

Quarter One: Uniting Heaven & Earth: Christ in Philippians & Colossians

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Lesson 5—Shining as Lights in the Night

Thursday: “Hold Such Men in Esteem”

January 29, 2026

- **Last Week:** “Unity through Humility”
 - Phil 2:1 – 8
 - Biblical basis for unity in the church: humility of Christ in contrast to Satan
 - Our call as believers to humility
- **This Week:** “Shining as Lights in the Night”
 - Phil 2:12 – 30
 - Jesus as the Light of the world: Christians to receive & impart that Light (through our surrender to God)

Memory Text: “Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world” (Phil 2:14, 15, NKJV).

The week in brief:

- 1. **Sunday:** We Work Out What God Works In (SQ)
 - Phil 2:12, 13 – role of faith & works in the life of the believer & how the grace of God and faith is the source of all (works is never on our own; it’s all Jesus)
- 2. **Monday:** Light in a Dark World (Rise)
 - Phil 2:14 – 16 – the role of the Christian – shine with the purity of Jesus & righteousness of Christ in a morally dark world. Importance of what we put into our minds.
- 3. **Tuesday:** A Living Sacrifice (Ryan)
 - Phil 2:17, 18 – Importance of spending ourselves, giving ourselves in a living sacrifice to spread this gospel message
- 4. **Wednesday:** Proven Character (John L)
 - Phil 2:19 – 24 – Paul’s commendation & encouragement about Timothy
- 5. **Thursday:** “Hold Such Men in Esteem” (Jill)
 - Phil 2:25 – 30 – Paul’s commendation & encouragement of Epaphroditus

Thursday: “Hold Such Men in Esteem”

Phil 2:25 – 30; Phil 1:27; Phil 4:18; Acts 24:23; 2 Tim 4:21; Phil 2:29; Phil 2:6 – 11; Luke 22:25 – 27; Luke 7:2; Luke 14:8; 1 Pet 2:4, 6

- Paul’s commendation & encouragement of Epaphroditus
 - 8 takeaways from Epaphroditus & how we should relate in the body of Christ

- Phil 2:25 – “Yet I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my **brother**, fellow **worker**, and fellow **soldier**, but your **messenger** and the one who **ministered** to my need;”
 - Epaphroditus = only mentioned in Philippians
 - Gentile convert to the faith
 - Name refers to the pagan cult of Aphrodite (focused on love, beauty, fertility & sacred prostitution)
 - Indicates he was converted from a pagan background
 - NLT: “Meanwhile, I thought I should send Epaphroditus back to you. He is a true brother, co-worker, and fellow soldier. And he was your messenger to help me in my need.”
 - He left the church at Philippi’s money for Paul to Paul
 - Became sick while with Paul
 - Now, sent back with Philippian epistle from Paul for the church
 - 5 distinct titles, commendations of character, bestowed on Epaphroditus:
 - **Brother** = within the family of the redeemed
 - **Takeaway #1:** Our past does not define our standing in the body of Christ
 - Gal 3:28 – “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”
 - 1 John 1:7 – “But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have **fellowship** with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”
 - Fellowship = koinonia
 - **Fellow worker** = active in ministry – labored shoulder-to-shoulder with apostle
 - **Takeaway #2:** Status does not belong in the body of Christ
 - 1 Cor 12 – gifts in the body of Christ
 - Mutual care – no part is superior to another; no division, but equal concern to others
 - No superiority – the eye can’t say to the hand “I don’t need you!”
 - Shared suffering & joy – one member suffers or rejoices – all suffer & rejoice together
 - Perhaps worked alongside Paul in Philippi before
 - **Fellow soldier** = endured under hardship
 - **Takeaway #3:** Endurance is exemplified in the body of Christ
 - Vs 30 – Epaphroditus willing to risk his life to spread the gospel
 - “Because for the work of Christ he came close to death...”
 - 2 Tim 2:3 – “You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.”
 - Paul’s final epistle to his son in the faith

- **Your messenger** = brought assistance / money from the Philippian church to Paul during his imprisonment
 - Phil 4:15 - 18 – “Indeed I have all and abound, I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.”
 - Food, clothing, bedding or necessities that Roman prisoners needed were purchased at their own expense or brought by family or friends
 - The church of Philippi provided more of Paul’s needs than any other church (EGW, AA)
 - **Takeaway #4:** Care for others is demonstrated in the body of Christ
 - One who **ministered** = shows humble, hands-on care
 - Phil 2 – showcases the humility of Christ’s followers
 - **Takeaway #5:** Humility is revealed in the body of Christ
- Phil 2:26 – “since he was longing for you all, and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick.”
 - **Takeaway #6:** Love is shown in the body of Christ
 - Epaphroditus longed for his Philippian brothers & sisters
- Phil 2:27, 28 – “For indeed he was sick almost unto death, but God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. (28) Therefore I sent him the more eagerly, that when you see him again you may rejoice, and I may be less sorrowful.”
 - God spared Epaphroditus’ life & miraculously healed him
 - Paul was grateful that he was spared the grief of losing a beloved coworker
 - Paul sent Epaphroditus to the Philippian believers with this epistle (AA, p. 479)
 - Demonstrates Paul’s unselfishness – sending someone assisting him to a church that needed him
 - **Takeaway #7:** Unselfishness is displayed in the body of Christ
- Phil 2:29, 30 – “Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such men in **esteem**, (30) because for the work of Christ he came close to death, not regarding his life, to supply what was lacking in your service toward me.”
 - Paul considered it necessary to send Epaphroditus back to the church at Philippi (Phil 2:25) (maybe because of the problems there)
 - Esteem = Gk, *en'-tee-mos* = “dear, highly regarded, precious” occurs 5 times
 - The Centurion (valued highly his servant) – Luke 7:2
 - Those shown honor for their placement at a feast – Luke 14:8
 - Jesus, the “precious” cornerstone – 1 Pet 2:4, 6
 - Epaphroditus – sacrificial, gospel service - Phil 2:29
 - **Takeaway #8:** Sacrificial service defines the body of Christ

8 Takeaways from Epaphroditus

- #1: Our past does not define our standing in the body of Christ
- #2: Status does not belong in the body of Christ
- #3: Endurance is exemplified in the body of Christ
- #4: Care for others is demonstrated in the body of Christ
- #5: Humility is revealed in the body of Christ
- #6: Love is shown in the body of Christ
- #7: Unselfishness is displayed in the body of Christ
- #8: Sacrificial service defines the body of Christ