

PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO
THE MIND OF CHRIST
(in you)

1. *Motivations to the mind of Christ; (2:1)*
 - Being in Christ.
 - Consolation of love.
 - Fellowship of the Spirit.
 - Tender mercies and compassions.
 - Personal appeal from Paul.
2. *Attitudes of the mind of Christ; (2:2-4)*
 - Unity and harmony.
 - Freedom from factiousness and vainglory.
 - Lowliness.
 - Concern for others.
3. *Christ's own example; (2:5-11)*
 - He did not grasp onto His divine form.
 - He became an obedient servant.
 - Honors He won by obedience.
4. *Commands for those with the mind of Christ; (2:12-17)*
 - Work your salvation to completion; 2:12-13
 - Don't murmur or question; 2:14-15
 - Hold forth the word of life; 2:16-17
 - Rejoice; 2:18
5. *Paul's helpers who had the mind of Christ; (2:19-29)*
 - Timothy; 2:19-24
 - He sought only the things of Christ; 2:21.
 - Epaphroditus: 2:25-29
 - He hazarded his life for the work of Christ; 2:30.

2:1. If there is therefore any exhortation in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any tender mercies and compassions, 2. make full my joy, that ye be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; 3. *doing nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself*; 4. not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others.

Translation and Paraphrase

2:1. If there is any exhortation (and consolation for us) in Christ (and I know there is), if (there is) any persuasive message in love (and there is), if any participation in (and fellowship of) the (Holy) Spirit, if (there are) any heart-felt emotions and (any) compassions—

2. (then, for the sake of these precious things,) make my joy full (and complete. You can do this if you take care) that you (all) think the same (way), having the same love (not some of you loving and some hating), (being) of one soul (one mind), thinking the one (way, the way of Christ);

3. (Do) not (be) thinking about how you can further (your own little) faction, or about empty self-glory, but (rather) in lowliness of mind (let every one) regard one another as better than themselves,

4. not each (one of you) looking (and concentrating) on his own (affairs), but each (one) also (looking upon) the things of others.

Notes

1. This section (2:1-4) contains Paul's plea to the Philippians to be of one accord, to be united.
2. Verses 1 and 2a give five motives for being of one accord:
 - (1) The exhortation (and consolation) of being in Christ.
 - (2) The persuasive power of love.
 - (3) The fellowship, or participation, we have in the Holy Spirit.
 - (4) The tender mercies and compassions, both those which we feel within ourselves, and those we receive from others.
 - (5) A personal appeal from Paul: "Make full MY joy."
3. Verses 2-4 contain a list of attitudes and actions that are done (or at least should be done) by those who are of one accord.
 - (1) They are of the same mind. They seek to be impartial and view every-one in the same manner, trying in all circumstances to think as Christ would think.

- (2) They have the same love. They seek to prevent a situation wherein some folks are hating and some loving.
 - (3) They are of one accord, literally "souled together." Perhaps the best commentary on this is Acts 4:32: "The multitude were of one heart and soul."
 - (4) They are of one mind, "thinking one (thing)." This is nearly a repetition of (1) above.
 - (5) They do nothing through faction or vainglory.
 - (6) They count each other as being better than themselves.
 - (7) They are more concerned about the sins and burdens of others than about their own pleasures, and wishes.
4. The motives for unity given by Paul in Phil. 1:1-2a are not the motives we often consider uppermost. We often feel that we can only be united when we have by fiery debate overwhelmed our religious adversaries, and subdued them into conformity to the truth as we see it.

However, this approach has not worked. Since all of us are quite confident that we have the truth and everyone else is at least a bit misguided, we are not likely to arrive at unity by controversy. The fruitful motives for unity are those that Paul suggests: our being in Christ, our common love, etc. Unity, wherever it comes at all, comes more readily as a result of heart-feelings than of intellectual conquest of the adversaries.

This is not to belittle the necessity for religious discussion or of defending the faith. These things we must do, and not leave the other undone.

5. The word *exhortation* (*paraklesis*) in 2:1 carries a double significance. It indicates both an urging, or exhortation, and a consoling. As Christians we do have both consolation and exhortation. We are stirred up to holy lives and hard labor by the truth of the gospel; we are at the same time consoled and reassured by the promises of the gospel.
6. The word *consolation* (*paramuthion*) in 2:1 literally means persuasive speaking. There are many many persuasive messages in the gospel. We need to act upon this persuasion.
7. *Fellowship* (*koinonia*) in 2:1 means a share in, a participation in something. Christians have a share of participation in the Holy Spirit. He is given to us as a gift when we repent and are baptized. Acts 2:38. He lives in our body as his temple. I Cor. 6:19. He brings to us much desirable fruit. This participation in the Spirit should lead us to unity.

8. Phil. 2:1 mentions *tender mercies* (KJV *bowels*) and *compassions*. As Christians we do share many kind feelings and actions, both within ourselves and from others. There are dear friends who come to our need when we are in distress, who speak kind and encouraging words, who frankly but kindly tell us when we are doing something wrong.

Such tender mercies and compassions should create within us an overwhelming desire to be ONE with our brethren.

