

8/9/26

Philippians 2:17-30

Paul has given to the Philippians a picture of Christ, the epitome of humility, the model which they were to follow.

That even as God exalted Christ and gave Him a name which is above every name, so Christ will exalt those who humble themselves for the purposes of God.

In view of this, Paul provides three examples, Paul, Timothy and Epaphroditus, men who have put to practice what he gave as counsel in order to demonstrate three things. Phil. 2:17-30

1. The possibility of Christ in us.
2. The practicality of Christ through us.
3. The power of Christ by us.

* This is not so much an imitation of Jesus, but rather to be Christ-like as He imparts to us the ability through our new Divine nature. 2Pet 1:3-4

To begin with, take note Paul is a model of humility in the very fact that he gives only two verses with himself, five for Timothy, and six for Epaphroditus.

2:17-18 The Christ-like example of Paul.

2:17 The joyful sacrifice of Paul.

- 1) Paul saw himself as being poured out, as a libation or drink offering that accompanied

offerings, “Yes, and if I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of their faith.” vs. 17a-b

- a) The drink offering was poured at the altar over the sacrifice that evaporated.
 - 1)) The aroma was a sweet smelling aroma going up to God. Num. 15:4-12
 - 2)) He is the lesser of the two, the Philippians being the better the sacrifice itself, once again modeling the mind of Christ and the least of the saints!
 - 3)) “And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved.” 2Cor. 12:15
 - 4)) “For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand.” 2Tim. 4:6
- b) The apostle Paul saw himself in the priestly role of every believer. 2Cor. 9:12; 1Pet. 2:5
 - 1)) Paul saw himself as both drink and sacrifice, as His Lord!
 - 2)) Paul was about to be executed by cutting his head off.
- c) Paul stated the sacrifice was in the service of their faith.
 - 1)) He loved the people of God, the church.

- 2)) He believed what he taught, he saw himself as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God. Rom. 12:1-2
- 3)) He was working out his salvation with fear and trembling, knowing that it was God who was working in him both to will and do of His good pleasure. Phil. 2:12-13
- 4)) He was doing everything without murmuring or disputing. Phil. 2:14
- 5)) He was attempting to be blameless, harmless and without fault in the midst of a twisted and corrupt generation as a light bearer for others who were saved and lost around him. Phil. 2:15
- 6)) He was holding fast the word of life, that he might rejoice in the day of Christ. Phil. 2:16
- 2) The attitude of Paul in his service to the Philippians is clearly stated, "I am glad and rejoice with you all." vs. 17c
 - a) He was glad in all his service, but also rejoiced with them over the benefits they had gained in his service.
 - 1)) His service of their faith was after his ability in Christ. Phil. 2:1-5
 - 2)) He had a great zeal for Israel. Rom. 9-11
 - 3)) He cared not for his life. Acts 21:13

- 4)) He was manifesting the fruit of the Spirit as love, the first evidence being joy. Gal. 5:22
- b) He was sold out to the work of people because he was first sold out to God.
 - 1)) From his conversion he began to preach in Damascus. Acts 9
 - 2)) He left Jerusalem and preached around Tarsus.
 - 3)) He taught at Antioch for one year and sent relief to poor saints in Jerusalem.
 - 4)) He headed three missionary journeys.
 - 5)) He was stoned in the first journey at Lystra.
 - 6)) He was chased out of Thessalonica, Berea and mocked at Athens in the second journey.
 - 7)) He nearly lost his life in the third journey at Ephesus and in Asia.
 - 8)) When he returned to Jerusalem, after 25 years of service, he was nearly killed by the Hebrews.
 - 9)) He spent two years in Caesarea as a political scapegoat.
 - 10)) And two more in his own hired house in Rome where he was writing from. Acts 28:30
 - 11)) Now he was in the palace.
 - 12)) His list of sufferings are impressive. 1Cor. 4; 2Cor. 4, 6, 10

* Paul says, “Besides those things that are without, that which comes upon me daily, the care of all the churches.”
2Cor. 10:28

2:18 The request of Paul for the Philippians to rejoice with him.

