



# **Paul's Epistle to the Philippians**

## **CHAPTER TWO**



# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO

## Outline

- Unity Through Humility (2:1-4)
- The Humiliation and Exaltation of Christ (2:5-11)
- Continue God's Work He Began in You (2:12-18)
- Commendations of Timothy & Epaphroditus (2:19-30)



# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO

## *Unity Through Humility (2:1-4)*

<sup>1</sup> Therefore if there is any consolation in **Christ**, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the **Spirit**, if any affection and mercy,

- The repeated use of the word “**if**” does not express doubt.
  - “**Since**” or “**in view of**” carry the intended meaning.
- The end of chapter one highlighted the need for unity (Phil. 1:27-28). Here, Paul continues that theme several verses, specifically highlighting the need to be unified through humility.
- The specific grounds for Paul’s appeal in Phil. 1:27-28 is described in this verse.
  - “**Consolation** [“encouragement,” ESV, NASB, etc.] **in Christ**” (also consider 2 Cor. 1:3-5).
  - “**Comfort of love**” (also consider 1 John 4:11-17).
  - “**Fellowship of the Spirit**” (also consider Acts 2:38-39; 5:32).
  - “**Affection and mercy**” (also consider 2 Cor. 1:3).
    - All of the blessings listed are found “**in Christ**” (Eph. 1:3).
    - “**Therefore**,” the Philippians should want to reflect Him (Phil. 2:5).



# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO

## Unity Through Humility (2:1-4)

<sup>2</sup> fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind,

- The Philippians brought Paul joy (Phil. 1:4-5; 4:10). This joy could be fulfilled if they:
  - Were “**like-minded.**”
    - The specific mind Paul envisioned for the Philippians is described in Phil. 2:3-8.
  - Of the “**same love.**”
    - This love would be one of knowledge, discernment, and good fruit (Phil. 1:9-11).
  - Were “**of one accord, of one mind**” (Acts 4:24, 32).

*“Literally the words of ‘one accord’ ... mean of one soul, or joined in soul, while of ‘one mind’ means thinking the one thing. Together the two statements mean ‘joined in soul contemplating the one thing’” (Weaver, p.80).*

    - Some of the Philippians were not of one accord (Phil. 4:2).



# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO

## Unity Through Humility (2:1-4)

### **3a Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit**

- In order to be united, every “**selfish ambition**” must be put away.
  - Debate exists as to whether “selfish ambition” or “contention” / “strife” is the most accurate translation. Personally, I think “selfish ambition” fits the context best.
  - Selfishness is antithetical to the gospel (Phil. 2:21; James 3:13-18; 1 Cor. 10:23-24).
- In order to be united, all “**conceit**” must also be put away.
  - Conceit / vanity destroys unity (Gal. 5:26).

*“The words Paul most often uses for the concept of conceit are the terms ‘high minded’ (Rom. 3:12, 16) and ‘puffed up’ (1 Cor. 4:6, 14, 18, 19; 5:2; 8:1; 13:4; Col. 2:18). Unity cannot prevail among brethren where ambitious men wish to triumph over others because they ‘think more highly [of themselves] than [they] ought to think’ (Rom. 12:3). When one thinks his ideas or ways of doing things are always right, or even always best in matters of human judgment, and insists upon them to the point of becoming factious over them, there will be division and discord ... This is vain-glory (‘conceit’ and ‘personal vanity’) as opposed to zeal for the glory of God” (Weaver, p.80).*



# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO

## Unity Through Humility (2:1-4)

**<sup>3b</sup> but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.**

- Nothing should be done selfishly or vainly; everything should be done **“in lowliness of mind.”**
  - The Greek word means “having a humble opinion of oneself; a deep sense of one's (moral) littleness; modesty, humility, lowliness of mind” (Thayer).
  - This mindset is essential to Christianity (Col. 3:12), and essential to unity (Eph. 4:1-3).
  - Humility comes by recognizing our faults (Luke 18:9-14).

*“This virtue consists in estimating ourselves according to truth. It is a willingness to take the place which we ought to take in the sight of God and man; and, having the low estimate of our own importance and character which the truth about our insignificance as creatures and vileness as sinners would produce, it will lead us to a willingness to perform lowly and humble offices that we may benefit others” (Barnes, p.166).*

- Humility is not a sign of weakness, but of strength (Phil. 2:5-7; Matt. 11:29, NASB).



# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO

## Unity Through Humility (2:1-4)

<sup>3b</sup> but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.

- Humility promotes unity because it causes us to “**esteem others better than**” ourselves.
- Note that Paul’s point is not merely discussing viewing and treating others as equals (also consider Rom. 12:10, 15:2).

*“Unselfish Christians humbly labor to please their neighbors for the purpose of edifying them (Rom. 15:2). They concentrate on the needs of others and are motivated by concern for the well-being of others. Their focus is so intense and so unselfish that they will often overlook their own needs to care for the welfare of the weak, vulnerable, and suffering. In fact, the servant’s heart moves unselfish Christians to consider their own personal comfort and security as forfeit to the needs of fellowmen” (Blake, p.24).*

- This was the attitude of Jesus (John 13:12-17).
- This type of humility is key to maintaining unity (1 Cor. 10:23-24).



# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO

## Unity Through Humility (2:1-4)

- 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.**
- There is nothing wrong with looking out for our “**own interests**,” but we must “**also**” look out “**for the interest of others**.” This is key to maintaining unity.
    - We must put ourselves in another’s shoes (Rom. 12:15; 1 Cor. 12:25-26; Heb. 13:1-3).  
*“This means more than to look to the material good of others as well as yourselves. Look to their conditions, surroundings, and the influences brought to bear upon them, and endeavor to see things as they see them, and it will enable you to sympathize more with them in their trials and troubles, and you will come to esteem them more highly (Lipscomb, p.180).*
  - Selfishness and conceit will prevent this from happening; humility will prompt it.
    - There is a difference in serving the interests of others and meddling (1 Pet. 4:15).
    - Not all affairs concern us! (1 Thess. 4:11).



# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO

## *The Humiliation and Exaltation of Christ (2:5-11)*

**<sup>5</sup> Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:**

- The unselfish attitude described in the previous verses is the same “**mind**” that “**was also in Christ Jesus.**”
  - We must think, walk, love, hate, etc. as He did (Col. 2:6).

*“Christians must be of Christ’s mind. We must bear a resemblance to his life if we would have the benefit of his death”* (Henry, p.732).
  - The word “**let**” demonstrates how it requires deliberate effort on our part to develop the unselfish mind of Christ (Rom. 8:5; Col. 3:1 -2, 12).
- The mind of Christ was defined by:
  - Not taking advantage of His deity (Phil. 2:6).
  - Voluntary service (Phil. 2:7).
  - Obedience (Phil. 2:8).



# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO

## *The Humiliation and Exaltation of Christ (2:5-11)*

<sup>6a</sup> who, being in the form of God,

- Jesus shared / shares the same “**form of God.**”
  - Jesus is the exact representation of God (Heb. 1:3; Col. 1:15; John 14:9). However, that is not what Paul is discussing here.

*“The word ‘form’ is to be carefully distinguished from ‘fashion’ (which denotes the mere outward appearance which we frequently designate as form); in this there is no notion of a body or form of God, but simply the character of God in His real essence” (Shepherd, p.181).*

- Instead, Paul is discussing how Jesus shared / shares the same deific nature as God; Jesus is God (John 1:1,14).

*“The Greek term translated form indicates a correspondence with reality. Thus the meaning of this phrase is that Christ was truly God” (NET Footnotes).*



# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO

## *The Humiliation and Exaltation of Christ (2:5-11)*

**6<sup>b</sup> did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,  
he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to (NLT)  
He ... did not cling to his prerogatives as God's equal (Phillips)**

- Jesus is described as being “**equal with God.**”
  - This is not referring to authority. Jesus and God do not share an equal position of authority (1 Cor. 11:3).
  - Instead, this expression is referring to how the Father and Son share every quality that makes one God, making them both equally God (Col. 2:9).
- Upon leaving heaven and coming to earth, Jesus did not cling to His deific rights as God, nor did He use those rights to his advantage.
  - The humility of Christ, which the Philippians needed to imitate, was defined by voluntarily giving up rights for the sake of others (Matt. 26:52-56; 2 Cor. 8:8-9).
    - We must possess this same mind today (1 Cor. 8:8-13, 9:12).



# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO

## *The Humiliation and Exaltation of Christ (2:5-11)*

**7<sup>a</sup> but made Himself of no reputation,  
but emptied himself (ESV)**

- Many contend that this proves Jesus gave up His deity by leaving heaven and coming to earth.
  - Jesus was God before coming to earth (John 1:1).
  - Jesus was God while on earth (John 1:1, 14; Isa. 9:6; Matt. 1:23).
  - Jesus was / is God after leaving earth (Heb. 1:3, 8).
    - Jesus has never stopped nor will He ever stop being God!
- Paul's not asserting that Jesus gave up His deity in coming to earth (Col. 2:9). Instead, Jesus gave up His deific rights and liberties.

*“Emptied Himself of His privileges” (NKJV Footnotes).*

*“He did not lay aside His divine nature ... Rather than coming in the fashion or form as one who held the image of sovereign divine majesty as a king or ruler of the universe, He took upon Himself a different form and put Himself totally at the disposal of others” (Harkrider, p.21).*



# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO

## *The Humiliation and Exaltation of Christ (2:5-11)*

**7<sup>a</sup> but made Himself of no reputation,  
but emptied himself (ESV)**

*“Hebrews 1 states that Jesus is God. Hebrews 2 states He was man, too. Which was He: God or man? He was both at the same time. One need not explain this paradox, nor attempt to measure how much was God and how much was man, nor try to prove He surrendered divine prerogatives, nor counter with attempts to deny the temptations He faced; just accept by faith that He was both God and man in this world from His conception to His ascension. Leave speculation to ‘untaught and unstable people’ who ‘twist’ the word of God ‘to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures’ (2 Pet. 3:16)” (Blake, p.30).*



# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO

## *The Humiliation and Exaltation of Christ (2:5-11)*

**7<sup>b</sup> taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men,  
by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness (NIV)**

- Jesus came to earth “**in the likeness of men.**”
  - Jesus (God the Son) truly did have a fleshly existence on earth (Gal. 4:4).
    - To deny this truth is to possess the spirit of the antichrist (1 John 4:2-3; 2 John 7).
  - While in the flesh, Jesus was in all things human (Heb. 2:14-18).
    - He suffered, was tested, and tempted like all humans (Heb. 4:14-16).
  - Specifically, Jesus came to earth in “**the form of a bondservant.**”
    - Jesus took on the nature of a servant while on earth.
      - He came to earth not to be served as deity, but to serve as a bondservant (Isa. 42:1-9; Matt. 12:15-21).
      - Jesus was both a servant of God (Acts 3:13, 26) and men (Luke 22:27; etc.).



# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO

## *The Humiliation and Exaltation of Christ (2:5-11)*

**7<sup>b</sup> taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men,**

*“Form of a servant,” should be allowed to explain the phrase ‘form of God’ in Philippians 2:6. The ‘form of a servant’ is that which indicates the condition of a servant, in contradistinction from one of higher rank. It means to appear as a servant, to perform the offices of a servant, and to be regarded as such. He was made like a servant in the lowly condition which he assumed” (Barnes, p. 72).*

*“Paul is not saying that Christ emptied something out of himself and then replaced it, or filled himself up, with something else. He is not talking about content; he is talking about how Christ ... The point is, he did not think only of himself (selfishly, thinking he could use his equality with God for his own advantage), either in heaven or on earth, and he did not act out of his own interest (he did not use his equality in a selfish way). Thinking of others rather than himself, he left the glories of heaven, came to earth, and on earth he continued to think of others and served others selflessly, not selfishly. Rather than say Christ emptied something out of himself, then, Paul is saying that Christ emptied himself. He poured himself out, putting himself totally at the disposal of others” (Weaver, p.90).*



# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO

## *The Humiliation and Exaltation of Christ (2:5-11)*

<sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

- Jesus carried the “**appearance**” of a man while on earth; He looked human because He was human (Isa. 53:1-2).
- Jesus’s humility was seen in Him remaining “**obedient to the point of death.**”
  - The “**death of the cross**” was the ultimate display of Christ’s humility (Isa. 53:7-8).
    - Jesus died as a humble servant for mankind (Isa. 53:5; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13).
    - Jesus died the death of a servant.

