

Philippians Chapter 2 Continued

Philippians 2:14 "Do all things without murmurings and disputings:"

Murmurings is much like muttering or grumbling in a low tone of voice. It is an emotional rejection of God's providence, will and circumstances for one's life. The word for "disputing" is more intellectual and here means "questionings", or "criticisms" directed negatively toward God.

Since God is producing in the Philippians the willing and doing of His good and perfect will (in verse 13), there can be no legitimate reason for murmurings and disputings. Not only are they forbidden to complain about the difficulties and persecutions that will befall them in carrying out God's good pleasure, but quarreling among themselves is also prohibited.

We found in the last lesson that a person's salvation is his own responsibility to obtain. Now, we see that we are not to murmur and dispute others.

One of the things that had God angry at the children of Israel coming from Egypt to the Promised Land was their constant murmuring. The murmurings here, could also mean doubting. If we are to do all things, we should do them gladly and not complain.

Philippians 2:15 "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;"

This introduces the reasons believers should have the right attitude in pursuing godliness. This indicates a process in which they are to be growing toward something they do not yet fully possess as children of God.

If the readers obey the commands of (verses 12-14), they will be (become) blameless, (i.e., no finger of accusation can justly be pointed at them), and harmless (i.e., morally pure).

"Blameless" describes a life that cannot be criticized because of sin or evil.

The world around them was evil to the utmost. They must let the Light of Jesus shine forth in this very darkened place. That is really what missionaries do. They go to places where it is spiritually very dark, and they shine the Light of Jesus to do away with the darkness.

Notice the fact that they are sons of God. The son will do the will of the Father knowing full well that the Father's work is his work also. We followers of Jesus are not completely blameless and harmless, but are working toward becoming that.

At least, the desire of our heart is to be blameless and harmless.

“Crooked and perverse nation”: “Crooked” is the word from which the English “scoliosis” (curvature of the spinal column), comes. It describes something that is deviated from the standard, which is true of all who stray from God’s path.

“Perverse” intensifies this meaning by referring to a person who has strayed so far off the path that his deviation is severely twisted and distorted. Paul applies this condition to the sinful world system.

“Shine as Lights” is a metaphorical reference to spiritual character. Believers must show their character in the midst of a dark culture, as the sun, moon, and stars shine in an otherwise dark sky.

Philippians 2:16 "Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain."

“Holding forth” here refers to believers’ holding out or offering something for others to take. As a healthy church, the Philippian assembly is to “offer” the word of life.

"The Word of Life" is the Bible and is also, the Lord Jesus. The gospel when believed, produces spiritual and eternal life.

Many other places in Paul's writings this "day of Christ", is spoken of as day of the Lord. Paul wants to believe that all of the people he led to the Lord would stay in Christianity, until the return of the Lord.

Paul wants to feel that his life has caused someone to believe. Each of us wants to believe that his life has been some benefit to the work of God.

“That I have not run in vain”: Paul wanted to look back on his ministry and see that all his efforts were worthwhile. Their godly behavior and fruitful witness will demonstrate on Judgment Day that Paul’s ministry in Philippi was effective.

Philippians 2:17 "Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all."

It seems as though Paul believes he will be martyred for the work of the Lord. He is saying this would be a pleasure for him, and not a defeat.

Some connect this with Paul’s future martyrdom, but the verb is in the present tense, which means he is referring to his sacrificial ministry among the Philippians.

Notice the statement, “your faith”. He believes even the giving of his life for the sake of the gospel is for the benefit of those he had ministered to.

Another bible version states this scripture as: “But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all.”

“Drink offering”: This refers to the topping off of an ancient animal sacrifice. The offerer poured wine either in front of or on top of the burning animal and the wine would be vaporized. That steam symbolized the rising of the offering to the deity for whom the sacrifice was made. Paul viewed his entire life as a drink offering, and here it was poured on the Philippians’ sacrificial service.

“Service of your faith”: “Service” comes from a word that refers to sacred, priestly service and was so used in the Greek Old Testament. Paul sees the Philippians as priests who were offering their lives sacrificially and faithfully in service to God.

Philippians 2:18 "For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me."