The word *bowels* in KJV is just exactly the meaning of the Greek word *splanchna*. The ancients regarded the nobler bowels (heart, liver, lungs, etc.) as the seat of emotions. It is really just as logical (or more so) to say, "I love you with my bowels," as to say, "I love you with my heart. We say the latter only because it is the modern idiom.

9. Alas, faction and vain glory motivate many Christians more greatly than do Christ and our tender mercies. Some people will come to a church election to vote for their friends when they will not come often at other times. *Faction* means self-seeking, electioneering, promoting our own little party or clique.

So often when one church or one faction in a church does something successful, another church or faction will feel constrained to do the same or to do something to top their neighbor. It is good to be stirred up by the example of others to love and good works, but the desire to promote ourselves or our faction at the expense of others is sin.

Vain-glory, that is, empty glory, useless desires to glorify ourselves, leads many to seek church offices, to make public performances that are not edifying, to show off before the church, and to run others down that they may feel superior to those they criticize.

Vain-glory, the pride of life, is one of the strongest and most basic temptations we experience. I John 2:16. You and I are both tempted by it, and yet we often will not even admit this to ourselves. Such vain-glory hinders our having the unity we should with our brethren.

10. Is it really possible that we in lowliness of mind can count each one better than ourselves? Phil. 2:3. Perhaps this seems impossible; however a mere recognition of the reality that every person on earth knows some things we do not know, can reach and influence people we can scarcely affect at all, can do things we cannot do—mere acceptance of these facts

will cause us to admit that others are indeed better than ourselves.

God is not impressed with our education, our wealth, our physical beauty, nor our possessions. We must not scorn the lowly or despise the mighty; let each count other better than himself.

This does not exclude the necessity for self-respect and recognition of our own abilities; these feelings are necessary too. However, self-respect and self-pride usually need much less cultivation than respect for others. Self-respect and self-pride are like weeds that grow naturally. Respect for others must be given lots of cultivation.

11. Verse 4 exhorts us to look not upon our own things, our own affairs, worries, and plans, but also to the things of others. This cannot mean that we are to be meddlesome or nosey in the affairs of others. Other scriptures forbid this. I Pet. 4:15.

Rather it means that we are to be concerned with the affairs, failings, and needs of others which we may be able to help without intruding upon their strictly private affairs.

5. Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

Translation and Paraphrase

5. Let this way of thinking continue among you, (that same feeling) which also was in Christ Jesus (when he came to earth).

Notes

1. The final and strongest appeal for unity is the example of Jesus Christ.
2. 2:5 can either be read as the closing verse of the paragraph 2:1-5, or as a starting verse to 2:5-11. Either way it is rich in meaning.
3. This verse introduces 2:6-11, which is a paragraph with some of the deepest theological thoughts in the New Testament in it. Notice carefully, however, that Paul did not employ theology to satisfy our curiosity about divine secrets, but to get us to live lives in which discord, selfish ambitions, and disunity are excluded.
4. We hear much about heart transplants. Christians must have mind transplants; the mind of Christ must replace our old sinful minds.

6. who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7. but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; 8. and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross.

Translation and Paraphrase

6. (Though Christ) was existing (before he came to earth) in the (very) form (the intrinsic nature) of God, he did not consider (this) being equal with God a thing to be grasped (and clutched onto),

7. but (rather) he emptied himself (of much of his divine glory), taking (upon himself) the (very) form (the intrinsic nature) of a slave (or servant), being (temporarily) made in the (outward) likeness of men.

8. And being found (by those who lived with him on earth) in the (outward) fashion as a man, he humbled himself, (even to the point of) becoming obedient unto death, (yea) death upon a cross.

Notes

1. To understand this section, the exact meaning of the words used must be understood.
 - a. *Existing* (KJV, *being*; Gr. *uparcho*). This term means *being*, but it has the deeper implication of pointing to that existence which is our basic essence, the innermost nature. Thus the fact that Christ was *existing* in the form of God suggests that the form of God was his basic essence, his innermost nature.
 - b. *Form* (Gr. *morphe*). Form is that which is intrinsic and essential about anything. It is the opposite to the outward and changeable fashion. See the notes that follow concerning FORM and FASHION.
 - c. "Counted (it) not . . . a *thing to be grasped*." The Gr. word *arpagmos* used here means both the act of seizing (or robbery, as in KJV), or the thing seized (as in ASV and RSV). We prefer the latter meaning, because equality with God was not something Christ might have obtained by seizure, but it was already his. He might have clutched onto it because it was already his, but he did not do so.

Such readings as that in the New English Bible, "He did not think to snatch at equality with God," suggest that Christ was not equal with God. This is contrary to the whole paragraph, which has its point that Christ gave up his equality with God.

Numerous other Scriptures teach that Christ had the full nature of deity before He came to earth, before He was conceived in Mary. (See John 1:1, 2; 3:13; 17:5, 24; Col. 1:15-16).

