

Chapter 6: Servanthood

Philippians 2:19–30

At first glance, Philippians 2:19–30 seems like it has nothing in common with the wondrous Christ hymn from Philippians 2:6–11. The Christ hymn packs dense, soaring theology into one of the most famous passages in the entire Bible, and this passage seems to address nothing more than the itinerary of who will visit the Philippians, and when. These two passages scarcely seem to come from the same author, let alone to belong in the same letter with only a short separation. But in fact, Paul writes this section of the letter, detailing why Epaphroditus has returned to his fellow Philippians, and why Timothy has not yet come, not only to handle logistics, but to continue pressing forward the themes of Christ-like servanthood. In describing Timothy and Epaphroditus, Paul honors two servants with the highest possible praise: that they resemble their Master, the Lord Jesus Christ. These two passages share close thematic commonality, but with an important twist: Paul here describes not what *Jesus* would do, but what ordinary, human, *servants* of Jesus would do.

Timothy: Christ-Like Servant (Phil. 2:19–22)

After the soaring Christ-hymn (Phil. 2:6–11) and Paul’s magnificent treatise on God’s grace toward us in sanctification (Phil. 2:12–18), Paul transitions into this new section by telling the Philippians that he hopes to send Timothy to them “soon, so that I may be cheered by news of you” (Phil. 2:19). Paul is anxious for news about the Philippian church during his absence (cf. Phil. 1:27; 2:12, 28), a theme we will return to a bit later in this chapter. For the moment, let’s focus on what Paul has to say about Timothy himself. What kind of a man is Timothy, and what kind of relationship does Timothy have with the Philippians?

No One Equal-Minded

Paul’s choice to send Timothy to the Philippians soon is not a matter of obligation or convenience. Paul wants Timothy *specifically* to go, for Paul has “no one like him” (Phil. 2:20). More literally, Paul writes, “For I have no one equal-minded (*isopsuchon*).” This word for “equal-minded” is a compound word meaning “equal” (*iso*) and “minded” (*psuchos*). The word for “equal” is the same word that Paul used to describe Christ as “equal [*isa*] with God” (Phil. 2:6), and the word for “minded” is the word from which we get our word “psyche” (as well as psychologist, psychiatrist, etc.). In the letter to the Philippians, this word shows up in a variety of places in various forms, with a notable example in Philippians 1:27: “with one mind [*psuchē*] striving together,” Phil. 1:27). To say that no one is “equal-minded” to someone is a stronger phrase than saying that they are simply “likeminded.” To describe two people as *likeminded* means simply that they agree on some particular matter. *Equal-minded*, on the other hands, describes a deeper degree of similarity in the entirety of a person’s mindedness.

Still, this phrase is a bit tricky to translate: does this mean that no one else is equal-minded to Timothy, or that Timothy is equal-minded to Paul? Who is “equal” to whom in this situation? In context, it seems that Paul means to reflect both senses of “equal-minded.” Paul begins by insisting that no one is equal-minded to Timothy, since no one other than Timothy “will be genuinely concerned for your welfare” (Phil. 2:20)—that is, anxious for the good of the Philippians. By citing Timothy’s exemplary qualifications for this ministry, Paul is saying that there is no one else equal-minded with *Timothy*, rather than saying that Timothy is equal-minded with himself (Paul).¹

The equal-mindedness that no one shares with Timothy is for the sake of the Philippians, just as equality with God was something the eternal Son of God emptied himself of for our sake. In this important respect, Timothy resembles his cruciform master, the Lord Jesus Christ. And, although Paul uses a different word for “mind” in Philippians 2:5 (“Have this *mind* [*phroneite*] in you”), the two words for “mind/mindedness” are very similar in meaning. Paul puts forward Timothy as someone who is fulfilling the charge to have the same mind in himself as Christ did when he emptied himself to take the form of a servant. We will observe how Paul demonstrates Timothy’s equal-mindedness with him (Paul) a bit later.

The Interests of Jesus Christ

The connections between Paul’s description of Timothy and what Paul wrote in the Christ hymn don’t end there. Next, Paul contrasts the way that Timothy seeks the *interests* of the Philippians (Phil. 2:20) after he pleaded with the Philippians not to look after their own *interests*, but the *interests* of others (Phil. 2:4).² Then, where Christ sacrificially took the form of a servant (*doulos*), Paul says that Timothy “has served” (*edouleusen*) Paul as a son with a father (Phil. 2:20).³ Timothy’s attitude resembles Christ’s own attitude. Just as the eternal Son did not cling to his own glory in his equality with God, but emptied himself in order to take the form of a servant in his incarnation for the redemption of humankind, so also Timothy forsakes his own interests in order to become a servant of the Philippians.

