

**Study on the
Book of Philippians
2:12-15;**

Overview of Philippians:-

Paul's Prayer for the Philippians. (1:1-12;)

A) A prayer of thanksgiving:

- 1. Paul gives thanks for the fellowship he shares with the Philippians in the area of spreading the gospel message.**
- 2. Paul give thanks for the sharing he has with them in the area of bonds, defence, And confirmation of the gospel.**

B) Paul's prayerful request for the Philippians:

- 1. Paul prayed that the Philippians would grow in knowledge and discernment.**
- 2. Paul prayed for the Philippians sincerity and purity of life.**

Paul calls upon the Philippians to live a life worthy of the gospel message. (1:12-30;)

A. Paul rejoices in the fact that the gospel is preached:

- 1. Brethren were motivated by his bonds.**
- 2. Some brethren preached of a pure and sincere disposition.**
- 3. Some brethren preached a pure doctrine; however, their motives were sinful.**

B. Paul desires to be a part of the Philippians progress in the gospel.

C. Paul calls upon the Philippians to walk worthy of the gospel of Christ.

D. God has “granted” the Christian to both believe and suffer on behalf of Christ (1:29;)

Ten Attributes of the Mind of Christ (2:1-5;)

A. Paul reveals to the Philippians the way to emotionally handle the sufferings at hand (i.e., to have the mind of Christ.)

B. The mind of Christ is to think about others:-

- 1. To encourage others who suffer (consider I Thess 5:14;)**
 - 2. Help others by making their suffering less burdensome or painful. (consider 2 Cor 4:16-18;)**
- 3. Share with others in their pain and suffering for the cause of Christ (Rev 2:10;)**
- 4. Let the inward man be filled with compassion toward those who suffer for the cause of Christ (Matt 23:37; Rom 14:15;)**
- 5. Let all be of the same mind (in doctrinal belief / having the mind of Christ) (cf. Phil. 1:27).**
- 6. Not factious (the party spirit) (Rom. 2:8; I Cor. 11:19).**

Ten Attributes of the Mind of Christ (2:1-5;)

7. **Not a person of vainglory.** (boastful and full of pride.)
(Prov 6:16ff;)
8. **Lowly in mind** (filled with humility and lowliness).
9. **Counting others better** than self.
(have the opinion that others are over you.)
10. Do **not only care** for the emotionally, physically, and spiritual well being of self but to others as well.
(James 2:14ff; I John 3:17-18;)

Jesus our example of Selflessness. (2:6-18):-

A. Jesus unselfishly gave up His glorious state in heaven to come to this earth, live as a man, and die for sinful man.

B. The Lord Jesus was obedient to the point of death.

C. When resurrected from the dead Yahweh God returned to Jesus all that He had divested Himself of when coming to earth. Indeed Jesus is Lord of Lords and King of Kings!

D. Paul exhorts the Philippians to be obedient as they look to the example of Jesus.

**Paul comforts the Philippians with news of the health of Epaphroditus and the coming of Timothy.
(2:19-30;)**

A. The Philippians were familiar with Timothy and knew of his love for both truth and them.

B. Paul anxiously sends Epaphroditus to the Philippians so that their anxiety over his health would be relieved.

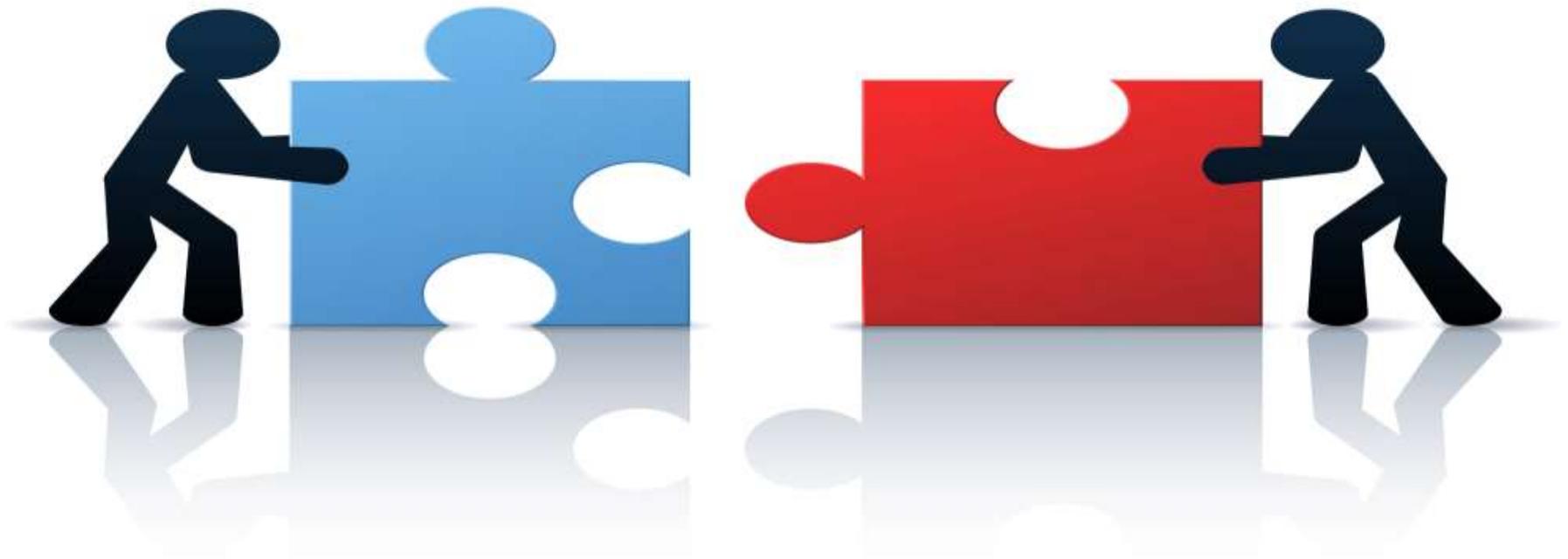
**Philippians 2:12-30;
From Jesus' obedience
to the Philippians obedience.**

“So then, my beloved, even as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your salvation with fear and trembling.” (2:12;)**

“Dearest friends, you were always so careful to **follow my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away you must be even more careful to **put into action God's saving work in your lives**, obeying God with deep reverence and fear.”**

2:12; “Dearest friends, you were always so careful to follow my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away you must be even more careful to put into action God's saving work in your lives, obeying God with deep reverence and fear.”

In two short verses, Paul shows how to **“walk the talk”** and **“let go and let God”** come together perfectly.



2:12; “Dearest friends, you were always so careful to follow my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away you must be even more careful to put into action God's saving work in your lives, obeying God with deep reverence and fear.”

12 “So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your salvation with fear and trembling;**

“So then” based on what Paul has said before to live the Christian life as a citizen of heaven (1.27) an exhortation to live a servant's humble life (2.1-11)

And since you Philippians have a grand track record of living an obedient life to Paul's apostolic teaching whether or not he was present or absent

Work out your salvation as serious as a heart attack
(in fear and trembling)

2:12; “Dearest friends, you were always so careful to follow my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away you must be even more careful to put into action God's saving work in your lives, obeying God with deep reverence and fear.”

Summary.

This section is a **call to faithfulness.**

Paul is no longer with the Philippians personally and he has a real and deep loving concern that they continue as they began .

This **faithfulness**, he urges, **involves:-**

- 1) **Work.**
- 2) **Character.**
- 3) **Testimony.**
- 4) **Encouragement.**

2:12; “**Dearest friends**, you were always so careful to follow my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away you must be even more careful to put into action God's saving work in your lives, obeying God with deep reverence and fear.”

“**Therefore, my beloved**, as you 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;” NKJ

“**Therefore**” Again this important word connects the following thought with what has already been said. '**Therefore,**' since **Christ's example** is one of **obedience**, you also **should obey**.

Motyer says:-

"God's '**therefore**' in vs .9 is matched by the Christian's '**therefore**' in vs 12. That, in a nutshell, is what this passage is about. Just as God assessed the worth of His Son's life of obedience and reacted accordingly (vs .9-11), **so the Christian must respond to the example of Christ.**" (vs.12-18;)

2:12; “Dearest friends, you were always so careful to follow my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away you must be even more careful to put into action God's saving work in your lives, obeying God with deep reverence and fear.”

Christ's example is faithful obedience unto death.

Theology for Paul was always **practical**.

Never just intellectual.

The Bible is not only interested in **teaching the Truth**, but also how we are to **respond to the Truth**.

We are to learn from Paul here, not only what is **the example of Christ** but also **how we are to respond to it** so as to make it real in our lives .

2:12; “Dearest friends, you were always so careful to follow my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away you must be even more careful to put into action God's saving work in your lives, obeying God with deep reverence and fear.”

“ Dearest friends” “MY beloved”

At the beginning of his call for faithful obedience,
Paul calls them **'beloved':**

This was a frequent designation in Paul's letters.
(Rom 16:5-12; 1 Cor 4:14; Eph 5:1; etc.)