- d. *Emptied* himself. The Gr. verb *kenoo* used here means to empty out or drain. When Christ came to earth, He submitted Himself to limitations which He had not had in glory before then. On earth Christ could become weary (John 4:6), but God is never weary (Isaiah 40:28; 45:11-12). Christ became hungry (Luke 4:2), but God is not hungry (Psalm 50:12-13). Some things Christ did not know (Matt. 24:35), but God knows all things (Heb. 4:13). Before Christ came to earth he dwelt in a realm described as "ivory palaces." (Ps. 45:7-8). But Christ emptied himself to a great degree of such glory when He came to earth.

The doctrine of Christ's emptying Himself is sometimes called the *kenosis*. This is a great mystery, and it has caused much disagreement in the church throughout the centuries. Exactly what was the nature of Christ while He was here on earth? To what degree did He empty Himself? Was He fully divine, or fully human, or both, or a mixture? Did He have one nature or two? Such questions can never be perfectly answered. We cannot understand human nature. How can we comprehend the divine nature?

It is enough for us to know that when Christ was on earth He was both the son of God and son of man (Matt. 16:13-17). As son of man he lay exhausted in a boat. As son of God he could rise and command the stormy waters of the Sea of Galilee to become calm. (Luke 8:23-24).

- e. *Likeness* (Gr. *omoiotoma*; 2:8). That which is made, a likeness, image. This term refers to Christ's outward appearance while on earth. It is somewhat synonymous to the term *fashion*.
- f. *Fashion* (*schema*). This refers to outward appearance of anything. As such it may be changed from time to time. Thus, the *fashion* of the world passes away. (I Cor. 7:31).

FORM and FASHION

1. Christ existed in the *form* (Gr. *morphe*) of God. Phil. 2:6. He took the *form* of a servant. Phil. 2:7. He was found in *fashion* (Gr. *schema*) as a man. Phil. 2:8.
2. *Form* is that which is intrinsic, essential, and unchangeable about anything. *Fashion* is that which is outward, incidental, and transitory about anything.
3. Christ had the form, or true nature of God. Also he took the actual nature or form of a servant. However, his *fashion*, or appearance, on earth was not necessarily his *fashion* in glory after leaving the earth. Thus the appearance of Christ as described in Revelation chapter one is considerably different from that of the lowly son of man on earth.
4. The meanings of *form* and *fashion* can be illustrated and confirmed by the uses of these words and their related words in the New Testament. Note the ways the words are translated in King James version.
 - A. FORM—3 times translated as *form*; Mark 16:12; Phil. 2:6, 7.
 1. *Metamorphoo* (a related word)—Translated “be changed” (II Cor. 3:18), “be transformed” (Matt. 17:2; Mk. 9:2; Romans 12:2). “Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.” Let your mind actually be made into something intrinsically new.
 2. *Summorphoo* (related word)—“being made conformable unto;” (Phil. 3:10).
 3. *Summorphos* (related word; an adjective)—“conformed to” (Rom. 8:29); “fashioned like unto” (Phil. 3:21).
 - B. FASHION—2 times translated “fashion.” (Phil. 2:8; I Cor. 7:31). “The *fashion* of this world passeth away.”
 1. *Metaschematizo* (a related word)—“Be transformed” (II Cor. 11:13, 14). Satan transforms himself. He can change his outward appearance, but not his true nature and form. “Change” (Phil. 3:21); Christ shall change our vile body. “Transfer in a figure” (I Cor. 4:6). “Transform one’s self” (II Cor. 11:15); Satan’s ministers transform themselves, but they only change their outward appearance, not the real form.
 2. *Suschematizo* (a related word)—“Be not conformed” (Rom. 12:2); Christians should not adopt the *fashion*

of this world for this is contradictory to their true nature. "Fashion one's self according to" (I Peter 1:14).

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2. The King James rendering of Phil. 2:6, "thought it not robbery to be equal with God," is satisfactory if it is understood to mean, "Since Christ was already equal with God, he considered it not robbery to claim equality with God."

If you or I should claim equality with God and demand to be worshipped, that would be robbery. We would be claiming honors that belong only to God. But Christ did not look upon being equal with God as robbery by him. How can one steal that which is already his?

3. The fact that Christ existed in the *form* of God shows that he had true godhood. The fact that he took upon himself the *form* of a servant shows that he had true servanthood. Both as God and as a servant in the likeness of men, Christ's form was genuine.
4. The fact that Christ *took upon himself* the form of a servant shows that He was truly God before then, and that He was not a created being. All created beings are servants of God by the very fact of their being created by God. "All things are thy servants." Psalm 119:91. Christ was not a servant as a result of his being created, but rather because he took upon himself the form of a servant.
5. Christ was made in all respects like as we are, except that he never sinned. Heb. 4:15. He partook of flesh and blood, since we, the children of God, are sharers in flesh and blood. Heb. 2:14. He came to earth with the command to die as men die. John 10:18. Christ was fully obedient to this command. Heb. 10:7. He was always obedient to the will of His father. He learned obedience, as we have to learn it, by the things which He suffered. Heb. 5:8. His obedience and sufferings extended to the ultimate degree of submission and agony, to the very death upon a cross.
6. As we consider this example of Christ, how could we be high-minded toward other people, or be factious, or proud, or seek our own advantages to the hurt of other people?

9. Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; 10. that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven and *things* on earth, 11.

and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Translation and Paraphrase

9. Therefore (because of the obedient self-sacrifice of Christ) God has given to him (as a gift) the name (which is) above every name, (the name of LORD),

10. So that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, (the knees) of the things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth (the dead).

11. (Not only will every knee bow, but also) every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the father.

Notes

1. Most probably the name given to Christ because of his obedience is LORD. After Acts 2:36 Jesus is constantly called LORD. See Acts 7:59-60; 9:1; 10:36.
2. Christ's new name represented new glory and new offices for Him. Abraham and Jacob received new names when their life situations changed. We receive a new name—Christian—when we come into Christ.
3. Out of appreciation for the things Christ has done we worship Him. We bow the knee, both literally and figuratively.
4. Everyone and everything will confess Christ Jesus as Lord, ultimately if not now, involuntarily if not willingly. The dead shall rise, and every eye shall see Him, even those who pierced him on the cross, and all tribes of the earth shall wail because of Him. Rev. 1:7. May it be even so, Lord Jesus. Yea, come quickly, Lord. Rev. 22:20.
5. The "things under the earth" probably refer simply to those who are dead. This does not suggest that there is some large subterranean cavity in the earth where a great group of souls dwell. But rather that those buried under the earth shall rise again and confess with the living that Jesus Christ is LORD.
6. The confession that Jesus Christ is Lord was really the only confession of the church in the time of the apostles. I Cor. 12:3; I John 4:2; Acts 8:37; Matt. 16:16. In those glorious times before the church was corrupted by human doctrines, the disciples of Christ did not recite any "apostles'" creed, Nicene creed, or Athanasian creed. Such human writings should be forgotten and thrown into the dump heap. The apostles never

wrote the apostles' (sic!) creed, and in its final form it was not completed until three or four centuries after the last apostle was dead. The Biblical confession that Jesus Christ is Lord is unifying. The creeds of men are destructive and divisive.

7. God is glorified when Jesus Christ is confessed. See John 5:23.

12. So then, my beloved, even as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; 13. for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure.

Translation and Paraphrase

12. So then, my beloved ones (seeing how God has exalted Christ, I exhort you now that) even as you have always obeyed, not (just) as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, (that you) work out to completion your own salvation, with fear and trembling.

13. For God is the one working in (the midst of) you (all), both (motivating you) to desire (that which is good) and (enabling you) to work for his good pleasure.

Notes

1. This section (2:12-18) gives some commands for the worthy Christian life. These commands include commands to steadfast work (2:12-13), contentment (2:14), purity (2:15a), evangelistic zeal (2:15b-16), and rejoicing (2:17-18).
2. The "so then" at the beginning of 2:12 indicates that the good acts called for in 2:12-16 are motivated by the obedience and exaltation of Christ described in the preceding paragraph.
3. Some Christians are faithful Christians only when the preacher is nearby. Paul expected the Philippians to be just as obedient in his absence as in his presence, and he indicates that they had done this previously.
4. "Work out" (Gr. *katargadzomai*) means to work to completion. When we work out a contract, we work it till it is done. Likewise we must work out our salvation until the end.
5. 2:12 does not suggest that by work we earn our salvation, but that our salvation must be followed by steadfast work to the end. Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5. While our salvation is not gained by our works of righteousness, we must be zealous of good works and careful to maintain them. Titus 3:5; 2:14. Failure

- to follow through with good works after we receive Christ is both evidence and cause of our not having salvation.
6. Christians need to feel fear and trembling because of the danger of forsaking Christ and displeasing God is so near to all of us and so deadly. "We are become partakers of Christ *if* we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end." Heb. 3:14.
 7. 2:13 teaches us that God motivates us (causes us "to will") to do his good pleasure; and then also He enables us to do it ("to work"). This thought should bring great delight to the servant of God. Our dedicated desires and labors represent the very desires and labors of God expressed through us.

If you find yourself desiring to do something for the Lord—to write a song, a poem, a book, a letter, a tract; to make a call; to do a helpful deed; to pray for a particular person or project; to give money for some specific need—then, brother, you should do it, and do it quickly. That desire within you may be God's working within you, causing you "to will." As God furnishes the willingness, so also will He furnish the ability "to work."

14. Do all things without murmurings and questionings; 15. that ye may become blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverted generation, among whom ye are seen as lights in the world, 16. holding forth the word of life; that I may have whereof to glory in the day of Christ, that I did not run in vain neither labor in vain.

Translation and Paraphrase

14. Do all things without murmurings or disputings,
15. so that ye may become blameless and pure (unmixed with evil), (being) children of God without blemish in the midst of (our) crooked and distorted generation, among whom you (all) shine as lights in the world;
16. (You shine by) holding forth the message (word) of life; (I pray that you will always do this) so that I may have something to glory about in the day of Christ, (namely) that I did not run (my race of life) in vain, neither have I toiled wearisomely in vain.

Notes

1. God's people have been forbidden to murmur against Him in both the Old and the New Testament (I Pet. 4:9; I Cor.

10:10; Numbers 11:1-3). Murmuring is one way of questioning God's reality, His power, and His care over us. It is tempting God.