As Paul rejoices over his ministry, so they must do the same over theirs, demanding and sacrificial though it may be. And the Philippians must also rejoice, as Paul does over his ministry, though it involves imprisonment and probable martyrdom. How can Paul rejoice over premature death in the Lord’s work? Because “to die is gain” (1:21).

Paul wants them to share in his joy, even if he is martyred.

In (verses 19-23), Paul tells the Philippians of his plans to send Timothy to Philippi, to set him forth as a model spiritual servant.

Philippians 2:19 "But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state."

The main thing for us to see in this is that even though Paul wanted to send Timothy, the Lord Jesus was really the one that had to send Timothy. If Paul sent Timothy without the approval of the Lord, the trip would be a failure.

In (Phil. 1:1), we saw that Timothy was an important gospel coworker in and around Philippi and a trusted corroborating witness to the truths Paul expounded.

Paul knows that Timothy would minister the same things he would minister, if he were there. Paul trained Timothy, and he was an extension of Paul. When Paul knows that Timothy is ministering to them, he will be pleased, because he will feel they are being taught the truth.

“When I know your state”: Condition.

In (verses 20 & 21), Paul states that “I have no man likeminded”. Literally meaning “one souled”. Timothy was one in thought, feeling, and spirit with Paul in love for the church. He was unique in being Paul’s protégé. Paul had no other like Timothy because, sadly, “all” the others were devoted to their own purposes rather than Christ’s.

Philippians 2:20 "For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state."

Likeminded: Paul has no one else like Timothy who possesses the mental framework and spiritual disposition so much in keeping with Paul's own.

Paul was so sure of Timothy, that he called him his own son in the faith. Timothy was trained totally by Paul. He thought the same way as Paul, because he was trained by Paul. There was no one else Paul could send who was like this. Timothy cared for these people, primarily, because Paul loved them.

Philippians 2:21 "For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's."

The dedication, even unto death, that Paul had for Jesus Christ was not shared by many of the Christians. Paul is saying above, they are more concerned with their own needs than the needs of others.

It seems from what Paul says here, that many were in the ministry for the wrong reasons.

"All seek their own": Paul must dispatch his right-hand man Timothy to Philippi because none of the Roman Christians are willing to undertake the mission. They all pursue their own interests, not Christ's. Despite their zealous witness in and around Rome, they refuse to venture further afield for the Lord's work.

Philippians 2:22 "But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel."

The proof of him is better said, "his proven character."

Paul is saying that his relationship with Timothy was as a son with a father. These people were already aware of the relationship that Paul had with Timothy. This serving was almost as a slave. At least, it was as a loving son to a father.

Philippians 2:23 "Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me."

Since Paul could not come at this time, the next best thing was to send Timothy. Paul would send Timothy to Philippi with news of his verdict as soon as he learns of it.

Paul really would not ever be able to go to Philippi again. He would end his days here in Rome.

Philippians 2:24 "But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly."

Paul loved this church at Philippi, and it was the desire of his heart that he would be able to go there personally. We can never overrule the will of God in these matters. Paul knew that whatever the Lord had planned for him would be what he would do.

Verses 25-30: These passages take a compelling look at love and unity among believers. All the parties show selfless affection for each other.

Philippians 2:25 "Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labor, and fellow soldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants."

It seemed that Paul had decided to wait a while to send Timothy and sends Epaphroditus in his stead. Perhaps, he even took the letter with him to these Philippians. The verse above is like a recommendation.

Paul wanted to send Timothy (verse 23), and come himself (verse 24), but found it necessary to send this man. A native Philippian of who, outside this passage, little is known.

His name was a common Greek one, taken from a familiar word that originally meant "favorite of Aphrodite" (Greek goddess of love). Later the name came to mean "lovely" or "loving." He was sent to Paul with gifts and was to remain and serve Paul as he could (verse 30).

The word "messenger" comes from the same word that yields the English "apostle." He was not an apostle of Christ, but an apostle (sent one), in the broader sense that he was an apostle of the church in Philippi, sent to Paul with their monetary love gift. Paul's sending him back to the church with this letter needed an explanation, lest they think Epaphroditus had not served Paul well.

The word "messenger" makes me believe he carried the letter. It seems as if he had taken care of Paul's needs while Paul was under house arrest. Epaphroditus was Paul's brother in the sense that all Christians are brothers, not that he was his physical brother.