The very **high standard of obedience** that Paul
is about to demand of the Philippians is done not
from harshness but **out of a heart filled with love.**

It is an example of Paul's own exhortation:-
“Speak the truth in Love.” (Eph 4:15;)

2:12; “Dearest friends, you were always so careful to follow my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away you must be even more careful to put into action God's saving work in your lives, obeying God with deep reverence and fear.”

"As you have always obeyed, so now, not only in my presence but **much more** in my absence.

This verse is very similar to Ch.1:27;

There is a glimpse of **Paul's concern** here for his beloved brethren. While he was with them he acted as a spiritual leader and example and they were obedient and followed Paul 's teaching.

But now they are on their own (not without God's help, but without the apostle's help) and so Paul says

“you have to work even harder now that I'm away.”

2:12; “Dearest friends, you were always so careful to follow my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away you must be even more careful to put into action God's saving work in your lives, obeying God with deep reverence and fear.”

It is relatively easy to live a faithful Christian life when there are great leaders to **‘help you up’** as it were. **But when we are on our own, the real test comes.**

Paul is saying 'You're on your own now, **keep going** in the same way as you started when I was with you, but work harder at it now'.

Can we pass the absence test? Are we just as faithful when we are away from the Christian family as when we are with Christians? It has been said, **“Character is what we are in the dark.”**

2:12; “Dearest friends, you were always so careful to follow my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away you must be even more careful to put into action God's saving work in your lives, obeying God with deep reverence and fear.”

Christ-likeness is the greatest possible concern of the Christian.

Here Paul outlines the procedure for attaining it

1. Work (verses 12-13;)

“work out your salvation with fear and trembling.”

2. Obedience. (verse 12;)

'You have always obeyed, continue to obey.

3. Responsibility. (verse 12-13;)

“Put into action God’s saving work.”

4. Reverence. (verse 12;)

“with fear and trembling”

2:12; “Dearest friends, you were always so careful to follow my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away you must be even more careful to put into action God's saving work in your lives, obeying God with deep reverence and fear.”

Paul, in many places, is absolutely clear that salvation is from God. **Fully and completely. We cannot help God by our works, we cannot earn our salvation.** (Eph 2:8-9;)

There are many paradox's in the Christian life. One of the greatest is found here.

Yet we have **to respond to His offer of salvation by accepting it on His terms.**

2:12; “Dearest friends, you were always so careful to follow my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away you must be even more careful to put into action God's saving work in your lives, obeying God with deep reverence and fear.”

It seems that Paul is confidently connecting the faithful obedience of Jesus to the Philippians by saying, “**even as you have always obeyed...**”

Many teach that salvation is **all of God** there is **nothing** man can do!

Yet time after time Paul stresses that we are involved, **we have to respond to accept Gods grace.**

We are to **be obedient** to the **will of God.** Yet that **obedience** is **not a work of merit** to **earn** salvation but **necessary** to **appropriate** it

2:12; “Dearest friends, you were always so careful to follow my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away you must be even more careful to put into action God's saving work in your lives, obeying God with deep reverence and fear.”

We see that Paul begins in Rom 1:5; by saying:-
“Through Christ, God has given us the privilege and authority to tell Gentiles everywhere what God has done for them, so that **they will believe and obey him,** bringing glory to his name.”

He ends in Rom 16:26; by saying:-
“But now as the prophets foretold and as the eternal God has commanded, this message is made known to all Gentiles everywhere, so that they might **believe and obey Christ.**”

2:12; “Dearest friends, you were always so careful to follow my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away you must be even more careful to put into action God's saving work in your lives, obeying God with deep reverence and fear.”

Jesus was obedient to the will of God

in that He suffered pain and agony at the hands of sinful men and even went to the shameful cross.

The Lord's suffering perfected Him.

The Philippians can **look to Jesus**, one who suffered at the hands of sinful men yet remained obedient to the task at hand. (i.e., **redemption** of the souls of mankind through the cross) (Matt 26:53-54;) and gain courage to do the same.

God desires man's obedience to The law of the Spirit of life in Christ so that **they may share in the glories of heaven** with **Jesus**. (Rev 2:10;)

2:12; “Dearest friends, you were always so careful to follow my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away you must be even more careful to put into action God's saving work in your lives, obeying God with deep reverence and fear.”

The evidence is overwhelming here as to salvation being conditioned upon **our obedience response to Gods grace demonstrated in Jesus.**

The text infers **a consequence** to not obeying the law of God. Paul states, A.V. “work out your salvation with fear and trembling.”

If I fail to work out my salvation the consequences are eternal separation. (Matt 13:47-50; Heb 2:1-3; Rev 20:10-15;)

To be separated from God for all eternity ought to cause me “fear and trembling.”

2:12; “Dearest friends, you were always so careful to follow my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away you must be even more careful to put into action God's saving work in your lives, obeying God with deep reverence and fear.”

“It is because **we know this solemn fear of the Lord** that **we work so hard to persuade others.**

God knows we are sincere, and I hope you know this, too.” (2 Cor 5:11;)

Genesis to Revelation reveals man's responsibility to **not sin** by keeping God's laws through a spirit of reverence, fear.
(Exod 19:16; compared to Exod 20:20;)

It is with a serious nature that I should approach my life. Isaiah records, “For all these things has my hand made, and so all these things came to be, says Yahweh but to this man will **I look even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembles at my word.**” (Isa 66:2;)

2:12; “Dearest friends, you were always so careful to follow my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away you must be even more careful to put into action God's saving work in your lives, obeying God with deep reverence and fear.”

This verse **has nothing to do with earning salvation by doing good deeds.** It does not say **work for salvation** but rather **work out.**

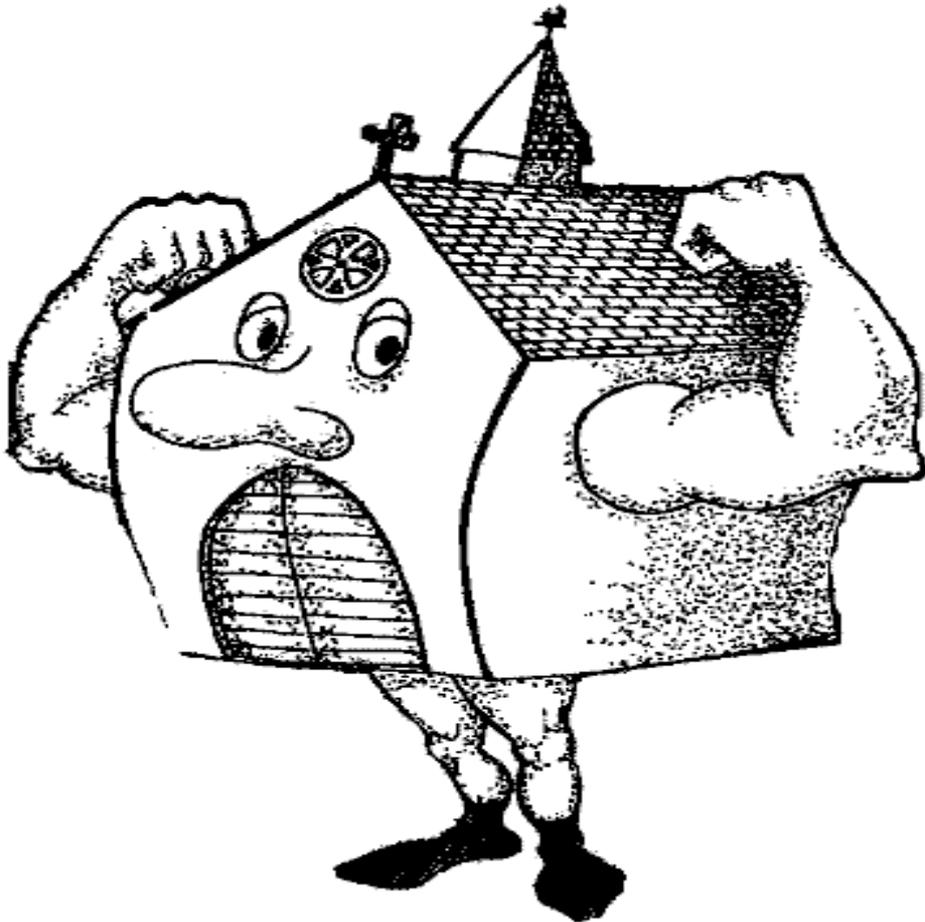
We are **not working to be saved**
we are **working because we are saved.**
We are **not working because we have to**
we are **working because we want to.**

To say otherwise would be in direct conflict with the entire book of Romans.

from **katá (2596)**, an intens., and **ergázomai (2038)**, to work. To work out; trans. **to bring about, accomplish, to carry out a task until it is finished.**

2:12; “Dearest friends, you were always so careful to follow my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away you must be even more careful to put into action God's saving work in your lives, obeying God with deep reverence and fear.”

Philippians 2:12-18; **‘Have a good workout.’**



**Take the time
and the trouble
to keep yourself
spiritually fit.**

2:12; “Dearest friends, you were always so careful to follow my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away you must be even more careful to put into action God's saving work in your lives, obeying God with deep reverence and fear.”