2. Similarly *questionings* (KJV *disputings*), whether they are directed toward God or men, are a serious offence. Disputings with men usually reflect the view that God will not punish evildoers, or that God does not care about us enough to do anything. Disputings with God may be direct challenges of His wisdom. There have been cases when God's saints asked Him why He did certain things. Thus Habakkuk (2:1), Jeremiah (12:1), Abraham (Gen. 18:23-25), and others. But these men asked out of a heart of trust and faith. To question God because we do not like his judgments, or doubt that He is doing anything is another matter. Let us lift up holy hands to God, without wrath and *disputings* (I Tim. 2:8).
3. *Blameless* (Gr. *amemptos*) means not subject to blame, deserving no censure. Luke 1:6; I Thess. 3:13.
4. *Harmless* (Gr. *akeraios*) means unmixed, pure, free from evil, without mixture of evil. Matt. 10:16.
5. Our generation is called crooked and perverse, and it certainly is. *Perverse* means turned aside, distorted, corrupted, perverted. Our generation is backwards in its thinking on many things. They call evil good and good evil. (Isaiah 5:20). It calls true religion fanaticism and superstition, while it calls alcoholism and fornication freedom! The whole world lieth in the evil one. I John 5:19. It is still, as in Christ's time, a faithless and perverse generation (Matt. 17:17). Christians are sheep among wolves. (Matt. 10:16).
6. In the midst of this evil generation we are to become children of God without blemish, without moral flaw, or rebellious minds. Eph. 1:4; Col. 1:22; Rev. 14:5.
7. We are to be seen as lights in the world. Compare Matt. 5:14-16; I Peter 2:9; Eph. 5:8, 11-13. An old proverb says, "It is better to light a candle than to complain about the darkness." May the Lord raise up a new generation of committed Christians, who will give their light without flickering and without fear.
8. 2:16 indicates that we shine as lights in the world only when we hold forth the word of life. The light is not in ourselves, but in the divine message we bear.

Our message is the word of LIFE. See Acts 5:20. It is a living (quick!) message. Heb. 4:12. Those who hear and believe it are made alive. John 5:24-25. Do you really believe that our gospel is the only source of life and light for the world? Then, brother, let it shine; let it be heard.

9. Numerous passages teach us that as Christians our works will be remembered and rewarded on the day of Christ, that is, the day of judgment. Paul's words in 2:16 suggest this again. See I Cor. 3:14-15; I Thess. 2:19-20; II Cor. 5:10; Rev. 22:12; Matt. 25:28-29.
10. The day of Christ Jesus is the day of His second coming, the time of the last judgment. See notes on Phil. 1:10. Compare II Cor. 1:14.
11. Paul did not want to stand before Christ on the day of judgment with no victories won, no souls he had saved, no record of accomplishment. Like a runner who raced to win, or a worker who labored to get a job done, Paul did not want to have run in vain or labor in vain. I Cor. 9:25-27. If the Philippians did not remain true to Christ, then Paul's labors would have been in vain. Isaiah 49:4; 65:23.

17. Yea, and if I am offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all: 18. and in the same manner do ye also joy, and rejoice with me.

Translation and Paraphrase

17. But (I hasten to assure you that I do not ask you to hold forth the word of life just so I can have easy victories for myself. For even) if I (should lose my trial here and give up my life, and) be poured out like a drink offering upon the sacrifice and the service of your faith (those things being the sacrifice and I being the drink offering), I rejoice (personally) and rejoice (jointly) with you all.

18. And (now) in the same way, you (yourselves) also be rejoicing (personally), and rejoicing (jointly) with me.

Notes

1. These two verses are like a jewel set at the peak of a crown. Paul has given a stirring exhortation in 2:12-16. Now he crowns the paragraph with a magnificent statement of his own self-sacrifice. He uses a bold figure of speech, and tells of

his own complete dedication without affection, boasting, or insincerity.

2. The Gr. verb translated *offered* (*spendomai*) means "to be poured out as a drink offering, or libation." According to Old Testament law a drink offering of a cup (about a quart) of wine was poured out upon the carcass of each burnt offering. Numbers 15:4-5.

Paul compares the service and sacrifice of the Philippians to a burnt-offering, and his own life to a drink-offering poured out upon their sacrifice, as a final enrichment of that sacrifice.

The self-sacrificing dedication of the great martyrs like Paul is indeed the crowning enrichment and glory upon whatever sacrifices we as disciples of Jesus may make.

3. By his reference to the possibility of his life being offered, Paul raises (in 2:18) the sobering reality that he might not be acquitted and released from Rome, but might be executed. If this happened, his career would close, like a poured-out drink offering is thenceforth never used again.
4. Paul refers to the *service* (Gr. *leitourgia*) of the Philippians' faith. The service referred to by this word is divine service, the service or ministry of priests relative to the prayers and sacrifices offered to God (Thayer). Outside the Bible the term was used to refer to various types of public service, but in the Bible it always has reference to divine service, and suggests again the truth that every Christian is a priest unto God to offer spiritual sacrifices well-pleasing to God. I Peter 2:5.
5. Paul rejoiced to think that his career, however it might end, might be like a drink-offering poured out upon the sacrifice of the Philippians' faith. He called upon them to rejoice with him in this thought. There was nothing morbid about it; it was a glorious point of view. He rejoiced in their triumphant sufferings, and wanted them to rejoice with him.