In contrast, Paul speaks of another group of people (“they all”) who *do* seek their own interests, rather than those of Jesus (Phil. 2:21). Paul is talking about his own gospel workers; he is not contrasting Timothy with Epaphroditus, whom he sends now (Phil. 2:25). Epaphroditus is a Philippian, sent by the Philippians to minister to Paul’s “need” (Phil. 2:25). When Paul does speak about Epaphroditus, he does so in strong, positive language, so there is no reason to think that he is tearing down Epaphroditus in order to build up Timothy. Rather, it seems better to recognize that Paul’s words do not “apply to absolutely every gospel-worker who was at this time in any way whatever associated with the apostle, but rather to those only who might be available at this particular juncture, and who might for a moment be regarded as qualified for a mission to Philippi.”⁴

“All” those who are available for Paul to send seek only their own interests, even though there are others who would seek the interests of Jesus Christ, were they available to send. In this, perhaps Paul is thinking of those who proclaim Christ out of “envy and rivalry...selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment” (Phil. 1:15, 17). Among the available gospel workers, Paul surveys the landscape and recognizes that anyone else he might send would only seek to build themselves up at the expense of the Philippians and the glory of Jesus Christ. Timothy’s servanthood shines clearly among his available peers.

As a Son with a Father

Finally, Paul appeals to the Philippians' own knowledge of Timothy: "But you know Timothy's proven worth, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel" (Phil. 2:22). Some commentators, wondering why Paul would go to so much trouble to praise Timothy, have suggested that perhaps the Philippians did not think much of Timothy. This verse, however, clearly suggests otherwise. The Philippians "know Timothy's proven worth" so that his value is not in doubt. From the days when Timothy was a part of the original missionary trip to Philippi, up through the second journey Timothy made to Philippi (cf. Acts 20:3–6), Timothy has proven himself as a valuable gospel worker.

Nevertheless, Timothy is something more than a mere servant. Paul uses the analogy of his labor alongside Timothy as one of "a son with a father" (Phil. 2:22), and the choice of this image is intriguing for three reasons. First, Paul could have used any number of analogies to describe his working relationship with Timothy, such as a master-servant relationship, or, using a kind of military imagery that he later employs with Epaphroditus ("fellow soldier"; Phil. 2:25), an officer-soldier relationship. And yet, Paul chose to speak of his relationship with Timothy as one of a son's serving his father.

Second, while Paul is not the biological father of Timothy nor (so far as we know) the adoptive father of Timothy, it is interesting to note that we do know something of Timothy's genealogy from elsewhere in the Bible. In 2 Timothy 1:5, we read of Timothy's grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice, two godly, believing, Jewish women who passed on their "sincere faith" to Timothy. The only thing we know about Timothy's biological father, however, is that he "was a Greek" (Acts 16:1). This language seems to suggest that, compared to Eunice, "a Jewish woman who was a believer," Timothy's "Greek" father was not a believer. But, we do not know the details of the situation. To some degree, it sounds as though Paul is suggesting here in Philippians 2:22 that he has become the *spiritual* father that Timothy never had. Regardless, the imagery of "a son with a father" has a clear purpose of "father and son being intensely interested in the same cause."⁵ In the ancient world where sons were expected to follow in the vocations of their fathers, this meaning of this analogy would have been unmistakable to the Philippians.

Third, in the shadow of the Christ hymn only a few verses earlier in this letter, describing Timothy "as a son with a father" seems intended to reflect something of the indivisible, jointly-undertaken work of the Father and the Son? In accomplishing the work of our salvation through Christ's incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and ascension, the Father sent the Son, and the Son freely emptied himself by taking the form of a servant. The work of redemption, then, is not exclusively the work of the Father or of the Son, but the unified work of the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit, working together to accomplish the singular mission of God. By describing Timothy as his son, Paul reflects the same kind of unified work of God the Father and God the Son in proclaiming the gospel. If so, then Paul is continuing to press his overall point: Timothy is a faithful servant whose life, attitude, and mind (cf. Phil. 2:5) closely resembles the cross-shaped servanthood of Jesus Christ himself.

