



What does it look like to follow Jesus as a living sacrifice? Pastor leads his family in today's "Hopewell @Home" passage. Philippians 2:25–30 prepares us for the evening sermon on the coming Lord's Day. In these six verses of Sacred Scripture, we learn that Epaphroditus was an example of following the apostle's instruction to imitate Christ from the first part of the chapter in his great effort, intense emotion, and willing sacrifice.

Friday, May 14, 2021 • Read Philippians 2:25–30

Questions from the Scripture text: What did the apostle consider “necessary” (v25)? What five things does he call him? For what had Epaphroditus been longing (v26)? Why was he distressed? How sick had he been (v27)? Upon whom does the apostle say God had mercy? Otherwise, what would the apostle have had? In what manner did the apostle send the recovered minister (v28)? What effect did he hope this would have upon the Philippians? And what effect would the success of this hope have upon the apostle? “In Whom” does Paul say to receive him (v29)? With how much gladness? Doing what to Epaphroditus and others like him? For what purpose had Epaphroditus come close to what outcome (v30)? What did he not regard as being that important? In order to do what specific ministry/service?

Christian life and ministry is hard work that comes from intense feeling at significant risk.

Christian life and ministry is hard work. We've already seen that we are called to *work out* salvation because of God *works in* us (cf. vv12–13), and that Paul uses significant “effort” words like “running” and “laboring” to describe his own ministry (cf. v16). Now he describes Epaphroditus as a “fellow worker” and a “fellow soldier.” The worker puts forth effort to accomplish something despite obstacles and difficulty. The soldier puts forth effort to accomplish something despite opposition and danger.

Christian life and ministry depends upon grace to be sure (v13), but it is a life of putting forth effort in the face of obstacles, difficulty, opposition, and danger. The Bible knows nothing of an effortless Christianity or painless Christianity, though we see on every side today false teaching that advances such counterfeits. Victory without a cross is the lie that the devil offered Christ in the temptation; and he has an army of preachers through whom he continues to offer it to Christians.

Christian life and ministry involves intense feeling. New life in Christ, by His Spirit, involves the whole man. Because we tend to compartmentalize things, and because we live in under-working and over-emotional days, we can often make the opposite error and neglect or be suspicious of Christian emotion.

But truly Christian emotion is all over this passage. We see Epaphroditus's longing for the Philippians (v26), his home church who had sent him in their place to minister to Paul (v25, 30). We see the implied concern of the members back home at the report of Epaphroditus's illness. We see Epaphroditus's reciprocal distress over their distress. We see the apostle anticipating how great his sorrow would have been if the Lord had taken the dear brother (v27). We see the eagerness of the apostle to relieve both Epaphroditus and the dear ones back in Philippi (v28). We see the anticipated rejoicing at the surprise reunion, when Epaphroditus arrived with the letter. We see the comfort that this anticipation brought the apostle. We even see a *command unto gladness* in v29!

That's a great deal of relational emotion in one little paragraph of Scripture. Believers are not to be unfeeling. The comfort and steadiness that we have in Christ enables us to refuse wrong feelings and to embrace intensely proper feelings. There is not only significant effort in a true Christian life, but also significant emotion.

Christian life and ministry comes at significant risk. The apostle tells them that Epaphroditus almost died in v27. But in v30, he adds the info that he willingly came close to death in order to do the work of Christ at the risk of his life. Of course, we cannot keep our lives, and as soon as our usefulness is up, we shall leave this world. This attitude of Epaphroditus is essentially the same as that of Timothy in vv20–21, and it should be ours as well.

The apostle even implies that this is what the Philippians would have (ought to have?) done, if they could, when he says, “to supply what was lacking in your service” (v30). Christ has done everything for us, and we cannot lose what He has worked for. So, we should be willing to “lose” anything else, in order to work for Him. Offer your bodies as living sacrifices!

What effort are you putting into your walk with Christ? Into serving others in your congregation of Christ's church? What circumstances in your church have been the occasion of biblically Christian emotions for you? What expense or risk have you put forth to serve Christ in His church?