In Chapter 1:6; Paul has pointed to **God as the One who began the work and will bring it to completion.**

The paradox is seen more clearly in the very next verse. After Paul says **"work out your own salvation,"** he adds **"for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure."**

God has done everything to make our salvation possible **through Jesus death burial and resurrection.** God is the source of all the work involved in our salvation.

2:12; “Dearest friends, you were always so careful to follow my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away you must be even more careful to put into action God's saving work in your lives, obeying God with deep reverence and fear.”

If we are **willing to submit our selves** to His will
He will continue to work in us and through us
and empower us so that we can do His will.

It is only **when a Christian has God working in Him,**
that He can work out his salvation.

The source of the work is God,
but there is **a personal responsibility** to work out
what God has enabled us to do.

We need to **allow ourselves** to be grafted into
the vine. “As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself
unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you
unless you abide in me.” (John 15:4;)

2:12; “Dearest friends, you were always so careful to follow my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away you must be even more careful to put into action God's saving work in your lives, obeying God with deep reverence and fear.”

The **work** to which we are called
is a positive attempt to follow the Lord Jesus
in a life of unswerving obedience to God.

So Paul puts it "You have always obeyed,
so now work"

The work is the exercise of obedience towards God.

The governing **motive of Christ** Himself, in every
aspect of His life, **was obedience to His Father.**

Therefore, the primary characteristic
of the Christian is obedience NOT JUST
because we have to **but because we want to.**

2:12; “Dearest friends, you were always so careful to follow my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away you must be even more careful to put into action God's saving work in your lives, obeying God with deep reverence and fear.”

It should be important to a Christian to know the Word of God's commands, and to obey them.

In practical terms, this ought to be, the motive and outcome of **our daily Bible reading.**

What is God like? What has God done?

What does God want me to do?

It should be kept under the shelter of the constant prayer **‘What does my Lord bid His servant?’**

As we begin to understand the will of God then we need to **put that knowledge into practice** in our lives.

2:12; “And now that I am away you must be even more careful to put into action God's saving work in your lives, obeying God with deep reverence and fear.”

We have a Responsibility to God to 'Work out our salvation.

The responsibility for your soul is yours.

Responsibility for personal spiritual progress is committed to the person himself.

It is easy to blame our brethren or circumstances for our lack of growth in Christ, but on the last day each person will stand accountable for Himself.

This is not to say that Christians are to be exclusive individualists, far from it. We are to work together in mutual help and encouragement. (Heb 10:24 25;)

But if our brother lets us down, we have no excuse before God, if we fail.

2:12; “Dearest friends, you were always so careful to follow my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away you must be even more careful to put into action God's saving work in your lives, obeying God with deep reverence and fear.”

Reverence. The attitude we are to have as we work out our salvation is **"fear and trembling."**

Nobody will stumble into heaven. **The gate is narrow the way is hard and only a few will find it.**

The Christian life is not a bed of roses despite what some of the **prosperity gospel preachers** say.

Satan had us, now he has lost us and he wants to bring us down.

2:12; “Dearest friends, you were always so careful to follow my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away you must be even more careful to put into action God's saving work in your lives, obeying God with deep reverence and fear.”

"Fear and trembling" are words that are

used by Paul in three other places:-

(1 Cor 2:3; 2 Cor 7:16; Eph 6:5;)

The idea is not the fear of uncertainty that we will not make it to heaven, **nor is it the trembling of weak-kneed kind.**

The expression refers to a proper assessment of the situation we are in. We are totally dependent on God, **without Him we would fail.**

Therefore, we should work with a seriousness that the task demands. We need a **'Godly fear'** which grows out of **a recognition of our weakness and the power of temptation** and that will lead us to stick close to God.

2:12; "And now that I am away you must be even more careful to put into action God's saving work in your lives, obeying God with deep reverence and fear."

Consecrated progress. The word "**work**" here carries with it the idea of '**carrying out**' a task to **the full and to the end.**"

It is a word of **progress or growth,**
a growth that demands everything we've got.

Barclay says:- "The Christian must give continual evidence in his daily life that he is indeed working out his own salvation; day by day, it must be more fully accomplished, more completely perfected.

The great tragedy of so many of us is that we never really are further on. Our life is forever marked by the same flaws and mistakes. **We continue to be victims of the same habits and slaves of the same temptations.**

The truly Christian life cannot stand in the same place; it must be a continual progress. It cannot be otherwise, **for the Christian life is a journey towards God."**

2:13; “For God is working in you, giving you the desire to obey him and the power to do what pleases him.”

Confidence:- The command is work, but the assurance is “for **God is at work in you,** both to will and to Work.”

The task is a tremendous one, **it demands total obedience, continual progress,** thus it is done in fear and trembling, but it is also done with confidence.

For the **supplier** of all our needs **is God** Himself.

"He is at work in us (Eph 3:14-21;)
both to will and to work."

The word **"work"** is **energein**

He energises us; empowers us to work effectively.

2:13; “For God is working in you, giving you the desire to obey him and the power to do what pleases him.”

Note that God **“working in you to will and to work for His good pleasure”** is connected With obedience to God’s word and the Philippians working out their eternal salvation through fear and trembling of 1:12;

When I work out my salvation with fear and trembling through obedience to God’s word Using Jesus as my example God works in me.

When I study and obey God’s truths God works in me?
Paul said “And for this cause we also thank God without ceasing, that, when you received from us the word of the message, even the word of God, you accepted it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which also works in you that believe.” (I Thess 2:13;)

2:13; “For God is working in you, giving you the desire to obey him and the power to do what pleases him.”

Hanell sums up these verses in the following words:
“The plot of this divine-human drama is spelled out in scripture; God, taking the initiative (2 Thess 2:13; 1Tim 2:4; 2 Peter 3:15;) works through human agency (1 Tim 4:16;) for mankind's salvation;”

“A salvation which, without human diligence, can be forfeited. (Heb 2:3;)”

The combination "of **God's activity** and **man's labour** results in **God's good pleasure.**”

2:13; “For God is working in you, giving you the desire to obey him and the power to do what pleases him.”

What is God going to do?

1. **Change your will.**
2. **Change your actions.**

Romans 12:2;

“Don't copy the behaviour and customs of this world, but **let God transform you** into a new person **by changing the way you think.** Then **you will know what God wants you to do,** and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect his will really is.”

2:13; "For God is working in you, giving you the desire to obey him and the power to do what pleases him."



2:14-15; “Do everything without complaining or arguing about it, so that no one can speak a word of blame against you. You are to live clean, innocent lives as children of God in a dark world full of people who are crooked and stubborn. Shine out among them like beacon lights”

Character. (verses 14-15;)

Following upon the response of work is the response of **Christian character.**

Verse 14 opens up further the activity to which the Christian is called, "**Do all things.**"

But we find that **the emphasis is not** on the **fact of being up and doing**, nor on the things which must be done, **but on the character** which is to be **displayed in every action.**

2:14-15; “Do everything without complaining or arguing about it, so that no one can speak a word of blame against you. You are to live clean, innocent lives as children of God in a dark world full of people who are crooked and stubborn. Shine out among them like beacon lights”

In verses 14-16a, Paul is giving **examples** of what **working out your own salvation** looks like.

v14; Stop complaining and bickering.

v15; Have a great Christian testimony by being a saint of personal integrity and high reputation and character.

v16; Hold on to the gospel message and your Christian life with the intensity as though you were holding on to a tree limb waiting to be rescued.

2:14; “Do everything without complaining or arguing about it.”

How does God’s word **“work in you that believe?”**

The work of God’s word is the salvation
of men’s souls. (Rom 1:16;)

When I obey truth (the word of God) **I will be doing
the work of God which is saving men’s souls
through the preaching and dissemination of truth.**

The **“all things”** must be the working that God does
through us by His holy word mentioned at verse 13.

To **murmur (goggusmos)** = “to complain in low
mumbling tones; **grumble”** (AHD 823; Moulton 81).

To **“question” (dialogismos)** = “contention and
dispute” (Moulton 93). Let the Christian **fulfill God’s
commandments without complaint or contention.**

2:14; "Do everything without complaining or arguing about it."

In our dealings with others, there must be a complete absence of the critical, argumentative spirit. **Grumbling** means selfish complaining.

(Matt 20:10-11;)

The word "**questionings**" is more **inward** in its significance. (Lk 24:38;)

Motyer says:- "What the warning against **grumbling** forbids is **outward conduct** that against **questionings** forbids an **inward attitude of heart and mind** towards other people.

Many a good deed is spoiled by **grumbling or inward questionings**. The obedience God desires is not grudging but voluntary. **A boy**, after being told he would be punished if he did not sit, obeyed and sat down, but as he did so, **he muttered, I'm still standing up inside."**

2:14; “Do everything without complaining or arguing about it.”

The Bible is full of grumblers.

The people that worked all day in the field, **grumbled**, when the people that worked for just one hour got the same pay. Matthew 20;

The Pharisees saw Jesus eating with tax collectors and sinners and the Bible says, **they grumbled.**

Luke 5;

Moses “He’s heard you’re grumbling against him, you’re not grumbling against us, but against the Lord.” Exodus 16:8;

2:14; “Do everything without complaining or arguing about it.”