Outline of 2:19-30

- E. News about Timothy and Epaphroditus; 2:19-30
 1. Timothy; 2:19-24
 - a. Paul hoped to send Timothy to them; 2:19, 23
 - b. Paul had no one else like Timothy; 2:20-22
 - c. Paul himself trusted to come soon; 2:24

2. Epaphroditus; 2:25-30
 - a. It was necessary to send Epaphroditus back; 2:25, 28
 - b. Experiences of Epaphroditus; 2:26-27
 - (1) He longed after the Philippians.
 - (2) He was sick.
 - (3) He recovered.
 - c. Receive him in the Lord; 2:29
 - d. Honor him for his work and courage; 2:30

19. But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know of your state. 20. For I have no man likeminded, who will care truly for your state. 21. For they all seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ. 22. But ye know the proof of him, that, as a child *serveth* a father, so he served with me in furtherance of the gospel. 23. Him therefore I hope to send forthwith, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me; 24. but I trust in the Lord that I myself also shall come shortly.

Translation and Paraphrase

19. But I hope in the Lord Jesus (—he being the basis of my hopes, his glory the goal of my hope, my association with Him being the supreme thing in my life—) to send Timothy unto you speedily, so that I may be of good courage, knowing of your affairs (and not being uneasy because of uncertainty.)

20. For I have no one (with me) of like mind (with a soul like his), who will (just) naturally be concerned with (and really anxious over) your affairs.

21. For all (the others) are seeking their own affairs (their own interests and desires), not the things of Christ Jesus.

22. But you (all) know what Timothy has proved out to be, that as a child (serves) a father (so) he serves with me in the gospel (and for the sake of the gospel).

23. I hope therefore to send him (to you) soon, (as soon as) I see (how) my affairs (work out here).

24. But I trust in the Lord that I myself shall be coming (to you) soon.

Notes

1. For a brief summary of Timothy's life see notes on Phil. 1:1-2.
2. Paul several times sent Timothy to visit churches that needed some personal guidance when Paul himself could not go. He sent him to Thessalonica (I Thess. 3:1-2). He sent him on

ahead to Macedonia from Ephesus (Acts 19:22). On another occasion he left Timothy at Ephesus while he himself went into Macedonia (I Tim. 1:3). (Compare I Cor. 16:10). Many great preachers like Paul owe some of their accomplishments to their "second team," to those like Timothy.

3. Although Paul faced the possibility of losing his case and losing his life (being poured out like a drink-offering; Phil. 2:17), the Philippians would not be bereft of guidance. He planned to send Timothy to them.
4. Paul hoped "in the Lord." (2:19). As Christians we hope in the Lord, trust in the Lord (Phil. 2:24), receive one another in the Lord (Phil. 2:29), rejoice in the Lord (Phil. 3:1; 4:4), glory in the Lord (Phil. 3:3), stand fast in the Lord (Phil. 4:1), use our minds in the Lord (Phil. 4:2), labor in the Lord (I Cor. 15:58). Whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's. (Rom. 14:8).
5. Paul's purpose for sending Timothy was that he might be cheered (literally *well-souled*) when he heard the news from Timothy about their activities. Good news from faraway places is like waters to a thirsty soul. Prov. 25:25.
6. Paul's statement that he had no one like Timothy who would naturally care for their welfare sounds like a rather harsh judgment upon Paul's other associates. But this need not be so. Perhaps at this time none other of Paul's associates were with Paul. The others had been sent out from Paul, and only Timothy was left of the devoted ones. This is somewhat indicated by the fact that Paul does not list at the close of Philippians a number of associates who sent greetings, as he does at the end of some other epistles (See endings of Colossians and Romans.)

Also perhaps this condemnation(?), or evaluation, is only a matter of degree. Timothy had such a high degree of devotion to Christ and to his brethren that Paul could truly say, "I have no man likeminded," and still not really be implying that the other co-workers were deficient in devotion. Paul's high praise of Epaphroditus in the following paragraph certainly suggests that he was not lacking in dedication to Christ.

7. "Naturally" (or "truly;" Gr. *gnesios*) means "as a birthright, or as an instinct derived from spiritual parentage" (Thayer). A similar word is used in Phil. 4:3 to describe Paul's *true* yokefellow.

