

EPAPHRODITUS

AN EXAMPLE OF HUMILITY

Philippians 2:25-30

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INTRODUCTION

One of the most essential qualities which Christ enjoins all His followers to have is humility (*Matthew 11:29*). Just as it is impossible to please God without faith, so it is impossible to walk successfully with God without humility (*Hebrews 11:6, James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5*).

Therefore, all Christians must possess and exhibit humility in all their services to God and man as depicted in the lifestyle of the brother called *Epaphroditus*.

The church at Philippi on hearing that apostle Paul was in chains in Roman prison sent help to him through Epaphroditus.

Epaphroditus is a Greek name meaning *charming*. He was not the same person as *Epaphras* in Colossian church (*Colossians 1:7; Philemon 23*).

He was not an elder or a deacon as claimed by some writers, though he may be, but the text did not indicate that.

He was a faithful, humble and a charming brother who served Paul in the mission on behalf of the Philippian congregation.

We shall at this point examine our text accordingly.

I SENT HIM BACK TO YOU (Verse 25)

When Epaphroditus arrived Rome, he delivered the gift to Paul and stayed with him ministering to his needs (*Philippians 4:18*). He was a messenger of the church to Paul.

The Greek word for messenger here is *apostolon* (apostle), "one sent forth" (officially), by *Christ* (*Matthew 10:1-5, Acts 1:2*) and later secondary use, "sent forth" by congregations

(Acts 13:3, Romans 16:7, Philippians 2:25).

Paul refers to him as his own brother, co-worker and fellow soldier. This was also a demonstration of humility on the part of Apostle Paul.

The apostle said he found it more important to send Epaphroditus back to Philippi. ***Why did Paul send him back when he needed him most?***

HE WAS SICK ALMOST DYING (Verse 26,27)

Epaphroditus was seriously sick that the hope of living was almost lost. The reason for his grave illness maybe due to attack by disease, his works and care for Paul – water to bathe, clothe to wear, food to eat, and so on.

However, God had mercy on him and he was healed; not only on him but also on Paul who would have had sorrow upon sorrow – figuratively means overwhelming sorrow.

After recovering, Epaphroditus strongly desires to see his loving brethren and Paul Sent him back because he was homesick as the brethren in Philippi had already heard about his illness.

RELIEF FOR ALL (Verse 28)

Apostle Paul agreed that Epaphroditus should go back to the Philippian congregation so that when his loving brethren see him, they will be sure that he is alive and will rejoice greatly and Paul would have less sorrow since he (Paul) definitely felt his absence.

HONOR HIM (Verse 29)

Wonderfully, the apostle recommends that Epaphroditus should be warmly welcome in the Lord, honored or regarded highly; not only him but anyone who serves with such a humble quality.

The works he did were caring for imprisoned Paul and other messages which indicate whatever work that is done rightly and humbly in the Lord should be appreciated.

HE RISKS HIS LIFE (Verse 30)

Epaphroditus risks his life for the work of the Lord. He endangered himself traveling seven hundred miles from Philippi to Rome – risk of being

attacked by robbers (**Luke 10:30**), attack by disease, endanger his life by caring for someone with capital charge (treason), working tirelessly daily to meet Paul's needs as an old man and what have you?

Indeed, he humbly fulfills New Testament lifestyle (**1 John 3:16**) - *This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.*

He worked and completed what the Philippian church would have done for apostle Paul.

CONCLUSION

Epaphroditus is a glaring example of humility which we all must emulate to enable us render sacrificial or selfless services to God, Christians and humanity in general...*For whatever we do to the least of these brethren, we do it to the Lord (Matthew 25:40).*

Christians must put off the old man, pride and put on the new man, humility with righteousness in whatever capacity we serve, always to

please God (**1 Peter 5:5; Ephesians 4:24**).