The spirit of **false teachers**
is to **murmur and question God’s word.**

Jude 1:16; said of teachers, “these are
murmurers, complainers, walking after their lusts
(and their mouth speaks great swelling words),
showing respect of persons
for the sake of advantage.”

2:14; “Do everything without complaining or arguing about it.”

**Grudging, questioning obedience
is in reality, no obedience at all.**

Examples: To **give hospitality but to feel
they should have stayed at a hotel.**

**Many preachers like Paul were constantly traveling
from place to place preaching the gospel.**

**“Cheerfully share your home with those
who need a meal or a place to stay.” (1 Peter 4:9;)**

2:14; “Do everything without complaining or arguing about it.”

To give into the contribution on the Lords day,
but wish you didn't have to. (2 Cor 9:7;)

“You must each make up your own mind
as to how much you should give.

**Don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure.
For God loves the person who gives cheerfully.”**

There are many things that a Christian may be called
to do, **They should do it willingly and even joyfully,**
from **preaching** from the pulpit
to **cleaning** out the rubbish bins.

We should **count it all joy** to have **an opportunity**
to serve God in **whatever** needs to be done.

2:15; “so that no one can speak a word of blame against you. You are to live clean, innocent lives as children of God in a dark world full of people who are crooked and stubborn. Shine out among them like beacon lights”

“Blameless and innocent”

Paul now moves on to look at the **results** or **the goal of the Christian's character.**

He is saying, in your everyday life, amidst all the difficulties, **work at getting rid of the bitter stumbling spirit** that you may be **blameless and innocent.**

These two words are closely related:-
Again it is suggested that the **first is outward** and **the second, inward.**

The first word has reference to the comment another person might pass upon us.

The second, to the comment we might pass on ourselves, knowing, as we do, our own inner life.

2:15; “so that no one can speak a word of blame against you. You are to live clean, innocent lives as children of God in a dark world full of people who are crooked and stubborn. Shine out among them like beacon lights”

"Blameless" Points to a life that
is **above reproach, above criticism.**

Just as, on the one hand, **the Christian**
is not to give himself to criticism of others,
so by the way he lives, he is to **remove**
all cause of just criticism against himself.

No one should, justifiably,
be able to point a finger of condemnation at us.

It is possible, however, that a life may
be **publicly** above reproach, and yet **secretly**, vile.

2:15; “so that no one can speak a word of blame against you. You are to live clean, innocent lives as children of God in a dark world full of people who are crooked and stubborn. Shine out among them like beacon lights”

Once more, **the Christian** must learn to guard the hidden man of the heart. He must be **“innocent.”** This word means, **“unmixed”** or **“pure”** or **“sincere.”**

The commentators point out that the word is used in secular contexts, of **undiluted wine**, or of **metal without alloy.**

That is to say, the word describes something which **retains its proper, professed nature through and through.**

2:15; “so that no one can speak a word of blame against you. You are to live clean, innocent lives as children of God in a dark world full of people who are crooked and stubborn. Shine out among them like beacon lights”

Motyer says:- “The greatest test of Christian character comes last. **What does God think of us?**

The Christian is to be **'without blemish.'** This is the spotless life which God purposed for us, when He chose us before the foundation of the world and sent His Son to die for us. Eph 1:4;

It describes what God will in the end accomplish when He presents to Himself a church **'without spot'** Eph 5:27; It is the word chosen to express the **unblemished character of Christ.** Heb 9:14; 1 Pet 1:19;

It is the life which not even the holy God Himself can find ground to criticize. **To this the Christian is called, as a consequence of salvation.**

2:15; “so that no one can speak a word of blame against you. You are to live clean, innocent lives as children of God in a dark world full of people who are crooked and stubborn. Shine out among them like beacon lights”

Part of our possession, as we possess salvation, is that **by the will of God** 'we have **been sanctified** through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.' (Heb 10:10;)

This **completely accomplished holiness** must be appropriated **outwardly** and **inwardly** by that unremitting work of obedience to which the saved are called.

2:15; “so that no one can speak a word of blame against you. You are to live clean, innocent lives as children of God in a dark world full of people who are crooked and stubborn. Shine out among them like beacon lights”

This standard of Christian character
is so **lofty** as to seem unreasonable.
Does Paul mean us to take it seriously?

It is evident that he does, for he ties his precepts
right down to **the facts of daily life.**

He does not say,
“Live like this in your imaginations” or
“Live like this when you are together as a church.”

He says, **“in the midst of
a crooked and perverse generation.”**

2:15; “so that no one can speak a word of blame against you. You are to live clean, innocent lives as children of God in a dark world full of people who are crooked and stubborn. Shine out among them like beacon lights”

The Christian who **responds** to the **grace of God** “**obeys**” God’s laws, works out their salvation with “**fear and trembling,**” and **avoids** complaining “**may become blameless and harmless.**”

One is to blame when found in sin and one will do harm when complaining against God.

The idea of a **spiritual “blemish”** is to be guilty of sin. To obey God’s standards and do the work of God is to be blameless.

We as individuals **need to repent** and **ask God’s forgiveness,** every day of our lives Only those spiritually clean and free from blemishes clothed in Christ’s righteousness will be in heaven. (Rev 21:27;)

2:15; “so that no one can speak a word of blame against you. You are to live clean, innocent lives as children of God in a dark world full of people who are crooked and stubborn. Shine out among them like beacon lights”

We are challenged to be Holy – set apart for Gods service. Remember Paul introduced us to a **three part salvation?**

Paul speaks of “**the first day**” the Philippians believed the gospel and became partakers of it and its benefits.
(Phil 1:5;)

He then speaks of the “**present time**” during which the Philippians live, during which they are experiencing fellowship in the gospel and the ongoing work of God in/among them (Phil 1:5-6;).

He concludes by speaking the “**day of Christ Jesus**” when all of God’s purposes will reach their consummation. (Phil 1:6;)

Three stages of **Salvation PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE**

Past Tense:- There is a sense in which God has already saved each and every Christian. In this sense **salvation is equated with the forgiveness of sins.**

Ananias said to Paul, "Arise and be baptized and wash away your sins" (Acts 22:16). So Paul, as soon as he obeyed, had his sins washed away. **He was saved.**

Paul said to the Corinthians, "You were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified..." (1Cor 6:11) They were saved. Paul says of God our Saviour, **"he saved us..."** (Titus 3:4-5). **That's past tense, isn't it?**

A little earlier in Titus, Paul says, **"The grace of God has appeared bringing salvation to all men."** (Titus 2:11;)

Three stages of **Salvation PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE**

Present Tense:- There is a sense in which God is still saving each and every Christian. In this sense salvation is equated with the Christian's growth, perseverance and holiness.

Paul spoke to the Corinthians of **"those who are being saved"** (2Cor 2:15;). Here we do not have past tense. We have the word **"saved"** used in a **present and ongoing sense.**

Paul tells the Philippians, **"work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who is at work in you..."** (Phil 2:12-13;). Here we see salvation presented as something being worked out by us in synergy with God. **It is not all over and done with.**

Note the implication of this question,
"How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"
(Hebrews 2:1-3;)

Three stages of Salvation PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

Another telling statement,
"be **all the more diligent** to make your
calling and election sure..." (2 Peter 1:10;)

John says that **"the blood of Christ
continues to cleanse us..."** (1 John 1:7;)

Past sins were forgiven when we became Christians,
but **further sins since then need to be forgiven too.**

Forgiveness and salvation continue
as we walk in the light.

Three stages of **Salvation PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE**

There is a sense in which salvation is a future event.

In this sense salvation is equated
with the return of Christ.

Jesus said, "these (wicked) shall go away
into eternal punishment, but the righteous
into eternal life" (Matt 25:46;). **This is a future event.**

As we saw earlier, Paul twice says,

"We **shall be** saved..." (Romans 5:9-10).

This is neither past nor present, but **future, isn't it?**

Paul speaking to Christians
makes an interesting statement,
"Our salvation **is now nearer** than
when we first believed." (Romans 13:11;)

Three stages of **Salvation PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE**

The Holy Spirit is given "as **a guarantee** of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession..." (Ephesians 1:14;) Here redemption and the eternal inheritance is something in view, **something yet future.**

Paul speaks of "**the hope of salvation**" (1Thes 5:8;) A hope of salvation **implies a future salvation.**

If our salvation were altogether finished, then we would have **no need** any more to hold it as our hope.

Three stages of **Salvation PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE**
I celebrate **the grace of God** in the work of **Christ** on
the cross and the power of His resurrection **brings**
the opportunity of salvation for all undeserved.

As I respond to the gospel
by accepting **on Gods terms**
through my faithful obedience
I am saved from my past sins.

Yet I need to continue in the faith therefore
there is a real sense in which **my salvation**
is an ongoing process culminating in glorification,
provided of course that **I hold fast to the gospel.**

2:15; “so that no one can speak a word of blame against you. You are to live clean, innocent lives as children of God in a dark world full of people who are crooked and stubborn. Shine out among them like beacon lights”

True sanctification is not an either or
but the believer wilfully doing everything
in his or her ability to choose obedience to Christ



While at the same time **humbly allowing God to work through us** for His good purpose to the same end.

