethren, rejoice in the Lord

He refers to rejoicing at least 14 times in the letter to the Philippians. We are to rejoice in the Lord.

**To the church of Colossae he said, I now rejoice in my sufferings for you,**

In Phil 4:4-7 he says: “Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I say Rejoice”

He doesn't grow tired in telling them to rejoice, neither should we become tired in hearing that we are to rejoice in the Lord.

But like most things in life, we have to learn how to rejoice.

I say that because in the very next chapter, Paul said in verse 11, “I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content:”

When David was running from Saul discouraged, he thought he was going to lose his life. In 1 Sam 30:6 David strengthened himself in the Lord his God. He was encouraged in the Lord.

**Phil 3:1b**

1b For me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but for you it is safe.

In other words, I know I'm telling you things I've said in the past, but there is a reason for this. And I don't get tired of telling or reminding you.

**2 Peter 1:12-13**

12 For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. 13 Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you,

2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation!

Paul issues 3 warnings in this one verse, beware, beware, beware!

He issues 3 stern warnings in against the Judaizers in this verse.

**Judaizers:**

Acts 15:1b

"Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."

They wanted the Gentiles to submit to Jewish rules for salvation.

Paul says, beware of dogs.

He understood being joyful meant being careful.

Paul is referring to people.

**Dogs are used symbolically at times in the bible**

- to describe men who are crude,
- unholy, profane, disrespectful,
- immoral and cruel.

Paul is telling the church to stay away from such people.

Paul says to beware of evil workers,

They're deceitful in that they'll tell you one thing and do another.

Paul says, beware of those people, those evil workers.

Finally, he says, beware of the mutilation!

Another translation says to beware of the concision meaning "to cut in pieces" and is the same Greek word for circumcision in verse 3. However, in verse 3 it means to cut around.

But the religious leaders continued to mix law and grace by saying

- circumcision was a requirement for salvation.

**Those who add works to salvation such as church membership,**

- circumcision, baptism etc. mutilate the gospel message
- by trying to add to God's grace for salvation.

The term Paul uses, "mutilation" refers to the Pagans cutting themselves. In 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 18 Elijah was on Mt Carmel with 450 prophets of Baal. Elijah wanted them to know who the true God is and they began to cut themselves until blood gushed out and they danced around to their gods. That's the mutilation.

Paul is saying that their circumcision is as meaningless as Pagan mutilation. Legalism mutilates the work of Jesus.

Every religious system falls into the category of human achievement. I've done this and I've done that, I'm this and I'm that. It's based on their human achievement.

Only the followers of Christ fall into the category of divine accomplishment.

Only the finished work on the cross saves us.

3 For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,

Before Jesus, the physical sign of circumcision set God's people, the Jews apart from the Gentiles. But after Jesus, that physical sign was no longer in effect.

Anyone could now come to salvation by putting their trust solely in the finished work of Jesus on the cross.

That's why Paul says, we are the circumcision. We've been saved within, we've had a true change of heart.

**Rom 2:28-29**

28 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; 29 but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.

We are to worship the Lord in spirit and in truth.

**Phil 3:3b**

rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,

Notice the contrast here. Rejoice in Christ, have no confidence in the flesh.

The humanist would say, "You can do that on your own."

The Legalist would say, "Keep working hard and hope you get there."

But the gospel message is, "it is finished, totalistai, it's complete" Rejoice in the Lord!

4 though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so:

It was the Judaizers based their salvation on works.

So what does Paul do, not boastfully but humbly begins to give his credentials.

When we see what he writes in verses 5 & 6 we might think he's boasting, what he's really doing is saying you cannot earn salvation.

So Paul lists 7 qualifications that unmistakably belong to a full-blooded Jew. Four are by heredity or by birth; three were by choice or personal conviction.

5 circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee;

6 concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

Paul was a true Jew. Notice he was circumcised on the eighth day. This was the sign of the Abrahamic covenant according to Gen 17:10.

He was of the stock of Israel. The Jews though if the Gentiles were circumcised this would bring them into the privileges of belonging to God's ancient people Israel.

Paul was of the tribe of Benjamin.

The Jews were said the Gentiles could become members of Israel. Paul says, "Hey, I can trace my family down to the tribe."

Paul sums up the preceding 3 qualifications by stating he was a Hebrew of the Hebrews.

Paul may have been saying, nothing was given to me, I am a Hebrew of the Hebrews.

Paul was a Pharisee at one time. Originally, to be a Pharisee meant to be separated. When they started around 200 BC they believed they'd give their entire life to studying and obeying the written and oral law. Eventually they became a hypocritical group of people.

Paul studied as a Pharisee under a man by the name of Gamaliel who taught him how to think and speak persuasively. He learned large sections of the OT.

Gamaliel didn't like Christians, he called them Christian heretics.

**One of Gamaliel's famous prayers reads:** Let there be no hope to them who apostatize from the true religion and let these heretics how many so ever they be all perish in a moment.

No wonder he persecuted the church as he did.

Then Paul says in verse 6, concerning zeal, persecuting the church;

Paul at one time had such a blind hatred toward anyone who opposed the Jewish religion and law.

Finally Paul says, concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

**Paul had a righteousness by keeping the rules.**

The hardest people to talk to about the gospel of Christ are the religious because they think they're alright. I go to church, I'm not that bad, I've been baptized, I've been confirmed, I do good things for people, I give to this charity etc.

They have enough morality to keep them out of trouble but not enough righteousness to get them into heaven.

Paul said to the Judaizers in verse 3 to have no confidence in the flesh.

None of our righteousness, none of our power, not all the money in the world will get a person into heaven apart from the work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

**Have no confidence in the flesh!**