This point brings us back to the earlier question of Timothy's equal-mindedness. Earlier, we saw Paul say that no one was equal-minded to Timothy, since everyone else available for sending would only seek their own interests, and not those of Jesus Christ (Phil. 2:21). Now, by describing Timothy

as his *son*, Paul is saying that Timothy is equal-minded to him (Paul).⁶ Timothy has served faithfully alongside Paul because Timothy shares equal-mindedly in the fullness of Paul's passion for the glory of Christ in the gospel (Phil. 2:22).

Timothy the Servant

What we see in Timothy, then, is a real-life, flesh-and-blood example of the cruciform life. Even according to the rigorous scrutiny of Paul, Timothy is without reproach in his dedication to serving the welfare of the Philippians for the sake of Christ. He is *not* the Lord Jesus Christ, but his life *looks* like Christ's. If anyone has taken up the mandate to "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5), Timothy has. Paul has the highest levels of confidence in Timothy's ability to carry out the mission of Jesus Christ in the world, because Timothy lives the cruciform life in conformity to the image of Christ Jesus himself.

Epaphroditus: Servant from the Heart (Phil. 2:25–27, 29–30)

But, instead of sending Timothy right away, Paul decides to send first a man named Epaphroditus back to his fellow Philippians, carrying this letter. We know almost nothing about Epaphroditus, but with a name like Epaphroditus, derived from the Greek goddess Aphrodite, this Philippian was likely a Gentile convert to Christianity from paganism; however, as Hendriksen points out, we cannot be certain of this background, since "Jews, too, had adopted the habit of giving their children Greek names."⁷ As with Timothy, Paul also gives Epaphroditus the highest praise in his commendation. Furthermore (also as with Timothy), Paul describes Epaphroditus in a way that resembles and reflects the themes that Christ himself exemplified, as described in the Christ hymn. Beyond what Paul wrote about Timothy, though, Paul also emphasizes not merely the dedication of Epaphroditus, but his heart. In other words, Epaphroditus is a fully devoted *servant* of the Lord Jesus Christ, but he is not *servile*.

Fully Committed Servant

Like Timothy, Epaphroditus is fully committed as a servant to the gospel of Jesus. Paul describes him as much more than some kind of low-level intern, using three terms that suggest his value to Paul: as Paul's "*brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier*" (Phil. 2:25). The first word, "brother," is the standard word used to describe a fellow believer. Epaphroditus holds firmly to the faith of Christianity, although we are not given any information to tell us how long he has been a believer. The next two words, "fellow worker" and "fellow soldier," however, add to the description of Epaphroditus as a "brother" to suggest that he is also a trusted laborer in the kingdom. In Philippians 4:3, Paul again uses the same word for "fellow worker" to describe Euodia and Syntyche, who have "labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my *fellow workers*." This is "Paul's most common term for those who have labored in the gospel in some way."⁸

The third word for "fellow soldier" does not give us additional information about the role of Epaphroditus. As with "gospel worker," this also reflects the labor of Epaphroditus for the kingdom. Still, the word "fellow soldier" gives us a different perspective on the nature of gospel work. Ministry is violent warfare waged against the forces of darkness. Earlier, Paul urged that the Philippians would devote themselves to "with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, and not

frightened in anything by your opponents” (Phil. 1:27–28), and Paul is suggesting that Epaphroditus has fulfilled that role at Paul’s side during his ministry with and for him.⁹ In all, these three words stand as a high commendation for Epaphroditus in the letter that this servant would have carried back to his fellow Philippians.

Obedient to the Point of Death

Next, Paul describes Epaphroditus as “your messenger and minister to my need” (Phil. 2:25). It is only by these words that we have some sense of how Epaphroditus wound up in the company of Paul in the first place. From this, we can infer that the Philippians had sent Epaphroditus for the sake of serving Paul during his time in jail. Likely, it was Epaphroditus who had brought the financial gift with him to the apostle (Phil. 4:14–18), but the Philippians had given Epaphroditus a charge to remain with Paul, serving any needs that the apostle might have while in jail. As Fee notes, “This is the first certain mention of their gift to Paul, although as noted on 1:5, it was most likely included already in the phrase ‘participation with me in the gospel.’”¹⁰

Somewhere on this mission, though, Epaphroditus had fallen “ill, near to death” (Phil. 2:27). Whether Epaphroditus fell ill while on his journey or while he was ministering to Paul is unknown;¹¹ however, we do know that (1) the Philippians were aware of Epaphroditus’s illness (“you heard that he was ill”; Phil. 2:26), and (2) Epaphroditus behaved admirably in spite of his illness (“risking his life to complete what was lacking in your service to me”; Phil. 2:30). Hendriksen paraphrases the apostle Paul’s intentions in defending Epaphroditus’s actions this way: “Let no one say, ‘How shameful for you to have acted contrary to the charge which we gave you, and to have deserted Paul at the very time when that honored prisoner, who is awaiting a life-or-death verdict, needs you most.’”¹² Paul wants to make sure that Epaphroditus receives a hero’s welcome when he returns to Philippians, not a deserter’s censure.