2:15; “so that no one can speak a word of blame against you. You are to live clean, innocent lives as children of God in a dark world full of people who are crooked and stubborn. Shine out among them like beacon lights”

The “**crooked and perverse generation**” is the “**adversaries**” of Philippians 1:28; (those in sin).

The sins of these people are seen exposed by godly living on the part of the Christian. (Eph 5:11;)

The Christian is to thereby **let the light of the gospel message** shine bright in their lives.

(Matt 5:14;)

We have an Individual Responsibility
to Watch and Warn against Sin.

BUT remember **we are to
speak the TRUTH in LOVE.**

We have no right to be rude.

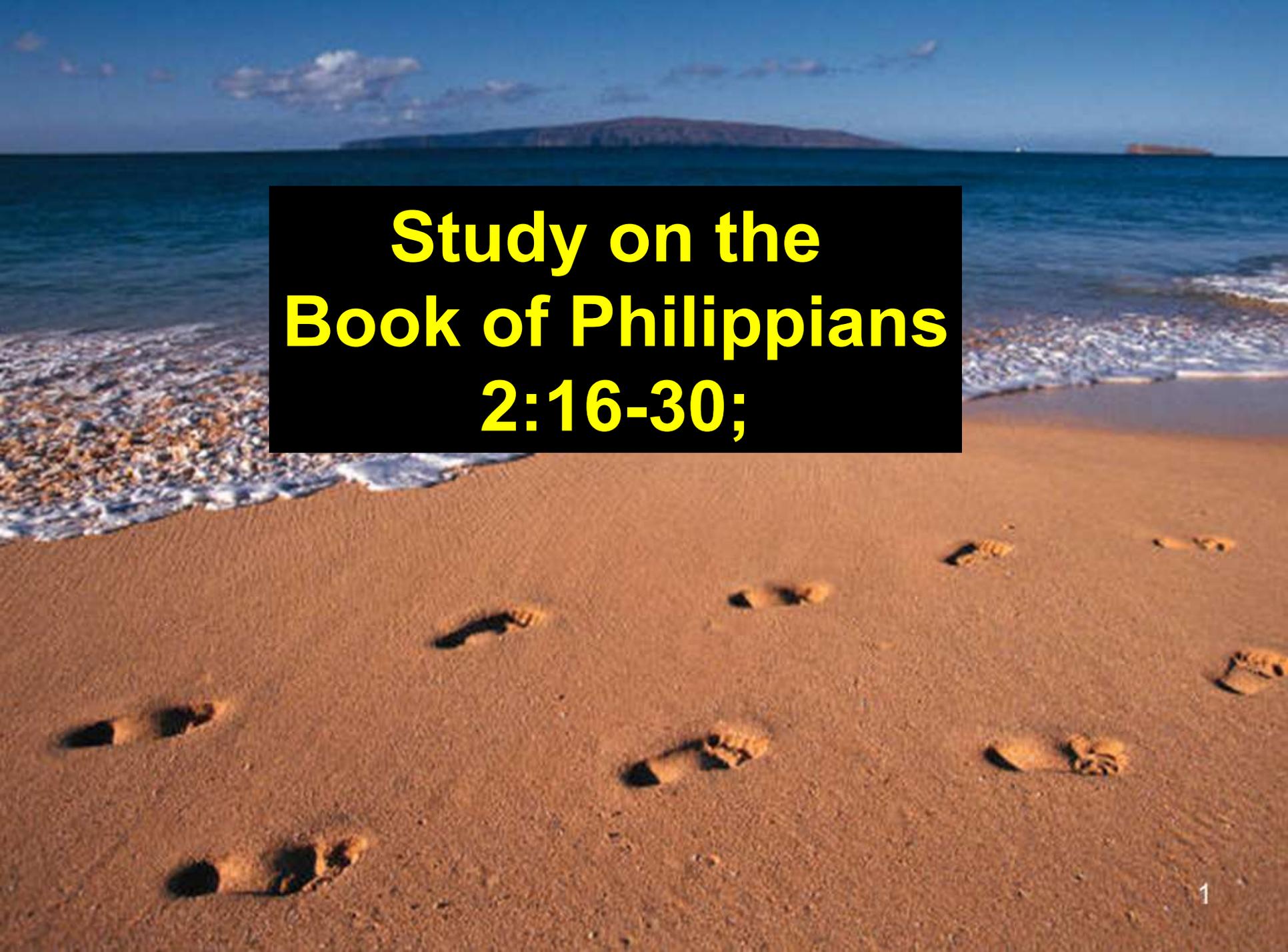
Study on the Book of Philippians 2:12-15;

**Prepared by
Graeme Morrison**

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Next in the series:- Phil 2:16-30;



**Study on the
Book of Philippians
2:16-30;**

2:15; “so that no one can speak a word of blame against you. You are to live clean, innocent lives as children of God in a dark world full of people who are crooked and stubborn. Shine out among them like beacon lights”

It is in the **'brass tacks'** of daily life that Christian character is to be displayed, making a stark contrast with **the contemporary world** which is described both as **inwardly 'twisted'** and **outwardly 'perverted'** or **turned off course.**

We are to **shine out as lights** in the darkness.
(Matt 5:14-16; Eph 5:8-9;)

This shining is to be a two-fold light.
Firstly, as Paul has already stressed!

We are to shine by our character, by the way we live. But a **silent example**, while it may be impressive, **will never save anybody.**

2:16; “Hold out the message of life. Then I shall have reason to be proud on the Day of Christ’s return, for it will not be for nothing that I have run the race and toiled so hard.”

It needs explanation; it needs ‘word.’

The **Christian** is a **light bearer** in the world, **not only** by his personal character, but also by means of **'the Word of Life.'**

The order used by Paul is important.

His first call is for quality of life and then for the spoken testimony.

**Life without word is an uninterpreted parable
Word without life is idle gossip.**

The Christian character is toward a definite purpose.

**He is to so live to help others
come to know the Word of Life.**

2:16; “Hold out the message of life. Then I shall have reason to be proud on the Day of Christ’s return, for it will not be for nothing that I have run the race and toiled so hard.”

“the **word of life**” is another name for **the gospel**, (Eph 1:13;), truth, (John 17:17;), the faith, (Phil 1:27;), word of God (I Thess. 2:13;)

Spiritual life and relationship with God
is the **work of the gospel** message

(Rom 1:16;) Each individual Christian is to “**hold forth**” (**epecho**) = “hold, retain, stay” (Strong’s 1907).

Each individual is **responsible** for **knowing**
and **remaining** in the truths of God’s word
Living in a relationship with God

2:16; “Hold out the message of life. Then I shall have reason to be proud on the Day of Christ’s return, for it will not be for nothing that I have run the race and toiled so hard.”

The verb **"holding fast"** (R.S.V.) is ambiguous:
it can mean either **'holding fast'**
(The work of personal loyalty and obedience
to the Word of God)

Or **'holding forth'**

(The work of presenting the word of God to others.)
It is very possible that **both meanings** are intended.

2:16; “Hold out the message of life. Then I shall have reason to be proud on the Day of Christ’s return, for it will not be for nothing that I have run the race and toiled so hard.”

The **first meaning** would be urging the Christians to **hold on to the Word of Life** for it is their only weapon to stand firm in a sinful world.

Without God's Word we will find **our light slowly going out and the world coming in**. But with that Word, we have all we need to face the world .

The **second meaning** would be urging the Christian to **shine by speaking up for Jesus**.
Telling forth the Word of Life.

**We must first hold fast,
if we are to be able to hold forth.**

2:16; “Hold out the message of life. Then I shall have reason to be proud on the Day of Christ’s return, for it will not be for nothing that I have run the race and toiled so hard.”

**Before Paul changes the topic
he includes some personal remarks**



2:16; “Hold out the message of life. Then I shall have reason to be proud on the Day of Christ’s return, for it will not be for nothing that I have run the race and toiled so hard.”

v16b Paul **wanted his life to count** and to matter for God. **Spiritual results of changing eternity really mattered to Paul.**

v17; In the **midst of persecution and pain**, Paul has been enabled to **deal with all things with joy** and wants the Philippians to share in it.

V18; As Paul **shares what God is doing in his life** which **produces joy**, Paul wants the Philippians to do the same with him.

2:16; “Hold out the message of life. Then I shall have reason to be proud on the Day of Christ’s return, for it will not be for nothing that I have run the race and toiled so hard.”

Encouragement. (Verses 16b-18;)

This then, is the **life of Christ-likeness:**
A life of work, character and testimony.

This must continue until the day of Christ.

Paul is so **deeply concerned**
for the salvation of others.

He even **would have sacrificed his own life,**
if by so doing **he could save his fellow Jews.**

(Rom 9 :1-3; 10:1;) .

Paul’s whole life 's labour was to save souls.

2:16; “Hold out the message of life. Then I shall have reason to be proud on the Day of Christ’s return, for it will not be for nothing that I have run the race and toiled so hard.”

He tells the Philippians, therefore, that **if they continue in their salvation until the end**, he would feel that **all his effort** had been **worthwhile**.