*“A Roman citizen would not have been nailed to a cross. It was a death for a slave, the means of execution for a low-class criminal” (Harkrider, p.22).*

- Christ did not want to die (Matt. 26:26-44), yet He never begrudgingly obeyed God (Heb. 12:2).
  - It was always His goal to obey the Father in everything (John 14:28-31, 6:38).
  - Christ was willing to die in service to God. Are we? (1 Pet. 2:18-23; Rev. 2:10)



# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO

## *The Humiliation and Exaltation of Christ (2:5-11)*

**<sup>9</sup> Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,**

- Due to Christ's humiliation and obedience, He received great exaltation.
  - God exalted Jesus by raising Him from the grave (Acts 2:22-24).
  - God exalted Jesus by seating Him in heaven at His right hand (Acts 2:30-33, 5:30-31; Eph. 1:20-23; 1 Pet. 3:21-22).
  - God exalted Jesus by granting Him all authority (Heb. 7:23-28; Matt. 28:18).
  - God exalted Jesus by making Him the king over a kingdom that will never pass away (Dan. 7:13-14; Luke 1:30-33).
- Due to Christ's humiliation and obedience, God has **“has given Him the name which is above every name.”**
  - After having received the lowest position (the death of servant), Christ has been raised to the highest position by being given the name of “Lord” (Phil. 2:11).



# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO

## *The Humiliation and Exaltation of Christ (2:5-11)*

<sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,

- Compare this verse with Rev. 5:13.
- Christ's name has been so greatly exalted that “**every knee**” will bow to Him, including:
  - “**Those in heaven.**”
    - This likely refers to angelic beings (see Heb. 1:5-6).
  - “**Those on earth.**”
    - This may refer to living men and women (see Matt. 10:32-33; 1 Thess. 4:16-17).
  - “**Those under the earth.**”
    - *“This ... perhaps includes ... fallen angels”* (Barnes, p.175).
    - *“Either the devils in the bottomless pit; or rather the dead bodies of men”* (Gill).
    - *“Either the dead ... or devils, and wicked souls”* (Poole).
    - Personally, it seems more likely this strictly refers to all of the dead (see 2 Tim. 4:1).



# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO

## *The Humiliation and Exaltation of Christ (2:5-11)*

**<sup>11</sup> and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**

- All will bow the knee to Christ and “**every tongue**” will confess His exalted name of “**Lord**” (compare Rom. 14:11).
  - The exalted name of Christ is the only name through which one can obtain salvation (Acts 2:21, 38-39, 4:8-12).
  - Verbal confession of Christ’s exalted name is necessary for obtaining salvation in Him (Rom. 10:9-10; Matt. 10:32-33).
    - Even those who reject the exalted name of Christ while living will bow to him on the last day (John 12:42-43, 48).
- This confession will be “**to the glory of God the Father**” (also consider John 13:31).



# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO

## Continue God's Work He Began in You (2:12-18)

<sup>12a</sup> Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence,

- The term “**beloved**” demonstrates Paul’s affection for the Philippians
- The Philippians were obedient Christians.
  - They “**always obeyed**,” regardless if Paul was present or absent (Phil. 1:3-5).  
*“Their obedience did not depend upon Paul being present to tell them every step to take or to praise them for every good deed they did. Some today ... bear no fruit for Christ unless others suggest what to do and later publicly honor them for doing so”* (Harkrider, p. 25).
- Compare this with the situations in Corinth (2 Cor. 10:1-2, 7-11; 13:1-2) and Galatia (Gal. 1:1-7).



# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO

## Continue God's Work He Began in You (2:12-18)

<sup>12b</sup> **work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;**

- There are numerous lessons we can learn by analyzing Paul's specific language in this verse:
  - Salvation is something that one must "**work out**," not work for (Rom. 11:5-6; Eph. 2:4-9).  
**NOTE:** Working out salvation does not make a person deserving of such (Luke 17:7-10).  
**NOTE:** Acknowledging conditions does not deny the grounds upon which salvation is possible (Rom. 5:1-2; Heb. 5:9, 2:1-3; etc.).
  - Reverence ("**fear and trembling**") is a must (Ecc. 12:13; Isa. 66:2; Psalm 2:11; 1 Pet. 1:13-17).
  - It takes great carefulness and diligence to work out one's salvation (Eph. 5:8-16).  
*"Fear and trembling,' that is, with great care and circumspection"* (Matthew Henry, p.734).
  - Salvation must be brought to completion (1 Pet. 1:3-9).
    - Man must continually do his part in bringing his salvation to completion (2 Pet. 1:5-11; 1 Cor. 15:58; etc.), otherwise God will not do His part completing it (Heb. 10:35-39).
  - Salvation is an individual ("**your own**") matter (2 Cor. 5:10; Ezek. 18:19-22; etc.).



# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO

## Continue God's Work He Began in You (2:12-18)

<sup>13</sup> **for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.**

- This **does not** mean that God enables a person to be saved by direct intervention of the Holy Spirit to do what he otherwise would not be able to do (Acts 2:40; etc.).
- This **does not** mean that a person can sit by passively and expect God to save him without ever doing anything himself (James 4:8; etc.).

*“In the case of all who have been saved, they have made an effort ... What reason has any man to suppose that [God] will interfere in his case and save him, if he will put forth no effort to ‘work out his own salvation’” (Barnes, p.176).*

- God **“works in”** those working out their salvation (John 15:5; Phil. 1:6).

**NOTE:** The text says God works **“in”** the believer, not for him (compare Rom. 8:28).

**NOTE:** Paul did not explain **in this text** how God works; he only explained why (consider Eph. 3:16).



# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO

## **Continue God's Work He Began in You (2:12-18)**

**<sup>14</sup> Do all things without complaining and disputing,**

**Be glad you can do the things you should be doing. Do all things without arguing and talking about how you wish you did not have to do them (NLV)**

- **“Complaining and disputing”** must not exist among God's people.
- Paul is most likely condemning murmurings against and questionings of God (Exod. 16:6-8; 1 Cor. 10:6-12).

*“Men are inclined to murmur and complain at duties which God has laid on them. But God ... does not accept grudging or unwilling service ... What God requires should be done as he requires it, without questioning upon the part of any” (Lipscomb, p.187).*



# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO

## *Continue God's Work He Began in You (2:12-18)*

<sup>15a</sup> **that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault**

- As we work out our salvation, our goal is to become “**blameless and harmless ... without fault**” (Dan. 6:5; Col. 1:21-23; Eph. 1:3-4).
  - This requires:
    - Living our faith sincerely and honestly; we must practice what we preach! (3 John 12)
    - Being careful how we live among and interact with others (Tit. 2:6-8).
      - We need to be willing to go above and beyond to avoid blame and harm (2 Cor. 6:3, 8:20-21).
    - Constant self-examination (2 Cor. 13:5).
    - True repentance when we realize we are at fault (2 Cor. 7:10-11).



# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO

## *Continue God's Work He Began in You (2:12-18)*

<sup>15b</sup> children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,

- The Philippians lived during a crooked and perverse generation, and so do we!
- Though the Philippians lived during a perverse generation, they could not live like them (Rom. 12:1-2).
  - We can avoid living like the world! (Gen. 6)
  - We must avoid living like the world because that is the only way that we can “**shine as lights in the world!**” (Matt. 5:14-16; Eph. 5:8-11)
    - To live as light in the world one must follow the source of light (Psalm 119:105).



# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO

## Continue God's Work He Began in You (2:12-18)

<sup>16a</sup> holding fast the word of life,

### **Holding forth the word of life (KJV)**

- Salvation cannot be brought to completion unless we retain our light (“**holding fast the word of life**”) and do not allow ourselves to be overtaken by darkness.
- Holding forth the word of life requires both living out the message and proclaiming it to others.

*“Christians ... become living testimonials to the power of the gospel. Their lives become visible evidence that God’s way works in transforming ordinary, sin-laden people into the image of Christ (Rom. 1:16; 2 Cor. 3:18). The gospel is then held forth, not merely by preaching and teaching it, but also by living and showing it” (Blake, p.35).*



# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO

## Continue God's Work He Began in You (2:12-18)

**16<sup>b</sup> so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.**

- Paul hoped the Philippians would live in such a way that he could “**rejoice in the day of Christ**” (3 John 4; 1 Thess. 2:17-20).
- If the Philippians did not continue the work God began in them, Paul's labor for them would have been “**in vain.**”

*“Those who have been taught the truth have an obligation to those who taught them: that is, they need to obey the truth and remain faithful. Otherwise, the precious time and efforts of the teacher have been wasted” (Blake, p.35).*



# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO

## *Continue God's Work He Began in You (2:12-18)*

**<sup>17</sup> Yes, and if I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all.**

- Paul spoke of potentially (“if”) being “**poured out as a drink offering**” (Exod. 29:40-41; Num. 15:1-10, 28:7-8; 2 Tim. 4:6-8).
- Paul was willing to be poured out on behalf of the Philippians due to the “**sacrifice and service**” of their “**faith.**”
  - He rejoiced at the thought.

**<sup>18</sup> For the same reason you also be glad and rejoice with me.**

- Paul wished for the Philippians to “**be glad and rejoice**” with him if he did lose his life.
  - Shouldn't we be glad and rejoice whenever people who played key roles in our conversions meet their reward?



# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO

## *Commendations of Timothy & Epaphroditus (2:19-30)*

- In Phil. 2:19-30, Paul:
  - Resumes the personal report that he began in Phil. 1:12-26.
  - Provides examples of brethren who were actively doing what Paul taught in Phil. 2:12-17.
    - He commends Timothy for his commitment to:
      - Christ (Phil. 2:20-21).
      - Preaching the gospel (Phil. 2:21).
      - Paul (Phil. 2:19, 21).
      - The Philippians (Phil. 2:19).
    - He commends Epaphroditus for his commitment to:
      - Christ (Phil. 2:30).
      - Preaching the gospel (Phil. 2:25).
      - Paul (Phil. 2:25, 30).
      - The Philippians (Phil. 2:25-26).



# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO

## Commendations of Timothy & Epaphroditus (2:19-30)

**<sup>19</sup> But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state.**

- Paul hoped to send Timothy to the Philippians “**shortly**,” or in the near future (see Phil. 2:23).
  - Remember, Timothy was with Paul at the time of writing (Phil. 1:1).
  - Timothy also had a close relationship with the Philippians (Phil. 2:22; Acts 16).
    - As such, it would be wiser to send Timothy rather than someone else (2 Cor. 10:13-16).
- Sending Timothy served a dual purpose:
  - Timothy would encourage and care for them (Phil. 2:20; also consider 1 Thess. 3:1-2).
  - Paul would “**know**” the Philippians’ “**state**” and, thus, “**be encouraged**” himself.
    - Notice that Paul had no expectation of receiving bad news.
      - This says much about their faith (Phil. 2:12) and Paul’s love for them (1 Cor. 13:7).
- Paul trusted “**in the Lord**” that these plans would come to fruition (also consider Acts 18:21; 1 Cor. 4:19; 16:7; James 4:15).



# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO

## Commendations of Timothy & Epaphroditus (2:19-30)

<sup>20</sup> For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state.

**NOTE:** We are assuming Paul is writing while imprisoned in Rome (approx. 62-63 AD), and this is the last of the “Prisoner Epistles.”

- Paul had numerous faithful supporters with him (see Col. 4:7-14), yet he described Timothy as the only person who was “**like-minded**” to him (i.e. shared the same special interest in them).

*“We learn from other epistles written from Rome that there were several other brethren with him during this portion of his imprisonment. It is almost certain that Luke and Aristarchus were in his company, and that they remained with him until after the epistles to the Colossians and Philemon had been written, and they show that Mark, Aristarchus, Justus, Epaphras, Demas, and Tychicus had been added to their number (Col. 4:10-14; Phile. 23-24). It is probable that before this epistle was written most, if not all, of these had left Rome on different missions assigned to them by Paul. Tychicus had been sent to Colossae (Col. 4:7-8), and it is likely that he was accompanied by Epaphras and Mark who was at that contemplating a visit to that district (Col. 4:10)” (Shepherd, p.192-193).*

- This is a very different situation than what we read about in 2 Tim. 4:16.



# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO

## Commendations of Timothy & Epaphroditus (2:19-30)

**<sup>21</sup> For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus.**

- Compare what is said here with the admonition found in Phil. 2:4.
- The word “**all**” in this verse does not literally mean all, otherwise Paul contradicts himself in Phil. 2:25-30 (also consider Phil. 4:21).

- This expression is likely used in reference to the people mentioned in Phil. 1:15-16.

*“From what Paul said in 1:15-17 about those who did not serve from the best of motives, we already know of his disappointment concerning some of his brethren in Rome. In this particular case it may be that Paul had asked certain individuals there to go to Philippi, but they had refused for various reasons. Whatever the particular reasons may have been in each individual case (a general reason is given in this verse), Paul was greatly disappointed in them, as he was in those who served with ulterior motives” (Weaver, p.124).*

- This demonstrates why it’s important to contextualize all-encompassing language (also consider Phil. 4:5, 12-13).



# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO

## Commendations of Timothy & Epaphroditus (2:19-30)

<sup>22</sup> But you know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel.