8. The temptation to seek our own affairs rather than the things of Jesus Christ has always been strong. (The world says, "Do your own thing.") Even some of Paul's associates were affected by it. It is quite natural to seek our own honor, our own positions of authority and prominence, our own enrichment. To *naturally* seek the things of Christ as Timothy did, is unnatural, that is, unnatural by human standards.
9. The Philippians really did not need Paul's praise of Timothy. They knew Timothy quite well themselves. They knew the *proof* of Timothy. *Proof* means the test by which something is shown to be good, as gold is proved by fire. I Peter 1:7. Our deeds and words soon furnish a proof of our real nature to all who know us.
10. The concerns of the man of God; Phil. 2:20-22.
 - (1) Concern over the things of Christ.
 - (2) Concern over the spiritual state of his fellow Christians.
11. Paul's statement that Timothy served him as a son serves a father expresses the ideal father-son relationship. However, children frequently rebel against parents and are disobedient. Always the hearts of children should be turned to the fathers, and vice versa. Also the hearts of younger ministers should look toward older ministers with respect and assistance. Malachi 4:6.
12. Paul closes the paragraph about Timothy's visit with the note that he himself is confident that he will get to come to them soon. This news of a proposed visit by Paul would strengthen Paul's preceding exhortations to a worthy life. (1:27—2:18).

25. But I counted it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow-worker and fellow-soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need; 26. since he longed after you all, and was sore troubled, because ye had heard that he was sick; 27. for indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, that I might not have sorrow upon sorrow.

Translation and Paraphrase

25. But I regarded (it as) necessary to send Epaphroditus (back) to you. (He is to me my) brother, and fellow-worker, and fellow-soldier; and (certainly he is) your messenger (apostle!) and minister to my need.

26. (I am sending him back now) because he has been longing for you all, and (has been) distressed (like one away from home—

homesick!), because you heard that he was sick (and he did not want you to be worrying about him.)

27. For indeed he has been sick (so sick he was) near to (the point of) death. But God had mercy on him, and not only on him, but also upon me also, so that I might not have sorrow upon sorrow (the sorrow of his death heaped upon my other burdens).

Notes

1. This section about Epaphroditus reaches an apex in Christian courtesy. It is so worded that Epaphroditus did not need to feel any embarrassment in returning, and the Philippians could receive him back with appreciation for what he had done in their behalf for Paul, and with no resentment at his returning. Courteous and true words like these of Paul are always befitting.
2. Evidently when the Philippians sent Epaphroditus to Paul to deliver their offering they intended for Epaphroditus to remain there with Paul to serve Paul on their behalf. For Epaphroditus to return home after a short time would raise many questions and perhaps some misunderstandings (they are always easy to raise!). Paul therefore wrote this paragraph to explain his sending Epaphroditus back.
3. Observe the complimentary titles bestowed upon Epaphroditus: brother, fellow-worker, fellow-soldier, your messenger, your minister to my need. (The Gr. word for *messenger* is *apostle*, meaning *one sent*.)
4. Epaphroditus longed after the Philippians, and was distressed. He was "full of heaviness." (The Gr. word has the derivation of "away from home," suggesting homesickness. But it probably merely means "distressed" or "sore troubled.")

The reason for his distress was that he had heard that they had heard that he was sick, and he did not want them to be worrying over him. In this Epaphroditus showed some sterling quality. He was less worried about his own critical illness, than he was about anxiety that the news of his illness was causing to his friends.

5. Indeed Epaphroditus had been sick, so sick that he was near to death. He had recovered, but the fact remains that he had been deathly sick.

Our being Christians does not guarantee that we shall never have sickness or injury. Paul left Trophimus at Miletus

sick. (II Tim. 4:20). Paul himself was not delivered from his grievous thorn in the flesh. (II Cor. 12:7-9). Epaphroditus came near to death during his sickness.

Such Scripture portions as these show that it is wrong to allege that we can pray for and receive miraculous healing of all sicknesses. It is true that such favors are sometimes bestowed, but they are not our inalienable heritage in this life. Some might argue that James 5:15 says that the prayer of faith shall save the sick. The scripture in James 5:15 probably refers to those who had miraculous gifts of faith and healing such as were in the early church. No one, not even Paul the apostle, claims 100% healings for those he prays for, as this verse promises. Therefore James 5:15 seems to refer to those having miraculous gifts of faith and healing.

Note that in James 5:15 it is the faith of the one praying that saves the sick. So often fake modern "healers" blame their failures upon the lack of faith on the part of the sick, but James 5:15 indicates that it is the one praying who exercises the faith. Thus if the "healer" cannot heal, he is at fault, not the sick.

6. Paul was relieved that God had had mercy on Epaphroditus, so that he recovered. Paul felt that this was an act of mercy upon him, as well as upon Epaphroditus. For Epaphroditus' recovery spared to Paul added sorrow (the sorrow of Epaphroditus' death) upon sorrow (the other griefs and sorrows he was already bearing).

28. I have sent him therefore the more diligently, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful. 29. Receive him therefore in the Lord with all joy: and hold such in honor: 30. because for the work of Christ he came nigh unto death, hazarding his life to supply that which was lacking in your service toward me.

Translation and Paraphrase

28. I am therefore sending him the more speedily (to you), so that (by) seeing him (safe and sound) you may rejoice again, and I (myself) may be less sorrowful (no longer being worried because I know you are worried.)

29. Receive him therefore in the Lord with all joy, and regard such (men) as worthy of honor,

30. Because he came near unto death, risking his life for the sake of the work of Christ, so that he might fulfill that which is lacking in your service to me.