We see what a terrible blow it would be to Paul if after **"running"** and **"labouring"** (both words describing the **utmost effort and sacrifice**) the Philippians were unfaithful, **All his efforts would have been in vain**.

So Paul makes a very moving appeal, by way of encouragement; that they **hold fast** until the day of Christ, so that he could be proud. (1Thess 2:19-20;)

2:16; “Hold out the message of life. Then I shall have reason to be proud on the Day of Christ’s return, for it will not be for nothing that I have run the race and toiled so hard.”

Paul’s glorying would be over the Philippians who made it to heaven after the great day of Christ (judgment day) due to their faithfulness and selfless approach to life.

Paul’s labours among the Philippians was surely fruitful; however, if the brethren failed to make it to heaven Paul’s labour would have been in vain. (i.e., useless and worthless.)

2:17; "But even if my life is to be poured out like a drink offering to complete the sacrifice of your faithful service (that is, if I am to die for you), I will rejoice, and I want to share my joy with all of you."
VERSES 17-18; are difficult verses to understand.

Paul is using the metaphor of sacrifice.

The **libation of offering** seems to have been an offering made either as a preparation or culmination of another sacrifice.

Usually a cup of wine was poured over the main sacrifice.

Barclay translates this verse:- "When men make the sacrifices to the gods, they pour out upon them a sacrificial cup of wine. Your faith encludes your service are a sacrifice to God and it. may be hat my life , like that cup of wine, must be poured out to crown and complete your sacrifice. If it must be so, I applaud and I share my joy with you; and in the same way you must be glad and share your joy with me."

2:17; “But even if my life is to be poured out like a drink offering to complete the sacrifice of your faithful service (that is, if I am to die for you), I will rejoice, and I want to share my joy with all of you.”

Paul has given the Philippians, **Jesus as an example** of one who **faithfully suffered persecution** and was thereby **perfected as a merciful high priest.**

Now Paul gives **himself**, as an apostle of Jesus Christ, **as an example** of one who is **willing to suffer** to the point of death for his beloved brethren’s sake.

To die for the cause of Christ (to be persecuted due to a message preached to the point of death) **would bring Paul joy.**

2:18; “and in the same manner do you also joy, and rejoice with me.”

Remembering that their suffering had been cheerfully granted unto them in behalf of Christ (Phil 1:29;) they were to rejoice in all trials of life even if it meant their death.

Paul would not have the Philippians saddened over his trials even if they bring death to him there awaits a glorious home for the faithful.

“I consider the sufferings of the present time not worth comparing with the future glory which will be revealed to us.” Rom 8:18;

2:19; “ If the Lord is willing, I will send Timothy to see you soon.
Then when he comes back he can cheer me up
by telling me all about you and how you are getting along.”

Having just discussed **the probability of his death**
for the cause of Christ. (Phil 2:17;)

Paul now lets the Philippians know that
his hope is to remain alive. (Phil 1:25;)

Paul’s desire to remain alive is for their sakes
but also to send his beloved Timothy to Philippi
for two reasons:-

- 1) Timothy would be able to supply spiritual sustenance to the brethren at Philippi.
- 2) Timothy would be able to send Paul a report regarding the welfare of the Philippian brethren.

2:19; “If the Lord is willing, I will send Timothy to see you soon.
Then when he comes back he can cheer me up
by telling me all about you and how you are getting along.”

Paul has been **exhorting the Philippians to live their lives worthy of the gospel of Christ.** (1:27- 2:18;)

This involves;- unity, humility, obedience and the growth of character that gets rid of grumbling and questionings and **becomes blameless and innocent** even in the midst of a world gone wrong.

The purpose of such a life is to be a **light** that **shines forth as a witness** to the **Word of Life.**

2:19; “If the Lord is willing, I will send Timothy to see you soon.
Then when he comes back he can cheer me up
by telling me all about you and how you are getting along.”

Summary of Paul's Plans for the near future. Chapter 2:19-30;

In this section **we see Paul**
as the **‘Thoughtful Administrator’** making plans
for the well-being of his beloved brethren in Philippi.

These plans involve two men - **Timothy** and
Epaphroditus, whom Paul commends highly.
They are **men worthy of imitation.**

2:19-24; **The planned visit of Timothy.**

2:25-30; **The return of Epaphroditus.**

2:19; “If the Lord is willing, I will send Timothy to see you soon. Then when he comes back he can cheer me up by telling me all about you and how you are getting along.”

Here we have:-

- 1) **The Plan** - to send Timothy.
- 2) **The Proviso** - The Lord willing.
- 3) **The Purpose** - To be cheered by news of them.

Timothy was probably Paul's closest helper, brother and friend. (note it was to Timothy that Paul wrote his last recorded letter before his death), and it would be almost like sending part of himself to send Timothy to Philippi.

Paul was willing to do this because he was more concerned for them than he was about himself.

A quality that was also evident in Timothy. (vs.20;)

2:19; “If the Lord is willing, I will send Timothy to see you soon.
Then when he comes back he can cheer me up
by telling me all about you and how you are getting along.”

**Paul never made plans without realising
that they were subject to the Lord's will.**

**So he says "I hope in the Lord Jesus."
A phrase that means he hoped to send Timothy
if it is the Lord's will. (See also v.24;)**

**His purpose in sending Timothy is so that he may be cheered
by news of them. (1 Thess 3:6-7;) The communication,
however, is not to be one way. The text actually says,
(although not the R.S.V.) not simply "I" but "I also."**

**The implication is that the Philippians will
be gladdened by news of Paul brought by Timothy
and also **Paul will be happy to hear news of them.****

2:19; “If the Lord is willing, I will send Timothy to see you soon. Then when he comes back he can cheer me up by telling me all about you and how you are getting along.”

This is the point Paul is making in v19; when he says, “so that **I also may be encouraged** when I learn of your condition.”



2:19; “If the Lord is willing, I will send Timothy to see you soon.
Then when he comes back he can cheer me up
by telling me all about you and how you are getting along.”

Timothy was no stranger to being sent
to various places on behalf of Paul and the gospel.

Paul had previously sent **Timothy** from
Athens to Thessalonica for the same purpose.
(I Thess 3:1-6).

Again, Paul had sent **Timothy** to **Macedonia**
and Corinth from Ephesus. (I Cor 16:10;)

2:20; “I have no one else like Timothy,
who genuinely cares about your welfare.

In 2:20-22; we have a description of **Timothy's unique fitness** for the task he is about to undertake.

2:20-21; set out a **contrast** between **Timothy's fitness with others who are unfit**, while verse 22 speaks of the Philippians' own knowledge of Timothy's worth.

After considering the Christian's Model.
(Christ in 2:4-11;) Paul now honours
Timothy as the Model Christian.

For he is portraying the same unselfish, sacrificial,
loving character that was **'in Christ Jesus.'**
"I have no one of the same mind as Timothy."

2:20; "I have no one else like Timothy,
who genuinely cares about your welfare.

His uniqueness for this task is seen in the phrase
"who will be genuinely anxious for your welfare."

The adverb 'genuinely' (**gnesios**) is often rendered
'true' (4:2;) and is the same word that Paul uses
of his relationship with Timothy. When he calls him
"my true child in the faith." (1Tim 1:2;)

Like a son to a father, **Timothy** had so deeply drunk
of Paul's spirit and attitude that he now shared
the same "anxiety" for others' welfare that Paul had.
(2 Cor 11:28;)

This word (**gnesios**) is also rendered 'naturally.'
Timothy did not have to force himself to care for the
Philippians. It was 'genuine' - it came 'naturally.'

2:20; “I have no one else like Timothy,
who genuinely cares about your welfare.

Practical Application:- Normally selfishness comes ‘naturally’ and deep, loving, sacrificial concern for others has to be worked at.

Happy is the man who has so fallen in love with Christ, that for him the reverse is true and he now ‘naturally’ goes out to others in loving service.

2:20; “I have no one else like Timothy,
who genuinely cares about your welfare.

Note that Paul did not say such things
about Luke and Silas who also accompanied Paul
to Philippi on his second tour of preaching.

Apparently **Paul** knew that the mind of **Timothy**
was filled with the **same anxiety**
over the Philippian brethren as he was.

In Chapter 4:6; Paul writes, “**Have no anxiety
about anything.**” There is **no contradiction** here.
What is forbidden there is anxious care for one's self
and one's own interests. Timothy's ‘**anxiety**’
was for **the spiritual welfare of others.**

2:20; “I have no one else like Timothy,
who genuinely cares about your welfare.

When **we find ourselves guilty of anxiety**
over our **own interests**, we will also find that
‘genuine anxiety’ for others is excluded.

On the other hand the surest antidote to personal
anxiety or worry is to widen our horizons and
so enlarge our hearts of sympathy that we share
the burdens of other people. **1 Cor 12:25**; states
our Christian responsibility for other believers,
using the identical verb.

Such words of **commendation** speak volumes
as to the **faithfulness and brotherly love**
that Timothy shared with Paul and **all**
who call upon the name of Jesus Christ.

2:20; “I have no one else like Timothy,
who genuinely cares about your welfare.

Looking out for number one
is the world’s basic philosophy.



2:20; “I have no one else like Timothy,
who genuinely cares about your welfare.