- 1) The basis for his request, “For the same reason.”
 - a) Because he was an offering to God in service to them.
 - b) This was the call and commission of Paul by God and appointed duty.
- 2) The request was that they also rejoice with him over his joy for them, “you also be glad and rejoice with me.”
 - a) Christ was his life. Phil. 1:21
 - b) Christ was his mind. Phil. 2:5
* 2Tim. 1:12; 4:6-8

2:19-24 The Christ-like example of Timothy.

2:19 The sending of Timothy to the Philippians.

- 1) Paul was planning to send Timothy to Philippi, “But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly.” vs. 19a
 - a) The word “but” is a contrast to the Philippian’s glad and rejoice with him over his joy and for his lack of information about them.

- b) He was not just making the decision himself, but waiting and hoping the Lord to guide him to the sending of Timothy by the phrase “I trust in the Lord Jesus.”
- 2) Paul wanted to be encouraged about the Philippians, “that I also may be encouraged when I know your state.” vs. 19b
 - a) He wanted to hear about their proper response to his imprisonment.
 - b) He without doubt wanted to hear about their response to the letter regarding their unity and oneness in Christ.
 - c) He wanted to know if they received Epaphroditus in the proper manner.
 - d) He was as interested in them as they were interested in him at Rome.

2:20 The high complement of Timothy by Paul.

- 1) Paul expressed his deep appreciation of Timothy, “For I have no one like-minded.” vs. 20a
 - a) The statement refers to being Christ minded as he had exhorted them to be.
* Literally equal soul or same spirit, found only one time in New Testament. Phil. 2:4
 - b) Timothy put others before himself in humility after the example of His Master Christ being enabled.

- c) The statement is an amazing commendation in view of how many other men served with Paul, “I have no one like-minded.”
- 2) Paul explained the like-mindedness of Timothy, “who will sincerely care for your state.” vs. 20b
 - a) He would not be a hypocrite in his service, but genuine.
 - b) He would be a person of single eye faithful in his service to the Philippians.
- 3) Timothy was Paul most trusted servant.
 - a) Timothy joined Paul in his second journey, at Lystra. Acts 16
 - b) Father was Greek and his Mother Jew.
 - c) Mother's name was Eunice, his Grandmother Lois, who had brought him up in the scriptures. 2Tim. 1:5
 - d) He was with Paul in Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Corinth, Ephesus, and Rome. 1Cor. 4:17; 16:10, 11; 1Thess. 3:1-5
 - e) He was young, timid and sickly, but well reported of the brethren. Acts 16:2
 - f) Timothy was sent by Paul many times as his trouble shooter. 1Cor. 4:17; 1Thess. 3:6; 1Cor. 16:10
 - * Paul's concern at this point was for the Philippians!
 - g) Timothy was called by Paul to come as he was about to be executed. 2Tim. 4:13, 21

2:21 The general bent of sinful man.

- 1) The habitual habit of man's sin-nature is to look out for self, “For all seek their own”. vs. 21a
 - a) Paul is not exaggeration, but speaking truth under the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit about other believers in service.
 - b) The problem in the heart, always. Jer. 17:9
 - c) Without any doubt Paul had in mind the individuals at Rome, who were of a party spirit, some attempting to add hurt to him in his imprisonment. Phil. 1:16
- 2) The habitual habit of man's sin-nature is to not look for the things that interest Christ, “not the things which are of Christ Jesus.” vs. 21b
 - a) Once again this is not an exaggeration, but fact.
 - b) This is without exception, without Christ enabling us, we fall into this category.

2:22 The integrity of Timothy.

- 1) The test of time had vindicated Timothy, “But you know his proven character.” vs. 22a
 - a) The phrase proven character, “dokimen” means tried and approved worth.
 - b) This was the product through the years of service with Paul.