Suggested songs: ARP197 “Christian Unity” or TPH405 “I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord”

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording referenced above)

Philippians 2 verses 25 to 30, these are God's words.

Yet I considered it necessary to send to you a pathitis my brother fellow worker and fellow soldier. About your messenger and the one who ministered to my need. Since he was longing for you all and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. From indeed he was sick almost unto death, but God had mercy on him.

And not only on him but on me also left. I should have soul upon Sarah. Therefore. I sent him the more eagerly. That when you see him again, you may rejoice and I may be less sorrowful. Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness. And holds such men in a steam 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. So far the reading of God's inspired and inherent word. This passage Paul continues giving examples of what it looks like to live as a Christian and minister as a Christian who is imitating Christ and has the mind in them that is in Christ Jesus often you have these kinds of plans kind of things at the end of a letter but here in Philippians chapter 2 or in the middle of the letter and he's just in the first half of this chapter given the command to have the mind in them that is in Christ Jesus and then the command to work out their own salvation.

Having this character of Christ formed and then he's given himself as an example, he's given Timothy as an example talking about his plans

concerning Timothy and now he gives a pafforditis as an example talking about his plans and the way things have gone with a path for ditus and in this portion these six verses.

He points out through his comments on a path for ditus that Christian life and ministry is hard work. That Christian life and ministry are proper Christian life and ministry is hard work proper Christian life and ministry involves intense feeling and proper Christian life and ministry comes at significant risk.

So first of all Christian life and ministry is hard work when talking about then he commanded them to work out that salvation that God is working in them work out salvation with fear and trembling because God is working in you hard work talking about himself, he used words like running and laboring and pouring out as a drink offering and sacrifice again really hard work kind of words he described him.

At these ministry as an apprenticeship under Paul who was the father and the father-son apprenticeship and the master worker and now he uses significant word work words to describe a patriotism he says aphroditus is my fellow worker not only my fellow worker who are overcomes obstacles when you're have to work you're overcoming obstacles, but also my fellow soldier which is work that over.

Comes opposition felt Christian life in ministry proper Christian life in ministry depends or not depends works requires. Significant effort to depends upon the grace of Christ, but it puts forth significant effort both in the face of obstacles and difficulty the papadus has a fellow worker and in the face of opposition and danger in Paffronitis is fellow soldier the Bible knows nothing of an effortless.

Christianity or a painless Christianity. That we see on every side today false teaching that suggests that if you were going to be a good Christian then you must not put forth effort and that if you were a Christian you would not experience pain. These ideas are completely ignorant and opposite of the apostle calling a patronitis his fellow worker and fellow soldier.

Christian life and ministry demands work and experiences pain. That is the way it is our Lord did that in his earthly life and ministry and were being commanded in this chapter especially to have our minds conformed to Christ so that our lives will be conformed to Christ. The kingdom without a cross was one of the great lies that the devil offered Christ in his temptation and the devil has an army of preachers in the church offering kingdom without a cross.

Our Christ our Redeemer our Lord offers no such thing. He comes and he encourages us saying through many tribulate tribulations. You must enter the kingdom of God. So proper Christian life and ministry is hard work. The second place proper. Christian life and ministry involves intense feeling. Oh, there there are miss appropriated feelings and feelings about the wrong thing in the wrong way to the wrong intensity.

Just because there are many and intense feelings involved in something does not mean that they are wrong. And there is as much intense feeling in these six verses as much of a concentration of intense feeling in these six verses as you might find in a 19th century romance novel.

Epaphroditus is distressed and longing verse 26, he is longing for you all. He was distressed. Why? Because you heard that he was sick and he knew that you would be distressed. 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.

Therefore, I sent him the more eagerly that when you see him again you may rejoice and I may be less sorrowful because I respond with my feelings to how your responding with your feelings, so when you rejoice then my sorrow will be diminished even more. Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness.

And hold such men in his team. So longing and distress over and distress over there distress and Paul having not just sorrel but so upon sorrow and being relieved from the soil upon sorrow and having his level of sorrow diminished looking forward to the retracing of the Philippians which diminish his sorrow even more and now commanding them for all of these reasons commanding them to gladness in verse 29.

