

## PHILIPPIANS 2b

In the first half of this chapter the Apostle Paul encouraged the Philippians to be like minded and in one accord. He exhorted them to look out for each other's interest even before their own.

Then using Christ as the example, he talked about the steps down that Jesus took to humble Himself; even to the point of being willing to die on the cross.

Of course, the lesson for us is to die to our own selfish ambitions and pride...

Because Jesus was willing to do this, God exalted Him and His name above all names. We had a good laugh at the intended insults that the Calvary Chapel Movement has enjoyed for 60 years... "Those JESUS people..."

Yes... We are.

In fact, we **want** to be... We want to be lights in the world... or at least we want to reflect the light of Jesus. He really is the light. We are just candle holders...

So, we learned, that we are to do all things without complaining or disputing. When people try to draw us into disputes, we should do all we can to deflect and reflect.

### **Deflect the dispute – Reflect the Redeemer**

The chapter will end with a couple of really good examples of living this way, Timothy and Epaphroditus.

### **TIMOTHY AND EPAPHRODITUS**

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

- Remember that among other roles, Timothy was Paul's trusted mailman. Timothy would deliver Paul's letters... Watch how the letters were responded to... And then return and tell Paul how his letter was received.
- "They loved it..." or "They were offended" or "They chased me out of town..."
- Listen to how much Paul trusted Timothy...

20 For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. 21 For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ

Jesus.

22 But you know his proven character, that as a son with *his* father he served with me in the gospel. 23 Therefore I hope to send him at once, as soon as I see how it goes with me. **(IE, after my trial)**

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

- Since the Apostle is holding Timothy up as an example, let's look at the characteristics of Timothy:
  - **1.** Trusting in Timothy was trusting in the Lord – V19 & 24. Though Timothy was young (1 Timothy 4:12) He was SO close to the Lord that Paul could trust his judgment. **I WANT THAT TOO!**
  - **2.** Timothy's opinions were trustworthy. V19. After hearing back from Timothy Paul knew he could believe Timothy. **I WANT TO BE THAT TRUSTWORTHY!**
  - **3.** Timothy was naturally **(sincerely)** gifted in care ministry. V20. Look, not all of us are... Timothy could take a beating while worrying about his attackers getting callouses from the clubs. **I WANT THAT!**
  - **4.** V21 – Timothy put others before himself. Paul had dealt with many selfish and self-centered assistants. Timothy was SO ministry centered that at times Paul had to MAKE him slow down and take some medicine. (1 Timothy 5:23) **MAY GOD MAKE ME SO!**
  - **5.** V22 – Timothy's character was a matter of public record. Paul had challenged him to be a good example in 1 Timothy, and He was!
    - It is a wise decision to choose people to serve **after** watching them grow for a while... Paul left Timothy behind for three years before inviting him along on mission's trips.
    - Timothy's volunteer years gave him his excellent reputation.
    - I always have my eyes ready to see the next servant-leader around here...
  - **6.** V22 – Timothy was respectful to the Apostle just as a good son is respectful to his father. Timothy's name means "Honoring God with dignity" and Timothy did just that! **I want to do that too!**

- To those of you considering the ministry as a vocation... Be sure to only respond to the call of God. THAT is the reason to surrender to full time service; and then never worry about the pay. God will make it enough! Concentrate on your character. Be like Timothy... AND this guy...

## THE “FELLOW”-SHIP OF EPAPHRODITUS

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.

- Sticking with your calling while sick is definitely “Advanced” Christianity. Nobody would have faulted Epaphroditus for returning home to recover. But... because Paul needed him, he stayed in Rome, at great risk to his own safety and health.
- Chuck Smith preached just two days before cancer took him. What a couple of great examples for us.
- Epaphroditus was more concerned about the feelings of the Philippians than his own health!

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.

- Let's close by looking at the three titles Paul gave to his trusted friend, Epaphroditus: **Fellow brother, worker & soldier**.
- 1. **Fellow Brother** – A brother is someone you can trust and Epaphroditus was entrusted with the money from the Philippian Church. He delivered it to Paul, in prison in Rome, at great risk to himself. When he saw the needs of the Apostle, he volunteered to stay on in Rome to support Paul.

- **2. Fellow worker** - Epaphroditus was not just an attendant of Paul. But he also worked like Paul to spread the Gospel during his tenure in Rome. His stay with Paul gave him valuable experience on how to spread the Gospel. It also shows that Paul did not resist from delegating responsibilities to Church laymen just because he was an Apostle. In fact, he built them up to such an extent that they could work the same way as he did. Paul was a great leader who brought out the best in people.
- **3. Fellow Soldier** - It assumes great significance that Paul should call Epaphroditus a fellow soldier. This is because a soldier is one who is on duty under constant danger. This term seeks to emphasize that Epaphroditus worked with Paul, shoulder-to-shoulder, in carrying out the work of the Lord and was ready to face the dangers that came with it.
- **WIERSBE** - Epaphroditus was a blessing to Paul and to his own church, and he is also a blessing to *us today!* He proves to us that the joyful life is the life of sacrifice and service, that the submissive mind really does work.
- He and Timothy together encourage us to submit ourselves to the Lord, and to one another, in the Spirit of Christ. Christ is the Pattern we follow. Paul shows us the power ([Php 4:12-19](#)); and Timothy and Epaphroditus are the proof that this mind really works.

As we consider these amazing heroes of the first Church, let's prepare our hearts to take communion together.