- The Philippians knew Timothy's "**character**" in two ways:
  - They knew the service he rendered "**in the gospel**" (see 2 Tim. 1:5, 4:5).
    - The Philippians personally saw Timothy's service (Acts 16, 19:22; 1 Thess. 2:2).
  - They knew the intimacy of Paul & Timothy's relationship ("**as a son with his father**").
    - Although a father / son dynamic existed between them (1 Tim. 1:2, 18; 2 Tim. 1:2, 2:1; 1 Cor. 4:15-17), Timothy did not serve under Paul; he served "**with**" him.
- Notice that character is something that must be "**proven**" (also consider 1 Tim. 3:8-10).



# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO

## Commendations of Timothy & Epaphroditus (2:19-30)

<sup>23</sup> Therefore I hope to send him at once, as soon as I see how it goes with me. <sup>24</sup> But I trust in the Lord that I myself shall also come shortly.

- Paul hoped to send Timothy once he knew how his situation would turn out (“**as soon as I see how it goes with me**”).
  - Most scholars agree Paul was eventually released from his bonds and lived in freedom for a few years before being imprisoned in Rome a third time, resulting in his death.
- Paul earlier stated that he trusted in the Lord to send Timothy shortly (Phil. 2:19). Here, he adds that he held “**trust in the Lord**” that he would “**also come shortly.**”
- Paul recognized that both his and Timothy’s journeys to Philippi were dependent upon whatever the Lord willed.

*“This expression was far more than mere form. It was a recognition both of the providential and spiritual government of the Lord. [Paul] recognized that the accomplishment of any purpose depended on [God’s] will and felt that his life was in his hands” (Shepherd, p.193).*



# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO

## Commendations of Timothy & Epaphroditus (2:19-30)

**<sup>25</sup> 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;**

- Epaphroditus is not the same person as Epaphras.
  - Epaphras
    - With Paul when he wrote letters to the Colossians and Philemon (Col. 1:7; Phile. 23).
    - From Colossae (Col. 4:12).

*“It is hardly likely that one who was a native Colossian would be a resident and chosen messenger of Philippi” (Ellicott).*



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# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO

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*“It is hardly likely that one who was a native Colossian would be a resident and chosen messenger of Philippi” (Ellicott).*

- Epaphroditus
  - Brought the Philippians’ gift to Paul (Phil. 4:14-18).
  - Ministered to Paul’s needs for a time.
  - Delivered this letter to the Philippians.



# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO

## *Commendations of Timothy & Epaphroditus (2:19-30)*

<sup>25</sup> 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;

- Paul described Epaphroditus as:
  - His “**brother**” (also consider Phil. 3:1, 4:21, etc.).
    - Epaphroditus was a Christian.
  - His “**fellow worker**” (also consider Rom. 16:3, 21; 2 Cor. 8:23).
    - Epaphroditus was not just a “Sunday morning Christian” (Phil. 2:30).
  - His “**fellow soldier**” (also consider Phil. 2).
    - Epaphroditus was an extremely dedicated Christian (2 Tim. 2:1-4).
  - The Philippians’ “**messenger**.”
    - Epaphroditus brought Paul monetary relief from the Philippians (Phil. 4:18).
  - One who “**ministered**” to his “**need**” (also consider Phil. 13; Heb. 6:10-12; Rom. 12:9-13).
    - Epaphroditus possessed a living faith (James 2:14-17).



# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO

## Commendations of Timothy & Epaphroditus (2:19-30)

<sup>25</sup> 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; <sup>26</sup> since he was longing for you all, and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick.

- Although he could use all the help Epaphroditus could offer, Paul “**considered it necessary**” to send him to Philippi (also consider Phil. 9-13).
- Epaphroditus longed for the Philippians and was “**distressed**” since the Philippians knew he had been deathly sick (Phil. 2:27), but, evidently, never learned that he recovered.

*“There can be no question that a considerable time had elapsed since Paul’s arrival at Rome before these words were written. The Philippians first had to learn of his need, to make their collection and send it. After the arrival of Epaphroditus in Rome he fell sick, for Paul implies that he had exerted himself and so brought on his illness. This becomes known in Philippi, and the anxiety of his friends in Philippi had been reported to Paul ... Such an illness must have also continued over an extended period of time. The words here used indicate that the report which reached the Philippians had come short of the reality” (Shepherd, p.196).*



# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO

## Commendations of Timothy & Epaphroditus (2:19-30)

<sup>27</sup> 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. <sup>28</sup> Therefore I sent him the more eagerly, that when you see him again you may rejoice, and I may be less sorrowful.