Beyond relating the bare facts of what happened, Paul includes this information about Epaphroditus’s poor health for another important reason: to link Epaphroditus’s obedient servanthood to the point of death and his forthcoming exaltation in the eyes of the Philippians with the service and exaltation of Jesus Christ himself. Frank Thielman writes:

Similarly, Epaphroditus became a servant to Paul in his need (2:25), and just as Christ Jesus “became obedient to death—even death on a cross” (2:8), so Epaphroditus came near death in faithful service to his commission (2:27, 30). Just as God, in response to Christ’s obedience, exalted Christ to the highest place, so Epaphroditus should be welcomed back to Philippi with joy and honor (2:29).¹³

Timothy and Epaphroditus stand together as remarkable examples of what it looks like in real life to suffer in the footsteps, and for the sake, of Christ.

Not Servile

And yet, Epaphroditus does not do all this out of servile fear, but out of affection for his fellow Philippians. Paul explains that he does not send Epaphroditus back just to carry this letter, but partially as a kindness to Epaphroditus, “for he has been longing for you all and has been distressed because you heard he was ill” (Phil. 2:26). Even if he acts within the constraints of a bondservant, he

does so freely out of a heart overflowing with desire to serve Paul as the representative of the Philippians, for the sake of Christ. It is love for fellow believers and for Christ that compels him, not the desire to avoid punishment. Furthermore, Paul also recognizes that this love is mutual, since he adds that he sends Epaphroditus back “that you [Philippians] may rejoice at seeing him again” (Phil. 2:28).

As Christ-followers, we are called to a life of servanthood; however, we are called to serve Christ out of love, not servile fear. God does not only seek our *deeds*, but our *desires*. This suffering will involve the anguish we experience on behalf of those whose outcomes are uncertain, or those who wander from the faith. When we pour our lives out as a drink offering for such people (cf. Phil. 2:17), we experience acute pain to see them suffer or fall away. This anguished, suffering *love* is what Jesus Christ endured on the cross, and the nature of Christian ministry as we seek to share in his sufferings (cf. Phil. 3:10).

Paul: Gospel-Driven Servant (Phil. 2:23–24, 28–30)

We should not forget, though, that there is a third person in this narrative: Paul. Timothy and Epaphroditus are marvelous examples of those who have followed the example of Christ himself in their ministries, but they do so as fellow workers *with* Paul. Furthermore, this entire passage hinges on which servant Paul chooses to send to Philippi, and at what time. These servants are worthy of our study in themselves, but we should also learn something from Paul’s example of managing servants well for the sake of Christ’s kingdom.

Anxious for the Philippians

To begin, we should recognize that Paul’s calculations are not based on some profit-and-loss spreadsheet, or on any social capital he hopes to accrue. Paul’s motivation, like that of both Timothy and Epaphroditus, is *love*. Accordingly, he mentions his deep anxiety for the Philippian church twice in this passage. First, in Philippians 2:19, he writes, “I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I too may be cheered by news of you.” Paul does not say this because he is looking forward to being cheered by hearing the latest morsels of gossip from Philippi, but because he is anxious for the spiritual progress of the Philippians. He has made no secret of his anxiety regarding their growth, as he has already appealed twice to their need to press on toward spiritual maturity even in spite of his absence from them (Phil. 1:27, 2:12).¹⁴ In fact, he mentioned specifically in Philippians 1:27 his desire that, “whether I come and see you or am absent, I may *hear* of you that you are standing firm in one spirit...” In Philippians 2:19, he seems to be picking up that same line of thought, revealing his great desire to hear good news of the growth of the church at Philippi.