Philippians 2:26 "For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick."

Heaviness, (meaning distressed), is a Greek term which describes the confused, chaotic, heavy state of restlessness that results from a time of turmoil or great trauma.

Epaphroditus was more concerned about the Philippians' worry for him than he was about his own difficult situation.

This illness seemed to be something of the nature of being heart sick and weary, possibly, because of the fact that Paul was under arrest. Notice, he longed after you all. It appears that his love, as Paul's, was to minister in the church at Philippi.

Many believe he might have been the head of the church there, but there is no Biblical proof of that. Some illness is caused from exhaustion and being homesick. This could have been the problem here, we do not know.

Whether this illness was emotional or physical, we cannot say, but we will see in the next verse, that it was a very serious illness.

Philippians 2:27 "For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow."

Perhaps by the time he had gotten to Rome, he had become seriously ill, but now was recovered enough to go back home to labor with the church, who needed him more than Paul did.

We see from this verse, that God healed him. Paul is explaining how hard it would have been on him, if Epaphroditus had died.

“Sorrow upon sorrow” means that if Epaphroditus had died, that would have added further sorrow to the apostle’s already present sorrow of imprisonment.

Philippians 2:28 "I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful."

Paul had a great burden for all the people in the churches, and he was concerned here because the Philippians were so distressed about Epaphroditus.

This in itself, makes you believe that part of his sickness was depression over being homesick, and over seeing Paul daily in chains. It will even make Paul feel better to know that his friend is feeling better.

“That I may be the less sorrowful”: means that the burden of Paul’s own detainment and possible death remains. But the Philippians’ joy over the return of Epaphroditus will lessen the apostle’s grief.

Philippians 2:29 "Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation:"

"Receive him ... in the Lord": Means that the Philippians are to welcome Epaphroditus home from Rome with a heartfelt Christian reception. Hold such in reputation is an imperative to the readers to hold in high esteem such Christian servants as Epaphroditus who are selfless in concern for others and who willingly risk their lives in serving the Lord.

"To hold him in reputation" would mean that they were to show him great respect. The Philippians would rather have seen Paul, but Paul is saying, don't let that show when you receive him. Receive him with joy. Men like him are worthy of honor.

Philippians 2:30 "Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me."

Nigh unto death refers to the same thing mentioned as sickness.

We see from this that Epaphroditus' illness was brought on by overwork. His concern for Paul had been greater than his concern for himself. Possibly, he had done without necessities for himself to give them to Paul, because of the statement (to supply your lack of service to me).

Not regarding his life is better said, "Risking his life." In ministering to Paul in Rome, Epaphroditus became so ill that he almost died. The reason he thus "risked his life", was in order to supply your lack of service toward me. That is, to make up for the Philippians' inability to aid Paul due to their being many miles from him.

Philippians Chapter 2 Continued Questions

1. Do all things without _____ and _____.
2. A person's salvation is _____ responsibility.
3. Where is an example in the Bible, when God was angry at the people for their murmuring?
4. How are Christians to be in the midst of a perverse world?
5. Missionaries really do what?
6. We Christians are not completely blameless and harmless, but are _____.
7. What is the "Word of life"?
8. What is another way to say "day of Christ"?
9. What do we find in verse 17 that Paul believed about himself?
10. Who does Paul believe would be benefited, if he were martyred?
11. If he is martyred, Paul wants them to _____.
12. Even though Paul wanted Timothy to go, who had to send Timothy?
13. Why did Paul want Timothy to go to Philippi?
14. What is Paul speaking of, when he says Timothy is likeminded?
15. Verse 21 says, for all seek their _____.
16. What was the relationship with Paul and Timothy?
17. Serving Paul, as Timothy did, was almost as a _____.

18. Since Paul could not come to them, what was the next best thing to do?
19. Paul loved this church at Philippi and desired what in his heart?
20. Who did Paul send immediately to Philippi?
21. How does Paul describe him?
22. What does the word "messenger" cause the author to believe?
23. Verse 26 is probably speaking of what type of illness?
24. How sick was he?
25. What does verse 28 make you believe about his illness?
26. What does the statement, "hold such in reputation", mean?
27. Why was he nigh unto death?