And. Proper Christian life in ministry is not a feeling less or feelings diminished thing. It employs the feelings with which God has created us about the right things at the right times to the right intensity and often that correct intensity is great. So Christian life and ministry in the first place involves hard work proper Christian life administry and second place involves intense feeling.

Third place and this is connected to the other two proper Christian life administration comes at significant risk. We've already seen Paul talking in terms of. Sacrifice. About himself the drink offering being poured out and their sacrifice in verse 17. He's talked about Timothy giving up his own concerns and order instead to be concerned for the things of Christ.

Jesus. There's 20 and 21. And now he talks about the sacrifice of his very life that aphroditus was willing to make because for the work of Christ he came close to death not regarding his life. He's willing to sacrifice concern for his health in order to keep serving at the side of the apostle on behalf of the Philippians who couldn't be with the apostles to serve. In other words, the Packarditis had never gone to Christian therapy and been told how much he needs to balance his life so that he can operate in you know, this Kumbaya Buddhist state of balance.

No Christian living is, By the mercies of God offering your bodies as living sacrifices willing to endure imbalance in order to serve God as well as possible. Now there is wisdom in attending upon those forms of recreation true recreation that God has given us and I don't mean video games and marvel films and bowling and partying.

I mean sleeping at night and getting exercise and, Decorate worship and family worship and keeping an entire lord's day in a way that understands that your soul is more important than your body and in this in addition to using those other means of physical rest that God has given us for every day the and especially the six days that on the seventh day, we might have an entire day of that spiritual rest that we can only grab and snatches in the secret worship and the family worship on the other six days that is consecrated as wholly unto God.

Those things are good. But it is not wrong. In fact, it is commended by the apostle here that he was not regarding his life and was serving in a way that came close to death. But notice it's not our duty to sacrifice others. We air when we take teaching like this and we use it to beat others over the head for not being vigorous enough in their service.

Paul noticed what Aphroditus was rightly willing to do and he said you stop him sending you back to Philippi. Okay, so we see when it's harming others because a path for diet is self-sacrifice here was not sinless. And yet it is commended that he was willing to sacrifice himself risking his life.

The apostle even applies implies that this is what the Philippians would have done if they could have and implies a commendation for that at the end when he says to supply what was lacking in your service towards me. Christ is done everything for us. You cannot lose what he has worked for and so we should be willing to lose much else sacrifice our finances sacrifice our time sacrifice our effort.

Yes, there is this desire to be as good of a servant as possible. So you don't neglect your health per se but this supposed ideal of achieving balance and me time and whatever else no Lord time. And if the Lord time isn't sure highest definition of me time then you are using the idea of me timing correctly.

So as he wraps up this chapter in making application of what he has been instructing us in and having the mind of Christ in us being willing to sacrifice ourselves as Christ sacrificed himself and being holy and passionately devoted to serving the Lord. He has given him as commands concerning them.

He's given himself as an example, he's gonna Timothy is an example and here he gives a path to this as an example of how proper Christian life and ministry is hard work. Involves intense feeling and comes at significant risk is willing to sacrifice much in order to know and to serve Christ and will continue to see some of those themes especially that last one through the rest of the book.

Let's pray. Our Father we pray that you would make us willing to sacrifice that you would stir up our hearts so that we would live intensely towards you not only with our minds and our actions but also with our affections. Who pray Lord that you would help us to put forth effort and not give in to the laziness that is inherent to our remaining sin and our remaining fleshliness and especially not to use clever ideas to excuse such laziness.

Lord help us we pray and we know that the greatest part of this help is to be given the mind of Christ and so we pray that your spirit would keep working into us. That which pleases you both the willing and the working. So that by his working in us we would be able to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling.

Lord every time we come before your word, we realize that you are more glorious than we have ever been able to understand. And we realize that we have fallen further short than we have ever been able to understand. And so we pray that you would set your glory before us in Christ and that you would glorify yourself in.

Him by glorifying. Him in us by working in us by your spirit. Which we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.