Listen to the heart of Paul

from an excerpt from 2 Corinthians 11;

26 I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren;

27 I have been in labour and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.

2:20; “I have no one else like Timothy,
who genuinely cares about your welfare.

**28 Apart from such external things, there is the daily
pressure on me of concern for all the churches.**

**29 Who is weak without my being weak?
Who is led into sin without my intense concern?**

**A character trait of a true man or woman of God
is to be **truly concerned** about
the spiritual walk of other Christians.**

2:19; “If the Lord is willing, I will send Timothy to see you soon. Then when he comes back he can cheer me up by telling me all about you and how you are getting along.”

To send Timothy back to Philippi was a journey of about 800 miles. Travel was not easy back then.

This journey would take about six weeks, depending on a variety of factors, weather being a major component.

Nonetheless, this journey was of **extreme importance** due to the fact that **Paul** was extremely **concerned** over Christian’s spiritual condition.

2:20; “I have no one else like Timothy,
who genuinely cares about your welfare.

Paul states that Timothy cared **“truly” (gnesios)**
for the Philippians.

gnesios = **“genuine, sincerely”** (Moulton 79).

Timothy was not looking for a handout
from the Philippians but rather truly **cared for**
their **emotional, physical, and spiritual** well being.

Timothy is a kindred spirit

Paul is saying that the younger Timothy is family
in that he shares with him a family bond of values,
motives, character and purpose.



2:21; “All the others care only for themselves and not for what matters to Jesus Christ.”

Such a statement demands that we look carefully at others that were known to be with Paul at various times during his Roman imprisonment.

Was Paul referring to Luke, Silas, Epaphras, Tychicus, or Titus here?

Remember that Paul made mention regarding the motivation of some preachers at Philippians 1:15;

Apparently there were men all around Paul and **men who Paul was hearing reports about** that caused him to say such a thing; i.e., **“they all seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ.”**

2:21; “All the others care only for themselves and not for what matters to Jesus Christ.”

Luke had remained in Philippi after Paul, Silas, and he came there on the second tour of preaching (compare the **we** Acts 16:11-16; with the **they** at Acts 16:40 – 17:1;)

Apparently Luke remained in Philippi for approximately 7 years / cf. Acts 20:6; when Luke again uses the **we**, to indicate that he was with them).

Paul, Timothy, Luke, and Silas had first come to Philippi around 51 AD.

2:21; “All the others care only for themselves and not for what matters to Jesus Christ.”

Seven years later **Luke** leaves Philippi to travel with Paul back to Judea. (Acts 20:6;)

Luke travels with Paul to Rome (see use of plural pronouns “**we**” at Acts 27-28) (the year was 61 AD [three years after leaving Philippi].)

Apparently the books of Colossians, Ephesians, and Philemon were written during the time of Paul’s Roman imprisonment as well.

Sometime, during Paul’s two year stay in prison, Tychicus, Onesimus, Aristarchus, Mark, Justus, Epaphras, Luke, and Demas are **revealed to be in good standing with Paul and the truth.** Col 4:7-14;

2:21; “All the others care only for themselves
and not for what matters to Jesus Christ.”

The last we hear of **Silas** is at Acts 18:5.
We are left to wonder if Silas fell away
from the truth (hopefully not.)

It seems apparent that all these good men of faith
had been sent out to various places
Such as Ephesus, Colossi, and Philippi
to encourage the brethren with letters from Paul.

Apart from these faithful men there would have been
others who became preachers of the gospel
But **many of these in Paul's experience
were self seeking.**

2:21; “All the others care only for themselves
and not for what matters to Jesus Christ.”

It is important to surround our selves
with faithful Christians to encourage one another
in our time of need.

In Paul’s day some of the Christians
started out strong yet didn’t finish well.

“for **Demas**, having loved this present world,
has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica;
Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.”
2 Timothy 4:10;

2:21; “All the others care only for themselves
and not for what matters to Jesus Christ.”

**Other Christians started out weak
but finished well.**

**“Only Luke is with me. Pick up Mark and bring
him with you, for he is useful to me for service.”**

2 Timothy 4:11;



**I'm glad a young carpenter from Nazareth
never said, “I don't do crosses.”**

2:22; “But you know how Timothy has proved himself. Like a son with his father, he has helped me in preaching the Good News.”

The word “**proof**” (**dokime**) = “a test, proof, **passing the grade, tried character**” (LS 208).

The Philippians had experienced Timothy’s godly character first hand.

“You know how he has stood the test and shown himself to be a man of sound character and worthiness; he has been tested and proved himself.”

Not only did they see

Timothy’s good character but Paul confirms their faith in him as **a genuine and sincere soldier in truth.**



2:22; “But you know how Timothy has proved himself. Like a son with his father, he has helped me in preaching the Good News.”

When it comes to the work of preaching to the lost, Timothy was like a son who follows his dad around helping him with the family work.

Incidentally, this lets us know what children’s attitude toward work with the father should be. (Like Timothy they should genuinely care to do it knowing that it is necessary.)

**SERVANTHOOD
MINISTRY**

Do you have a servant’s heart?



2:22; “But you know how Timothy has proved himself. Like a son with his father, he has helped me in preaching the Good News.”

Paul was his father in the gospel, leading him to Christ and fostering him in the things of the Lord.

He was a true son in that

he followed and 'served' his father.

Paul is careful here. He does not actually say that Timothy served him, but because of his own position as a servant of God he says:- **“He served with me.”**

(1:1;) Paul and Timothy are **yoked together** in common service for a single cause, **“the gospel.”**

This almost incidental allusion to Paul's junior colleague provides a reminder that, in the church of God, the only claim to position and honour is **based on service** to the **cause of Him** who came to take the form of a slave, (2:7;) and was among His own as **“he that serves.”** (Luke 22:27;)

2:23; “I hope to send him to you just as soon as I find out what is going to happen to me here.”

2:23-24; After Paul's brief aside on Timothy's virtues, the apostle **resumes** the thought of 2:19; the **sending of Timothy**.

Paul's Roman trial was nearing a conclusion and a verdict was soon to be pronounced by a Roman judge.

Paul was waiting to see what the outcome of the verdict would be before he sent Timothy away to them.

These words help us conclude that the letter to the Philippians was written sometime toward the end of Paul's two year imprisonment in Rome.
(62 to 63 AD.)

2:24; “And I am trusting the Lord that soon
I myself may come to see you.”

Paul’s personal experience with the trial at hand
caused him to be very **optimistic**
regarding his release. 1:19-26; 2:17-18;

When we turn to **second Timothy**
we find just the opposite.

There are no faithful brethren with him, except Luke,
and all hope of survival seems dim. (2 Tim 4:6-8;)

Apparently **2 Timothy**
was **written at a later imprisonment.**

2:25; “Meanwhile, I thought I should send Epaphroditus back to you.

He is a true brother, a faithful worker, and a courageous soldier.

And he was your messenger to help me in my need.”

The apostle **turns** from considering the future plans to the present, and in this he is concerned to **commend Epaphroditus** to the Philippian church.

Epaphroditus is nowhere else mentioned in the Bible except in the book of Philippians.

It seems that Paul has sent this letter by the hands of Epaphroditus to not only relieve the Philippians of **their physical sufferings**.
(telling them to have the mind of Christ)

But also their **emotional sufferings** as they longed to see their beloved Epaphroditus.

2:25; “Meanwhile, I thought I should send Epaphroditus back to you. He is a true brother, a faithful worker, and a courageous soldier. And he was your messenger to help me in my need.”

Paul refers to **Epaphroditus** as a “**fellow-worker**” (labourer in the kingdom of God), “**fellow-soldier**” (i.e., God’s warrior for truth / this indicates the battles that had to be fought for truth sake.)

And “**minister to my need.**” Paul was in need of various necessities of life and the Philippians saw to it that his needs were met.

The brethren in Philippi apparently sent this aid to Paul by the hands of Epaphroditus.

2:25; “Meanwhile, I thought I should send Epaphroditus back to you.
He is a true brother, a faithful worker, and a courageous soldier.
And he was your messenger to help me in my need.”

**There is a need to get the work done!
There is kingdom work all around us.**

10% of believers do 90% of the work.



**If you hang around the 10%'ers,
you may become one of them.**

2:25; “Meanwhile, I thought I should send Epaphroditus back to you.
He is a true brother, a faithful worker, and a courageous soldier.
And he was your messenger to help me in my need.”

Paul later instructs Timothy 2 Tim 2:3-4; :-

“Suffer hardship with me,
as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.”

“**No soldier** in active service **entangles himself** in the affairs of everyday life,
so that he may please the one
who enlisted him as a soldier.”

2:25; “Meanwhile, I thought I should send Epaphroditus back to you. He is a true brother, a faithful worker, and a courageous soldier. And he was your messenger to help me in my need.”

Lightfoot put it:- “Epaphroditus was one with Paul **in sympathy**, one with him **in work**, one with him **in danger**.”

Meyer says, about these three terms:-

“There is no kinship so close as that brotherhood into which a common love of God brings two men.. Epaphroditus was a man much less gifted than Paul, yet Paul seemed to forget the disparity and speaks of him as his equal - **my fellow-worker and fellow-soldier**, because to work for Christ, and to fight side by side in the ranks of Christ 's gospel, must bring a soul close to soul.”