Then, in in Philippians 2:28, he writes, “I am the more eager to send him [Epaphroditus], therefore, that you may rejoice at seeing him again, and that I may be less anxious.” Here, the reason for Paul’s anxiety is different, but related. Paul is anxious to send Epaphroditus to the Philippians because he also knows of *their* loving anxiety for Epaphroditus, not knowing whether their brother had recovered from his illness or had died. While we are able to send a digital message across the world in the blink of an eye, Paul, Epaphroditus, and the Philippians could not.¹⁵ Paul is anxious because of the anxiety of the Philippians. Sending Epaphroditus back to them in good health would not only give the Philippians reason to rejoice, but would also alleviate Paul’s anxiety in this area

(Phil. 2:28). Then, after Epaphroditus returns, Paul not only hopes to send Timothy (Phil. 2:23), but Paul hopes that he can go to them personally: “and I trust in the Lord that shortly I myself will come also” (Phil. 2:24). He will continue to be anxious for the Philippians until he can see their progress personally.

In these cases, we should note how the anxiety of Paul is tied to the welfare of the Philippians. Paul yearns to hear about their growth and to relieve their worries about Epaphroditus. Paul, therefore, stewards the gospel workers under his charge and assigned to his care not for his personal gain, but for the good of the Philippians. Even logistics are an opportunity demonstrate love.

Affectionate for the Fellow Workers

Additionally, Paul is affectionate and concerned for his fellow workers. They are not his minions to boss around, doing his bidding according to his private concerns. Rather, he cherishes his fellow workers and bestows upon them the utmost honor in recognition of their service to him and for the sake of Christ. In the case of Timothy, Paul describes his relationship with this young minister as though he were Paul’s own son. As mentioned earlier, there is a sense in which Paul’s bestowal of the name of son on Timothy seems to follow the pattern of the relationship between God the Father and God the Son, especially in the exaltation of Timothy in honor because of his service to Paul. But at a much more basic level, this description of their relationship clearly reveals Paul’s love, admiration, and affection for Timothy.

Then, with Epaphroditus, Paul expresses his affection even more clearly in two ways. First, Paul seems preoccupied with ensuring that the Philippians do not misunderstand the reasons that Epaphroditus is returning to them, since they had sent him with a clear mandate to “minister” to Paul’s needs (Phil. 2:25).¹⁶ When the Philippians saw Epaphroditus returning to them, contrary to their charge to remain with Paul for ministering to his needs, the minds of the Philippians would likely rush to the worst possible explanations. Had Epaphroditus abandoned Paul, as John Mark had done (Acts 13:13, 15:38)?¹⁷ Or, did Epaphroditus do something that caused Paul to expel him from ministry, sending him back in shame to Philippi? Because Paul cannot pick up the phone to clarify the situation, Paul writes down exactly why he “thought it necessary” (Phil. 2:25) to send Epaphroditus back. Paul did not want the Philippians merely to *accept* Epaphroditus, but to *honor* him.

Second, Paul gives us a glimpse of his personal turmoil regarding the severe illness that Epaphroditus suffered. Describing the way God had healed Epaphroditus, Paul writes, “God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow” (Phil. 2:27). Paul reveals here that he is not the emotionless machine we might think after reading him speak of his ability to rejoice in the midst of suffering. Rather, Paul reveals that he deeply feels the sorrow that surrounds him, and that Epaphroditus’s death would have been one more wound on top of everything else he has endured. The *joy* Paul describes does not remove sorrow altogether, but allows believers to rejoice in spite of our sorrows.¹⁸

Through the clues scattered through this passage, Paul gives us insight into the nature of his relationships with his fellow gospel workers. Paul is not an exacting taskmaster, but he holds those with whom he serves Christ in the highest regard. By grace, may we share such a high opinion of the believers God has surrounded us with in life, especially to the degree that we are entrusted with their direction in life and ministry!

Strategic for the Gospel

We must notice one more key aspect of Paul's involvement in this situation: Paul's strategic planning. While Paul's sorrows run deep, Paul does not allow his emotions to rule the day. So, despite the fact that the Philippians' love for Timothy might prompt Paul to send Timothy immediately, Paul instead waits to send Timothy until a more appropriate time "soon" to follow (Phil. 2:19, 23). Paul explains the reasoning for his timing this way: "I hope therefore to send him just as soon as I see how it will go with me" (Phil. 2:23). Paul is saying that he wants to *wait* to send Timothy until he *sees* what the outcome of his trial will be, so that Timothy can come not only to minister to the Philippians, but to bring news about Paul's final disposition.¹⁹ In the meantime, he doesn't want to put off the Philippians any longer, so he finds it "necessary" (Phil. 2:25) to send them Epaphroditus now.

Cruciform Servanthood

On the surface, this section of the letter to the Philippians seems fairly mundane. We might even wonder why these travel logistics are worthy of preservation and study as holy Scripture. And yet, Paul writes these details to give us concrete illustrations of what Christ-like, cruciform servanthood looks like in ministry. Whether coming, going, or staying, these three servants of Jesus Christ do everything out of an overwhelming desire to see Christ glorified in their midst. Their example of service invites us to follow them in doing the same.

