

The Book of Philippians

Lesson 8

Study Notes

Examples of the Christian Life

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Text: Philippians 2:17-30.

Introduction: So far in our study we have seen the perfect pattern realized in Jesus Christ, the practical pattern related to life, and now we will examine the personal pattern of the Christian life seen in the lives of Paul, Timothy, and Epaphroditus.

We learn that Paul himself is an example of _____. Paul then presents his spiritual son, Timothy, as an example of _____. Finally, we are introduced to Epaphroditus as an example of _____. Paul was an apostle, Timothy was a _____, and Epaphroditus was a _____. While it is true that Jesus Christ is the Christian's model, these men are presented as model Christians. Jesus poured Himself out in service to God. These men poured themselves out as servants of Jesus Christ!

Philippians 2:17-18.

I. The Example of Paul.

Paul was being poured out like a _____. But at the same time, he was offering a sacrifice, a two-fold sacrifice. The first sacrifice is that of the Christians' faith. He had succeeded in working faith in their hearts and in strengthening this faith to the present state of growth in _____. That was a pleasing sacrifice in the sight of God. The consequence was that the Philippians were now living a sacrifice in service, a true ministry. The apostle assumes he himself will be offered upon his sacrifice. He may suffer the death of a martyr because of his _____. He knows that he will soon be liberated from the present imprisonment, but that merely places his martyr's death at a somewhat greater distance. The final disposition of his body is even now pretty sure: martyrdom looms up before him. But even should this take place very soon, it cannot hinder the _____ of his labor. He has cause for rejoicing at the faith and Christian life of the Philippians, he is happy in the thought of what has been accomplished. And in the same way his readers should rejoice in their faith, and rejoice with him, as it behooves good Christians, in the love of Christ.

There is an Old Testament picture here; He likens the Philippian believers to worshippers who offer their _____ as a sacrifice which has been slain and laid on the altar. This is the visible sacrifice.

He notes that if he be "offered" poured out as a drink offering; in the Old Testament wine was offered with the sacrifice as seen in Numbers 15.

Numbers 15:7 And for a drink offering thou shalt offer the third part of an hin of wine, for a sweet savour unto the LORD.

Wine is a symbol of _____ in Scripture. The pouring of wine on the Old Testament sacrifice taught the truth that the way of sacrifice is the way of joy. This truth is what Paul was teaching these Philippians.

II. The Example of Timothy.

Philippians 2:19-20.

Paul wanted to send Timothy to the Philippians; but only if it was in the will of Jesus Christ. All of his plans and purposes centered in _____.

A. His background.

Timothy was one of the better known of Paul's companions. His mother and grandmother were godly Jewish women; and gave him a good _____ of the Old Testament Scriptures.

2Timothy 1:5 *When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.*

2Timothy 3:14-15 *But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; 15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

Timothy was Paul's child in the faith and seems to have been converted at the time of Paul's _____ missionary visit to Lystra and Iconium. Timothy's father was a _____; Paul circumcised him to make him more acceptable to the Jews; for Paul would always approach the synagogue congregation first when he entered a new town. His recommendation of Timothy shows the intimacy of feeling between these two men, a cordial relation which the difference in _____ in no way affected them.

According to Eusebius, Timothy was the first bishop of Ephesus. The Bible does not tell us how he died; but historical tradition states that he was clubbed to death at a _____ for preaching the Gospel and for denouncing the licentiousness.

B. His like-mindedness to the Apostle Paul.

Timothy was _____ with Paul, and therefore felt the same pure, cordial interest in the Philippians as did his teacher, since he was just as anxiously concerned about the work of Christ. Timothy's solicitude for the Philippians was genuine, sincere, just as Paul's was. Men who think like Paul are rare in any age. So are men who share his genuine, painstaking, self-sacrificing care for the spiritual needs of others. Timothy was spiritually gifted and was available to go. A true servant is _____.

C. His opposites.

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

The curse of the local church today is lack of _____. There are so few people who are willing to make an out-and-out commitment to a task. Most help only when Christ's gain is compatible with their own. They are not willing to practice _____ in order to promote the cause of Christ.

D. His tested service.

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

The Christians at Philippi had ample opportunity of observing Timothy and of judging his motives, the state of his mind and heart; they approved him. They knew that he had served by the side of the great apostle in the ministry of the Gospel as a loving _____ serves his _____. For Timothy to have served with Paul the Greek word "served" means he had discharged the duties of a _____ or that of a _____.

III. The Example of Epaphroditus.

Philippians 2:25-26 Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants. 26 For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick.

Epaphroditus' name means "_____." If ever a man breathed the spirit of helpfulness, it was this man. He was from Philippi, and was a member of the church there. He had been employed by the Philippians to carry relief to Paul when he was in _____, and while in Rome he was taken dangerously sick. News of this had been conveyed to Philippi, and again intelligence had been brought to him that they heard of his sickness and that they were much affected by it. Upon his recovery, Paul thought it best that he should return at once to Philippi, and doubtless sent this _____ by him. He is much commended by Paul for his _____ and _____. These high words of praise for Epaphroditus came from a man who maintained lofty standards for servants and soldiers of the Lord.

A. A brother.

Paul would refer to Timothy as a son, and to Epaphroditus as a brother. The new birth puts all Christians on the level of family.

B. A companion in labor. He was a _____, not just a spectator but one who participated in the work of the Gospel.

C. A fellowsoldier. He was on the battlefield with the apostle.

D. Their messenger. An _____ sent on a commission. Paul regarded Epaphroditus as a _____ sent by the Philippians to meet his needs. Paul appreciated not only the gift that was sent, but also the way it was sent, in the hands of a delightful likeminded believer.

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

Epaphroditus was not depressed because he was sick, away from home, and among strangers. What burdened him was his concern for family and friends who would worry about him. He did not want others to be _____.

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

E. A near death experience.

Note: The fevers that were prevalent in Rome, due to malaria borne by mosquitoes from near-by swamps ravaged the populace; and would be hazardous to visitors with little or no immunity.

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

While we do not know what his sickness was the context seems to indicate his condition was due to over _____ rather than persecution or hazards of the journey.

Epaphroditus is sent with a high recommendation for the apostle to be received with joy and respect and honor for his work in the ministry.

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

Three men exemplifying the mind of Christ.

1. Paul a man ready to sacrifice anything.
2. Timothy a man ready to go anywhere.
3. Epaphroditus a man ready to help anyone.