

Epaphroditus, A True Brother And Servant

Sunday PM 01/06/19

Introduction:

In *Acts 16* Paul is directed by the Holy Spirit to go to Macedonia, *v. 9*. Upon arriving they met and converted Lydia, the first Macedonian convert. The next person mentioned was a slave girl possessed by a demon, *v. 16*. Paul cast the demon out of the girl, which caused a next riot. He was arrested, beaten, and put in prison. It was there he met and converted the Philippian Jailor. Epaphroditus is not mentioned in *Acts 16* but he was obviously a member of the church there. The letter to the church at Philippi was written while Paul was imprisoned in Roman, *Philippians 1.12-14, Acts 16.14-15*

I) Paul and the *Philippians, 4. 15-19*

A) They sent relief to Paul while at Thessalonica.

1. Preaching in the first century was dangerous, *2 Corinthians 11,24-28*
2. Paul preached to his own physical detriment, *1 Thess. 2.9; 3.7-8*
 - a. While at Thessalonica Paul faced persecution, *Acts 17.5ff, 10*
 - b. The people at Berea were fair minded, *Acts 17.11* but Jews from Thessalonica came and caused problems there, *Acts 17.13*.
 - c. Athens proved to be unresponsive to the Gospel, *Acts 17.32,33*.

- d. Paul stayed at Corinth a year and ½ but even there he faced opposition, *1 Corinthians 2.1-4*

B) The Philippians were concerned about Paul (fellowship in the Gospel, *1.5*)

1. They were not just converted they were convicted, *John 16.8*
2. What is the difference?
 - a. Conversion - a person learns and obeys the truth. They realize what they must do to go to be a Christian and go to heaven.
 - b. Conviction - person is driven to do what the Bible says. They want to fulfill their obligations.
 - c. It is the difference between "have to" and "want to".
3. The abundance was able to supply Paul's needs.
 - a. This was their "reasonable service" *Romans 12.1*
 - b. To aid the servant is to aid the master, *Hebrews 13.16*

II) The Personal Sacrifice of Epaphroditus, *Phil. 2.25-30*

A) A servant of God.

1. He was Paul's brother in Christ, all Christians are saints and brethren. Term used to show we are members of the same spiritual family.

2. He was a fellow worker. The word fellowship is often abused today to refer to social gatherings. The word means joint participant, partaker with, worker. It shows we are working in the Gospel of Christ.
 - a. Epaphroditus was an active member, no matter where he was.
 - b. To many Christians become inactive when they move or go some where else. Our obligation is not just to a local congregation but to the Lord.
3. He was a messenger; the same word is translated as apostle in other passages. Means ambassador or one sent by the authority of another.
4. He ministered to Paul's needs. In this case it included but not limited to the "gift" from the church to Paul, *Philippians 4.15-19*
5. He was sick, almost unto death, or to the point of death, *Philippians 2.27*.
 - a. This was dangerous work.
 - b. He was willing to risk his own life, much like Paul and Barnabas.

B) We all are to be servants of the church.

1. Jesus defined greatness as being a servant, not just of Him but of each other, *Matthew 20.27,28*.
 - a. The washing of the disciple's feet in *John 13* was to show how they humble themselves.

- b. Self righteousness, arrogance, and lack of humility gets in the way of servitude.
- 2. A servant must be comfortable with their humility and faith, *Phil. 2.5-8*
- 3. The world does not revolve around you or me. We live in a society of narcissist.
 - a. We need to ask, "What can I do to help?"
 - b. Once I heard a lady say, "If I was rich, I would hire that man to be my servant." For many years I thought the statement to be brash and prejudice for the man was black. But it may have truly been a statement showing her appreciation for what that man was willing to do.
- 4. Through out service to others we help them, provide a good example for others to show, are serving God.

III) **Paul's Instruction to the church, *Phil. 2.29***

A) Epaphroditus was to be received in gladness, and esteemed.

- 1. Why did Paul write this?
 - a. Some believe they were expecting Timothy to be coming instead of Epaphroditus.
 - b. They may have inferred that Epaphroditus was returning because he was not helpful or useful to Paul.

- c. They may have doubted whether he was really sick or just "homesick"
- 2. They were to be happy or glad to have this man in their mist.
- 3. To esteem is to honor, to appreciate the work this man had and was continuing to do.
 - a. He was a proven warrior of the cross, *1 Thess. 5.12-14; 1 Peter 5.5*
 - b. We have to appreciate those that have fought the battles in times past and those that are stilling fighting them now.

B) A servant is: useful, humble, faithful in all things, a risk taker, an adventurer.

Conclusion:

Are you willing to empty yourself and be an Epaphroditus?