Notes

1. Paul's returning Epaphroditus would accomplish two objectives: (1) It would cause the Philippians to rejoice upon seeing him again safe and sound. (2) It would make Paul himself less sorrowful, to know that the anxieties of the Philippians were relieved. The pain in their hearts hurt Paul's heart.
2. The Philippians were to receive Epaphroditus with joy, not reluctantly as if he were a quitter or a failure. He was neither. Rather he was to be held in honor.
3. We wish we knew all the details of Epaphroditus' activities in Rome with Paul, so we could know just how he had risked his life to serve Paul. We can ask Paul or Epaphroditus about this in the New Heaven and Earth.

4. There was a class of Christians in the ancient church called *parabolani* (a word meaning those who cast themselves aside in disregard of danger and risk). These people risked their lives going among the sick, and into the houses where the plague was rampant to minister and serve others.

A related word (*paraboleuomai*) is used to describe Epaphroditus' deeds in Rome. He risked and hazarded his life to serve Paul. We do not know the details as to what risks he ran.

There are times when Christians must be willing to lay down their lives that others may be saved and served. Acts 20:24; 15:26.

5. The *Preacher's Homiletic Commentary* gives the following outline, based on 2:25-30, of Heroic Devotion to Christ:
 - (1) It is wholly absorbed in the work of Christ; 2:30.
 - (2) It risks life in serving the cause of God.
 - (3) It should be held in highest esteem; 2:29.
 - (4) It is fully of sympathy for the anxieties of people; 2:26.
6. Phil. 2:30 suggests that the Philippians owed Paul a debt of service. Compare Philemon 13, 19. Converts do owe a debt of service to those who win them to Christ. The Philippians had sent one of their members, Epaphroditus, to Paul to help pay their debt to Paul.

PHILIPPIANS

Study and Review

Questions Over Philippians Chapter Two

1. What four motivations does Paul use to urge the Philippians to be likeminded? (2:1)
2. What personal appeal does Paul make to the Philippians to be likeminded? (2:2)
3. Why, probably, did Paul stress the topic of unity to the Philippians?
4. Nothing was to be done through *faction* (or strife) or *vain-glory*. What is faction, and what is vainglory?
5. How were the Philippians to regard one another? (2:3)
6. What were the Philippians to look upon, and what were they not to look upon? What does *look upon* mean? (2:4)
7. Who had a mind like the mind we should have?
8. What was Paul's purpose for relating the information in 2:6-8?
9. In what form did Christ exist before he came to earth?
10. What does the word *form* in 2:6 mean? What is the difference between *form* and *fashion* (in 2:8)?
11. (Question based on King James Vers.) Why would Christ not have thought it robbery to be equal with God. Is claiming equality with God robbing God?
12. (Question based on American Stand. Vers.) How did Christ look upon (or count) his being on an equality with God?
13. Did Christ actually have equality with God, or was this only something he might have seized? Give reason for your answer.
14. When did Christ empty himself (or make himself of no reputation)?
15. Define the word *kenosis*.
16. What does the statement, "He took upon himself the *form* of a servant," indicate about Christ's human nature? What does it indicate about His nature before He came to earth?
17. How greatly did Christ humble himself? (2:8)
18. What was the result of Christ's humiliation and obedience?
19. What is Christ's name that is above every name?
20. What response to Christ shall every knee make?
21. What response to Christ shall every tongue make?
22. What effect is there upon God when men confess Christ? (2:11)
23. Had the Philippians been an obedient group of disciples? (2:12)
24. What is the meaning of the expression *Work out* your own salvation?

CHAPTER TWO

25. How can we work out our salvation when salvation is not of works? (Eph. 2:8-9)
26. What feelings should we have as we work out our salvation? Why should we have such feelings?
27. What two things does God work to bring about within us? (2:13)
28. What is wrong with murmurings and questionings (KJV, *disputings*)?
29. What type of children of God are we to become? (2:15)
30. How did Paul describe the generation in which he lived? (See 2:15). Is our generation any different?
31. What are Christians to be seen as (or shine as)?
32. What would give Paul opportunity to glory on the day of Christ?
33. What could cause Paul to have labored in vain? (2:16)
34. In 2:17 what does Paul compare the Philippians' service to, and what does he compare his own life to? Did this make him happy or sad?
35. Whom did Paul hope to send to the Philippians quite soon, and why was he being sent?
36. What was distinctive about Timothy's attitude toward the Lord's people and the Lord's work?
37. To what did Paul compare Timothy's service with him?
38. Whom had Paul sent back to Philippi, presumably with the letter to the Philippians?
39. Where did Paul feel that he himself would soon get to come?
40. In what five ways did Paul describe Epaphroditus? (2:25)
41. What had Epaphroditus been sent to Rome to do?
42. What feelings had Epaphroditus been having about the Philippians? Why?
43. What do Epaphroditus' experiences indicate (if anything) about miraculous healings?
44. How did Paul want the Philippians to receive Epaphroditus back?
45. How much had Epaphroditus risked? For what purpose was this risk?
46. What was lacking as far as the Philippians' relation to Paul was concerned?