

Expository Bible Study for Paul's Letter to the Philippians

Lesson #8 - "Timothy & Epaphroditus"

• H A N D O U T •

► Our last study opened with Paul exhorting the Philippians to pursue their personal spiritual progress without being dependent on Paul's presence in Philippi. This was followed by Paul's counsel that the Philippians should apply God's Word into their lives, not just as a set of rules, but as a lifestyle. Doing so would accomplish shining God's light of truth and life into the depraved world around them.

Also Paul's words "work out your salvation," was a reference to the process of sanctification, and not an errant teaching where one's works earned salvation. Paul added that they were to take the journey of sanctification without complaining and arguing. Instead they were to walk in reverent fear & trembling in view of what Christ Jesus had accomplished for them on the Cross. Paul also expressed excitement that he would be able to stand with the Philippians, and boast about their faithfulness to the Word of God, on the Day of Christ. He assured them that they would be considered blameless because of their witness of Christ to the world around them.

Even though Paul said he had a deep desire to visit Philippi once he was no longer under house-arrest, he also acknowledged that he might be facing his own martyrdom. But Paul assured the Philippians that all he had done and experienced, both positive and negative, would make his death worth it – he had no regrets. He fervently hoped the Philippians would learn to share Paul's attitude toward suffering for the faith, because, in the end, everything was to the Glory of God.

► Paul now shifts to a new subject with a decidedly more optimistic tone. He writes of his hope to send Timothy to Philippi. He explains that he is looking forward to the report Timothy will be able to give Paul about their faith and he knows it will bring him great joy.

► **Philippians 2:19-23** • I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare. For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.

But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because, as a son with his father, he has served with me in the work of the gospel. I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how things go with me. And I am confident, in the Lord, that I myself will come soon.

Q: What is the main purpose for Paul sending Timothy to Philippi?

Q: Paul said his hope was in the Lord. In what ways do we see that manifest in Paul?

Q: Paul began this letter by referring to Timothy in the opening of this letter. It is obvious that Timothy is extremely important to him. What do we actually know about Timothy? Name at least seven salient facts:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

Q: What was Paul referring to when he wrote: For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.

Q: Paul says he hopes to send Timothy to Philippi soon. Then he clarifies that he won't send him until he "sees how things go with me." Why does Paul indicate some conditional hesitation?

**We now learn an additional purpose for Paul's letter to the Philippians.
Thus, we meet Epaphroditus – the probable carrier of this letter to Philippi ...**

► **Philippians 2:25-27** • But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs.

For [Epaphroditus] longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill. Indeed he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only, but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow.

Q: Who is Epaphroditus?

Q: What is behind Paul's reference to Epaphroditus as "your messenger whom you sent to take care of my needs?"

Q: Paul wrote that it was "necessary" for Epaphroditus to go home. Why necessary?

Q: What stands out about Epaphroditus' illness and subsequent healing?

Q: What does Paul mean when he said Epaphroditus being restored to health spared both Epaphroditus and Paul pain?"

► **Philippians 2:28-30** • Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you may be glad and I may have less anxiety.
Welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor men like him, because he almost died for the work of Christ, risking his life to make up for the help you could not give me.

Q: When Paul first announced that he was sending Epaphroditus home, he said it was "necessary." Why does Paul now say that he was "eager to send him home?"

Q: Although we are never told anything about Epaphroditus' illness, what do we learn from Paul's request that the Philippians joyfully and honorably welcome Epaphroditus home?

Q: How should we view Paul's statement that Epaphroditus risked his life "to make up for the help you could not give me?" Is it a negative reprimand from Paul toward the Philippians?

Paul abruptly turns from his discussion regarding Epaphroditus and issues a stern warning to the Philippians:
"Watch out for the dogs, those men who do evil..." This is where we will pick up our study next time ...

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Next Time ♦ Lesson #9
"The Judaizers & Antinomians"

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