- c) The word proven “dokimen” was used for the testing of metals. 2Cor. 2:9; 9:13
- d) They knew it personally, as Timothy had been there three times. Acts 16:13; 19:22; 20:3
- 2) The manner of service of Timothy described, “that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel.” vs. 22b
 - a) This means Timothy was Paul’s spiritual son in the faith, not that Timothy was serving Paul. 2Tim. 1:2
 - b) Timothy’s service was in the gospel, according to the example of Christ and the standard of God’s word. 2Tim. 3:10-11

2:23 The deployment of Timothy to Philippi.

- 1) Paul would be sending Timothy in view of the proven character, “Therefore I hope to send him at once.” vs. 23a
 - a) He knew Timothy was dependable, available, faithful, and a reliable messenger.
 - b) He would settle their minds as to their concern with the most recent news.
- 2) Paul would send Timothy as soon as he found out the outcome of his defense, “as soon as I see how it goes with me.” vs. 23b
 - a) The phrase to see, “aphorao” means to look away, fixed on something in the distance.

- b) Paul already confidently told them he would be released from his imprisonment. Phil. 1:19, 24-25

2:24 The confidence of Paul.

- 1) Paul was trusting what Jesus was doing, “But I trust in the Lord.”
 - a) He was trusting “in the Lord”, not himself.
 - b) This was not a mere empty expression, but the identity of God’s direction.
 - * “And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith, that your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again.” Phil. 1:25-26
- 2) Paul confidently once again told them he would be joining them soon, “that I myself shall also come shortly.”
 - a) Every person has a set number of days to live.
 - b) Every person born again and serving the Lord is to be concerned about one day at a time for their service in the Kingdom.
 - c) This does not mean that we do not make plans for the future as we are serving Christ, but they are under “if God will”, Jesus may have something better for me.

2:25-30 The Christ-like example of Epaphroditus.

2:25 The character of Epaphroditus.

- 1) Paul revealed his plans to send Epaphroditus back to Philippi, “Yet I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier.” vs. 25a-d
 * Epaphroditus means charming and he was a Gentile.
 - a) He called him a brother “adelphos”, means born of the same womb, belonging to the same family, the family of God and having the same Spirit.
 - b) He called him a fellow worker “sunergos”, meaning a companion in labor, under same Lord with the same standing.
 - c) He called him a fellow-soldier “sustariotes”, one who hazards his life for Christ and the gospel. 2Tim. 2:3
- 2) Paul identified Epaphroditus as a Philippian, “but your messenger and the one who ministered to my need.” vs. 25e
 - a) The word “your” is emphatic in the Greek!
 - b) He called him a messenger “apostolos”, one sent out as a delegate, used for an apostle.

- c) He was commissioned to go to Paul to comfort and help him with a gift. Phil. 4:15
- d) He called him one who ministered “leitourgos” to his needs.
 - 1)) The word is used of a man who would fund a city function at his own expense, because he loved the city. Rom. 13:6; 15:7-8
 - 2)) In the LXX it is used of the special consecrated priest and Levies. Ex. 29:9
 * Epaphroditus means charming and he was a Gentile.

2:26 The condition of Epaphroditus.

- 1) He was home sick, “since he was longing for you all.” vs. 26a
 - a) The word is the same to describe his longing for the Philippians. Phil. 1:8
 - b) The word is used a strong yearning for total allegiance of a man’s heart. Ja. 4:5
- 2) He was concerned about their concern for his illness after the example of Christ, “and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick.” vs. 26b
 - a) The word distressed “ademoneo” means full of anguish, weighed down and or depressed, a heaviness.
 * There must have been others that came with Epaphroditus to Rome, they

must of witnesses his illness and after a while returned to Philippi.

- b) The word is used of Jesus as He approached the agony of Gethsemane. Matt. 26:37; Mk. 14:13

* The origin of the word means, away from home, thereby being besides oneself.

2:27 The critical state of Epaphroditus.