These **three terms** should **describe all true Christians**. For the **fellowship in Christ** is always one of brotherly affection, **labour of love** and a united stand against the enemy.

2:25; “Meanwhile, I thought I should send Epaphroditus back to you. He is a true brother, a faithful worker, and a courageous soldier. And he was your messenger to help me in my need.”

Paul. uses **two very noble words** to describe Epaphroditus service to him on behalf of the Philippians:-

1) **Messenger - apostolos.**

This is the word used for apostle.

It literally means:-“one who is sent on an errand.”

Here it is not used in it's technical sense to describe those **chosen men** that were **sent personally by Christ** himself, but never-the-less, it is **a term of high regard.**

He was sent by the Philippian congregation as an official representative through whom the congregation itself speaks and acts.

2:25; “Meanwhile, I thought I should send Epaphroditus back to you. He is a true brother, a faithful worker, and a courageous soldier. And he was your messenger to help me in my need.”

2) Minister or servant - leitourgos.

This is a word of high and holy associations.

It is the usual word for "**priest**" in the Greek translation of the O. T. (LXX) ; and is used to describe a servant of the State who has performed some distinguished public service.

Hendrikenson says:- "Epaphroditus had been sent both to **bring a gift and to be a gift** from the Philippians to Paul."

“The very word used in the original for '**minister,**' namely **leitourgos,** indicates that the task of Epaphroditus was viewed as one in which he and the church of Philippi through him – **rendered official and sacred service,** and this not only to Paul but the cause of the gospel; hence, to God Himself.”

2:25; “Meanwhile, I thought I should send Epaphroditus back to you.
He is a true brother, a faithful worker, and a courageous soldier.
And he was your messenger to help me in my need.”

**“The sending of Epaphroditus with all that it implied,
was a religious act, a true offering or sacrifice.”**

(2:17; 4:18;)

Today, we call our public worship a **“service”**
or **“liturgy.”** This is from the **same root**
as the word used here.

This should remind us that **our**
collective worship should not be
a formal ritual that is divorced from life,
but an expression and offering of service to God.

2:26-27; “Now I am sending him home again, for he has been longing to see you, and he was very distressed that you heard he was ill. And he surely was ill; in fact, he almost died. But God had mercy on him—and also on me, so that I would not have such unbearable sorrow.”

The reasons for the authorized return are now stated. **These reasons are three and are closely intertwined.** They concern “**him**” (Epaphroditus), “**you**” (Philippians) and “**myself**” (Paul).

1) In order that Epaphroditus' longing may be satisfied. (vs. 26-27;)

2) In order that you may rejoice. (vs. 28a;)

3) In order that I may be less sorrowful. (vs. 28b;)

2:26-27; “Now I am sending him home again, for he has been longing to see you, and he was very distressed that you heard he was ill And he surely was ill; in fact, he almost died. But God had mercy on him- and also on me, so that I would not have such unbearable sorrow.”

Some time had elapsed between Paul first coming to his Roman prison and the time of this letter (so again the latter date; i.e., 62-63 AD for the letter is more likely.)

When Paul first came to Rome it was made known to the Philippians (in some unrecorded way) that Paul was in need of the necessities of life.

The Philippians respond by sending Epaphroditus to Rome with the necessary help. (possibly food and clothing.)

2:26-27; “Now I am sending him home again, for he has been longing to see you, and he was very distressed that you heard he was ill. And he surely was ill; in fact, he almost died. But God had mercy on him—and also on me, so that I would not have such unbearable sorrow.”

While in Rome, Epaphroditus gets sick and nearly dies. Enough time elapses so that someone brought back news to the Philippians that **Epaphroditus was very sick.**

The Philippians began to be filled with anxiety over the welfare of their beloved brother in Christ.

Paul’s letter and the appearance of Epaphroditus will **sooth their worries about him.**

2:26-27; “Now I am sending him home again, for he has been longing to see you, and he was very distressed that you heard he was ill. And he surely was ill; in fact, he almost died. But God had mercy on him—and also on me, so that I would not have such unbearable sorrow.”

God too had mercy on Paul.

If Epaphroditus would have died from the sickness Paul would have had great sorrow of heart.

**Though Paul realizes that leaving this world and going on to comfort glory is a great blessing.
(Phil 2:21;)**

It is apparent that **life among the living is also a **great blessing** to be enjoyed to its fullest in Christ.**

2:28; “So I am all the more anxious to send him back to you, for I know you will be glad to see him, and that will lighten all my cares.”

These verses give insight into the character of Paul.

Paul was very conscious of other’s feelings

Paul knew that the Philippians were worried over the welfare of Epaphroditus and therefore wanted to quickly send him unto them.

Until that time, Paul’s mind would be filled with sorrow for the Philippians knowing that they were filled with such anxiety and care over this beloved brother.

2:29-30; “Welcome him with Christian love and with great joy, and be sure to honour people like him. For he risked his life for the work of Christ, and he was at the point of death while trying to do for me the things you couldn't do because you were far away.”

Paul used the same language when writing the Romans regarding the brethren **“receiving (Phoebe) in the Lord, worthily of the saints...”**
(Rom 16:1-2;)

Again, the brethren in Ephesus had written a letter to the brethren in Achaia, on behalf of Apollos, that they might **“receive” him. “welcome him.”** (Acts 18:27-28;)

The idea of **“receiving”** on **“in the Lord”** is the idea of **accepting one into spiritual fellowship.** We could not receive such a one who was not in good standing with truth. (2 Tim 2:16-18; 4:14-15;)

2:29-30; “Welcome him with Christian love and with great joy, and be sure to honour people like him. For he risked his life for the work of Christ, and he was at the point of death while trying to do for me the things you couldn't do because you were far away.”

Brethren who **put their lives in danger** for the sake of the gospel message and men's souls are to be held in “honour.”

Epaphroditus had risked his life in bringing Paul the necessities of life.

To “lack” (**husterema**) = “deficiency, need, want.”
“Things you could not do”

Later, Paul will explain that this deficiency on the part of the Philippians was **not due to their neglecting him** but rather to **their lack of opportunity** to help him. (Phil 4:10;)

Philippians 2:12-30; – Scripture Questions

- 1) The Philippians obeyed Paul when he was there and in his _____. (v12;)
 - 2) Who worked in the Philippians, for His own good purpose? (v13;)
 - 3) How did Paul describe the current generation? (v15)
 - 4) How did Paul describe the Philippians? (v15)
 - 5) Paul was willing to be poured out like a _____. (v17)
 - 6) Who did Paul plan to send to them, when he had news of his situation? (v19)
 - 7) How did Paul describe Epaphroditus?
-

Philippians 2:12-30; – Summary

1) Keep up the good work! Don't depend on me, but be focused on how you live.

God will make you more and more like Jesus.

2) Be satisfied with God's plan for you, and don't argue over things that aren't critical. Then, when you teach others about Jesus, you will really stand out as a different kind of people.

3) No matter what happens to me, I am proud of you.

The way you live and serve makes me so happy!

4) I'm sending Timothy to see you. You know what a great person and Christian he is—his life proves his faith and commitment.

He'll tell you the news about me, and when he comes back here he'll tell me all the news about you.

5) Epaphroditus is coming back to you soon. He's been very helpful to me, but he misses you. He was so sick, he almost died. He's better now (a miracle from God), but he's worried about you and what you heard about him. Welcome him back and honour him, because he is a committed Christian who does whatever it takes to live like Christ.

Synopsis of chapter 2

The Philippians were sure to face persecutions as they went about preaching the gospel message.
(Phil. 1:28-30).

The Philippians **needed a context** in which they could endure said suffering even though Paul states that it is **“granted in behalf of Christ.”**
(Phil 1:29;)

Jesus (Phil 2:6-8;), **Paul** (Phil 2:17;), and later he will mention **other faithful Christians** (3:17;) were to be their context for suffering.

Because they suffered and remained faithful the Philippians can face suffering.

Synopsis of chapter 2

Paul encourages the Philippians to exercise the mind of Christ when faced with persecution.
(Phil 2:1-5;)

The mind of Christ is to be an encourager, able to make events less painful to endure, sharing in truth, compassionate, united with others in truth, not factious, or vain.

Rather **lowly of mind** being of the opinion that **others are better than self** and **always looking to the needs of others.**

Synopsis of chapter 2

No greater example of selflessness can be found than that of Christ. **Jesus existed from all eternity with God as God.** (Phil 2:6; Jn 1:1, 14, 29-30; Eph 1:4;

The Lord **“emptied Himself”** so that others may be saved from the consequences of their sin. Jesus gave up the glories of heaven to live as a servant though He was a king. (Phil 2:7;)

The author of Hebrews terms Christ, **“the effulgence of his (God’s) glory, and the very image of his substance...”** (Heb 1:3;)

Synopsis of chapter 2

The **objective of Christ's life** on earth is given at Hebrews 2:10, “For it became him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”

Study on the Book of Philippians 2:16-30;

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Next in the series:- Phil 3:1-3;