How, then, do we become such humble, servant-hearted people who seek the interests of others and of Jesus Christ out of love and affection? How do we have the mind in us that was also in Christ Jesus (Phil. 2:5)? The answer that Paul gives in this letter is that we gain both the ability to work and the motivation to work from God himself, who graciously works in us as we work out our own salvation with fear and trembling before him (Phil. 2:12–13). It is the gospel that both conforms our actions to the image of Christ and provides us with the joy-filled will to follow our Master in cruciform servanthood.

How might someone describe the nature of *your* service for the sake of Christ? Where God asks you to step out in faith, believe the gospel in obedience. Where you fall short, return to the gospel through repentance to find forgiveness. The same God who graciously conformed Timothy, Epaphroditus, and Paul to the image of Christ still lives and reigns to accomplish the same work in you, for the sake of Christ and for the glory of God the Father.

Discussion Questions

1. Do ministry details and logistics matter to God? Do you know people who are faithful in detailed, logistical work, but do not get much credit for their service in the gospel, since much of what they do is behind the scenes? How can you honor and encourage such people in their important work?
2. In your life, whose interests do you seek? What are Christ's interests in your family? in your neighborhood? in your work? in your church? What is one area where you need to repent from seeking your own interest, rather than the interests of Christ? What do you need to change in your life in order to put Christ's interests first?

3. How do desires and deeds interact? That is, how do the desires of your heart influence the deeds of your hands? Or, from the other perspective, how does serving sometimes soften your heart toward people you struggle to love? How might you cultivate both godly desires and also godly deeds? Finally, do your deeds flow from servile fear or from love?

4. Whose ministry are you in a position to encourage and build up? In what ways do you seek to do that? If you are young and inexperienced, who might you work alongside someone with equal-mindedness, as a son to a father? Or, if you are old and mature, how might you mentor a younger kingdom worker?

Notes

1. Hendriksen, *Philippians*, 134, footnote 111.

2. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 108. The word “interests” does not appear literally in the Greek, but is implied by the plural neuter form: “the *interests* of yourself” (*ta heautōn*) vs. “the *interests* of others (*ta heterōn*) in Philippians 2:4. Then, Paul speaks of Timothy’s care for “the *interests* concerning you” (*ta peri humōn*; 2:20).

3. “Paul is troubled because the Philippians seem too much concerned with their own interests (*ta heautōn*) and too little with the interests of others (*ta heterōn*, 2:4). He combats this problem, (1) with the Christ-hymn (2:6–11), which stresses the servant-role (*doulos*) of Christ, (2) with the example of his own life as a libation poured out for the sake of others (2:18), and (3) with the model of Timothy, who set himself to serve (*edouleusen*, 2:22) and who was more genuinely concerned with the interests of the Philippians (*ta peri humōn*, 2:20) than he was with his own interests.” (Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 108.)

4. Hendriksen, *Philippians*, 135.

5. Hendriksen, *Philippians*, 136.

6. Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, 265–66; Silva, *Philippians*, 140; and Thielman, *Philippians*, 152.

7. Hendriksen, *Philippians*, 138–39, footnote 116.

8. Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, 275.

9. O’Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, 331.

10. Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, 276.

11. O’Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, 334–35.

12. Hendriksen, *Philippians*, 140.

13. Thielman, *Philippians*, 155.

14. Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, 261.

15. “Only those who have not had such experiences, when one has knowledge both of a sickness and its severity and where communication is not readily available, would ever read ulterior motives into this.” (Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, 277.)

16. “One can hardly avoid the impression that Paul needed to prevent a possible misunderstanding when the Philippians saw, not Timothy (whom they had expected?), but Epaphroditus, safe and sound. Had they grieved in vain over his health? Had he been unable to fulfill his mission? Had the whole project been a fiasco?” (Silva, *Philippians*, 139.)

17. It is worth remembering that Silas accompanied Paul on the original missionary journey to Philippi precisely because “Paul thought best not to take with them one [John Mark] who had withdrawn from them in

Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work” (Acts 15:38, 40). The Philippians, then, may have been aware of the way John Mark had abandoned Paul, and might have been sensitive to worrying that Epaphroditus had done the same.

18. “Joy does not mean the absence of sorrow, but the capacity to rejoice in the midst of it.” (Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, 280.)

19. Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, 269–70.