- 1) Epaphroditus was critically sick, “For indeed he was sick almost unto death.” vs. 27a

a) He was at the very door of death.

b) This was not just their opinion, but an accurate statement by the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

- 2) God intervened on Epaphroditus behalf and allowed him to recover from his deathly sickness, “but God had mercy on him.” vs. 27b

* The word mercy “eleeeoo” to have compassion and pity.

- 3) God also had mercy on Paul by not having to sorrow over his death, “and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.” vs. 27c-d

a) Paul certainly had the gift of healings, for he prayed for many and they were healed.

- b) Paul admits that God at times chooses to work apart from the vessel and not through the vessel.
- c) Paul also shows us that it is not the will of God for all to be healed right away or at all, every time, God is sovereign.
- d) Paul at the same time knew that it did not ultimately rest on his faith to believe as a mark of his spirituality, as so many today teach in the positive confession faith doctrine or seed faith doctrine.
- e) Paul teaches us He did not control the gift of healing in his life, but God did. Heb. 2:4
- * He mentions that he left Trophimus sick at Miletus. 2Tim. 4:20
- f) Paul acknowledges sickness is a part of life and for a fallen world without it being related to sin, lack of faith or even the chastening of the Lord.

2: 28 The commission of Epaphroditus to return.

- 1) Paul revealed his heart of love for the Philippians, “Therefore I sent him the more eagerly.” vs. 28a

* The phrase “more eagerly” means more diligently, here again we see Paul’s concern for others.

- 2) Paul desired to relieve the sorrow of the Philippians, “that when you see him again you may rejoice.” vs. 28b
 - * Paul contemplated the joyful reunion of Epaphroditus and the Philippians rejoicing together.
- 3) Paul declared his relief of sorrow, “and I may be less sorrowful.” vs. 28
 - a) Being in prison he was concerned about what is best for Epaphroditus, lest he have a reoccurrence of his sickness.
 - b) Being in prison he is concern about what was best for the Philippians.

2:29-30 The commendation of Epaphroditus.

- 1) Paul gave a command to them, “Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness.” vs. 29a
 - a) The word receive is an imperative command, not a request.
 - b) A present active in the middle voice, indicating each person was to do this, no one could do it for them.
 - c) The manner is “in the Lord”, being saved and in the family of God.
 - d) The method is “with all gladness” joyfulness.
 - * Paul says this knowing the problem of lack of unity, he feared that some would perhaps think he had failed or gone back on his mission.

- 2) Paul declared what their spiritual perspective should be, “and hold such men in esteem.” vs. 29b
 - a) Another present active imperative.
 - b) They were to hold such men as Epaphroditus in esteem and honor, literally precious. vs. 29b; 1Pet. 2:4, 6
 - c) Men who are examples of Christ, not considering themselves before others, men of reputation based on character.
 - d) Men like these are to be held in high regard and valuable to the church body. 1Cor. 16:15-18
 - * In prison you visited me. Matt. 25:41-46
 - e) This is the secret of greatness, to be the servant of all. Mk. 10:35-45
- 3) Paul declared the reason for his commendation of Epaphroditus. vs. 30
 - a) He was a bond servant of Jesus, “because for the work of Christ he came close to death.” vs. 30a
 - b) He was selfless as Christ, “not regarding his life.” vs. 30b
 - 1)) He lived having died in Christ!
 - 2)) Associating with prisoners made on suspect and in danger of their life!
 - 3)) The phrase not regarding “parabouleuomai” is a gambling word, to stake everything on a turn of the dice.

a)) From the word “parabolos” venturesome, reckless, as in Alexandria there grew up an association of men known as the “Parabolani”.

b)) Among the hazardous duties of this “suicide squad” these people chanced visiting the ill and contagious in prison, risking their lives.

4) Paul declared the motive of Epaphroditus service to be agape love, “to supply what was lacking in your service toward me.” vs. 30c

a) Epaphroditus brought a financial gift to Paul for his needs.

b) We are not told exactly what, but he took on other work and labored to the point of exhaustion, etc.