- Epaphroditus' recovery was due to God having **“mercy on him.”**
- Epaphroditus' recovery was also an act of God's mercy towards Paul (**“not only on him but on me also”**).
  - If Epaphroditus died, Paul would have experienced **“sorrow upon sorrow,”** adding to his afflictions.
  - By understanding the sorrow that he would feel had Epaphroditus died, Paul sent him to the Philippians to prevent them from experiencing that same sorrow. Epaphroditus' return would be cause for the Philippians to **“rejoice.”**

*“His readiness ... to send Epaphroditus back to them ... indicates how anxious he was that the anxiety of these brethren be relieved” (Weaver, p.129).*

- Paul practiced what he preached in Phil. 2:4 (also consider Rom. 12:15; 1 Cor. 12:25-26).



# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO

## Commendations of Timothy & Epaphroditus (2:19-30)

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- We learn an important lesson on the nature of miraculous healing in this text.

*“[L] The passage, over and above its interest as an example of the strong personal affection which belonged to Paul's nature, and harmonized with his deep Christian love, is noticeable in showing clearly that his power of miracle, great as it was, was not his own, to use at his own will. When it was needed to be ‘the signs of an apostle’ (2 Cor. 12: 12), it was given; and at special times, as at Ephesus (Acts 19:11), it was given in special fullness. [S] But this instance, together with the case of Trophimus, of whom Paul says: ‘Trophimus I left at Miletus sick’ (2 Tim. 4:20), is clear proof that the power of performing cures, and of working miracles, was a power ... not at all depend upon their own will. He would undoubtedly have healed Epaphroditus if he could. Nor, if the power of working cures had awaited his disposal, would he have left Trophimus at Miletus sick” (Lipscomb and Shepherd, p.196).*



# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO

## Commendations of Timothy & Epaphroditus (2:19-30)

<sup>29</sup> Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such men in esteem;  
<sup>30</sup> 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 urged the Philippians to “**receive**” Epaphroditus “**in the Lord with all gladness.**”

*“What problems Paul anticipated upon the return of Epaphroditus to Philippi are not specified, but ... it is clear that some problems were expected. The likelihood is ... he was returning sooner than they expected ... They probably had expected Timothy instead of Epaphroditus. Paul attempts to guard against such problems by issuing two present tense imperatives: they must receive him, and they must honor him as he deserves ... The main reason he gives that they must receive him in this manner is because he had successfully fulfilled their mission, and, not only that, he had done so at great risk to himself” (Weaver, p.132-134).*

- Epaphroditus was to be held “**in esteem**” for his “**work**” in Christ.
  - Faithful brethren deserve respect and praise! (1 Thess. 5:12-13; Rom. 16:1-16)



# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO

## Commendations of Timothy & Epaphroditus (2:19-30)

**<sup>29</sup> Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such men in esteem;  
<sup>30</sup> 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.**

- The expression “**supply what was lacking in your service toward me**” is not meant as a rebuke against the Philippians (see Phil. 4:10).
  - “... he almost died doing things for me that you could not do” (NLV).
  - “... risking his life to make up for the help you were not able to give me” (Mounce).
  - “... he risked his life to do for me in person what distance prevented you all from doing” (Phillips).

*“Not that they had been indifferent to him, or inattentive to his wants ... but they had not had an opportunity to send to his relief ... and Epaphroditus therefore made a special journey to Rome on his account. He came and rendered to him the service which they could not do in person; and what the church would have done, if Paul had been among them, he performed in their name and on their behalf” (Barnes, p.186).*



# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO

## Commendations of Timothy & Epaphroditus (2:19-30)

**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.

- We learn an important lesson on commendations of Timothy and Epaphroditus.

*“Did Timothy and other devout Christians need letters of recommendation as they moved about preaching from one congregation to the next? When Apollos wanted to go to Achaia to preach, the church at Ephesus wrote a letter of recommendation: ‘And when he desired to cross to Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him’ (Acts 18:27). Paul wrote a letter of recommendation for Mark to the church at Colosse: ‘Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, with Mark the cousin of Barnabas; about whom you received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him’ (Col. 4:10). Even the apostle Paul himself needed someone to speak on his behalf to the church at Jerusalem [Acts 9:26-28] ... The body of Christ does not have a ‘don’t ask, don’t tell’ policy ... We have a God-given duty to maintain the purity of the local church (1 Cor. 5:6-8). When we accept people ... without a reasonable investigation, we leave the church open to potential corruption and trouble” (Blake, p.40-41).*