



A MODEL SACRIFICIAL SERVANT
EPAPHRODITUS

“Hold Such Men In Esteem”
(Philippians 2:25-30; 4:18)

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- **Philippians:** Paul's letter of joy
- TRUE JOY & PEACE CAN ONLY BE FOUND IN CHRIST
 - ▶ Regardless of our past (our sins or what others have done to us)
 - ▶ Regardless of our circumstances - (Our physical / material condition or how others are mistreating us) (Phil. 4:10-20)

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- Would Epaphroditus make your list of Biblical heroes?
- He is mentioned in only two passages as a supporting character, not a headliner (Philip 2:25-30; 4:18).
- What makes this man worthy of our consideration? (hold such men in esteem - Phili 2:29)

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- **Epaphroditus is a powerful example of the type of humble, sacrificial service previously addressed:**
 - ▶ Paul — 1:10-26;
 - ▶ The Philippians, — 1:27-2:4, 12-18;
 - ▶ Jesus — 2:5-11;
 - ▶ Timothy — 2:19-24

Philippians 2:25–30 (NKJV)

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; ²⁶ since he was longing for you all, and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. ²⁷ 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. ²⁹ 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.

Philippians 4:14–20 (NKJV)

¹⁴ Nevertheless you have done well that you shared in my distress.

¹⁵ Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. ¹⁶ For even in Thessalonica you sent *aid* once and again for my necessities. ¹⁷ Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. 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. ¹⁹ And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. ²⁰ Now to our God and Father *be* glory forever and ever. Amen.

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ABOUT THE MAN



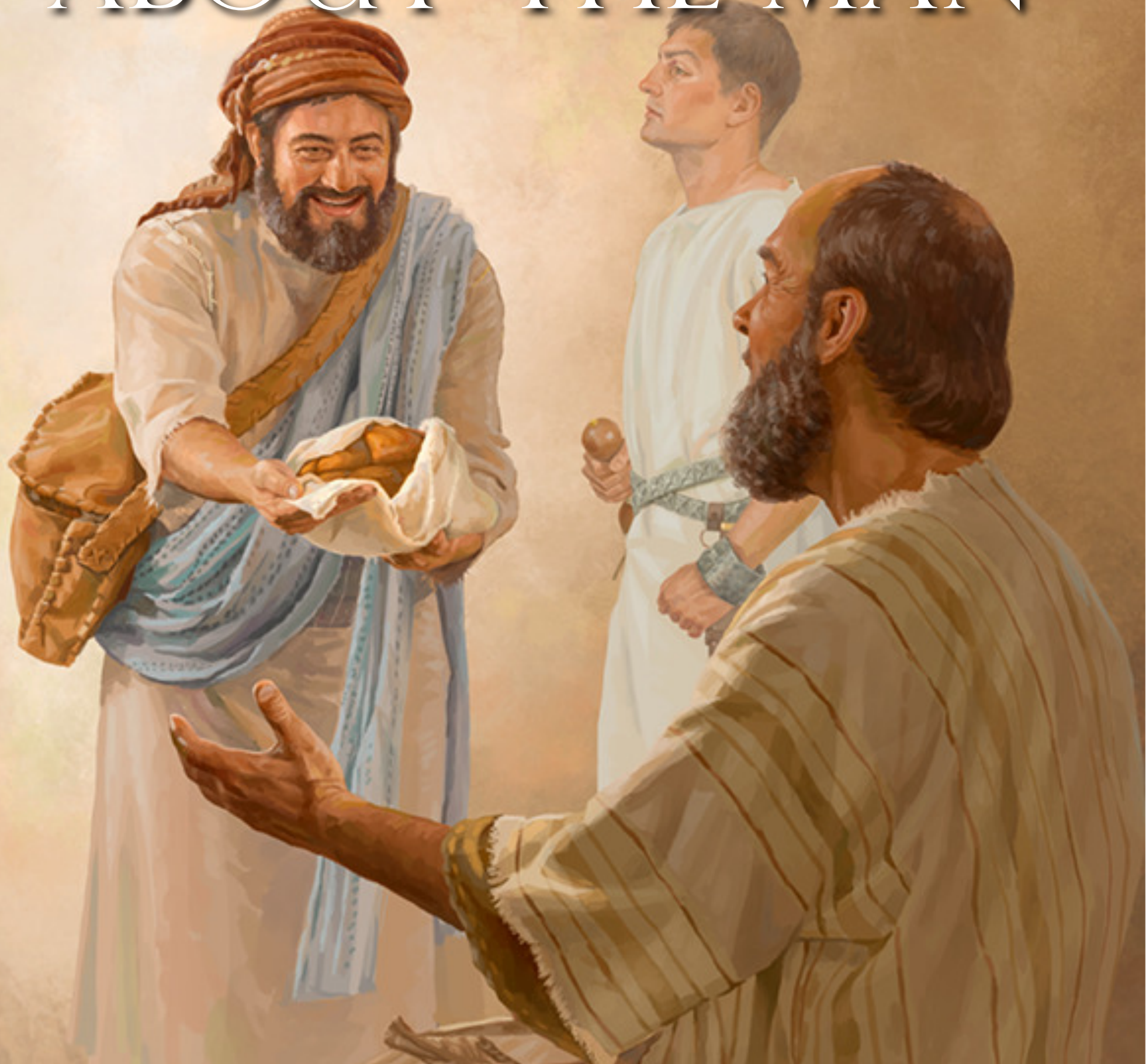
■ **Epaphroditus: (Ἐπαφροδιτον [Epaphroditon]).**

- ▶ Common name, though found only in the passages before us, meaning ‘lovely,’ ‘comely,’ or ‘charming’ - (not the same man as Epaphras — Col. 1:7).
- ▶ More than likely had a pagan background.

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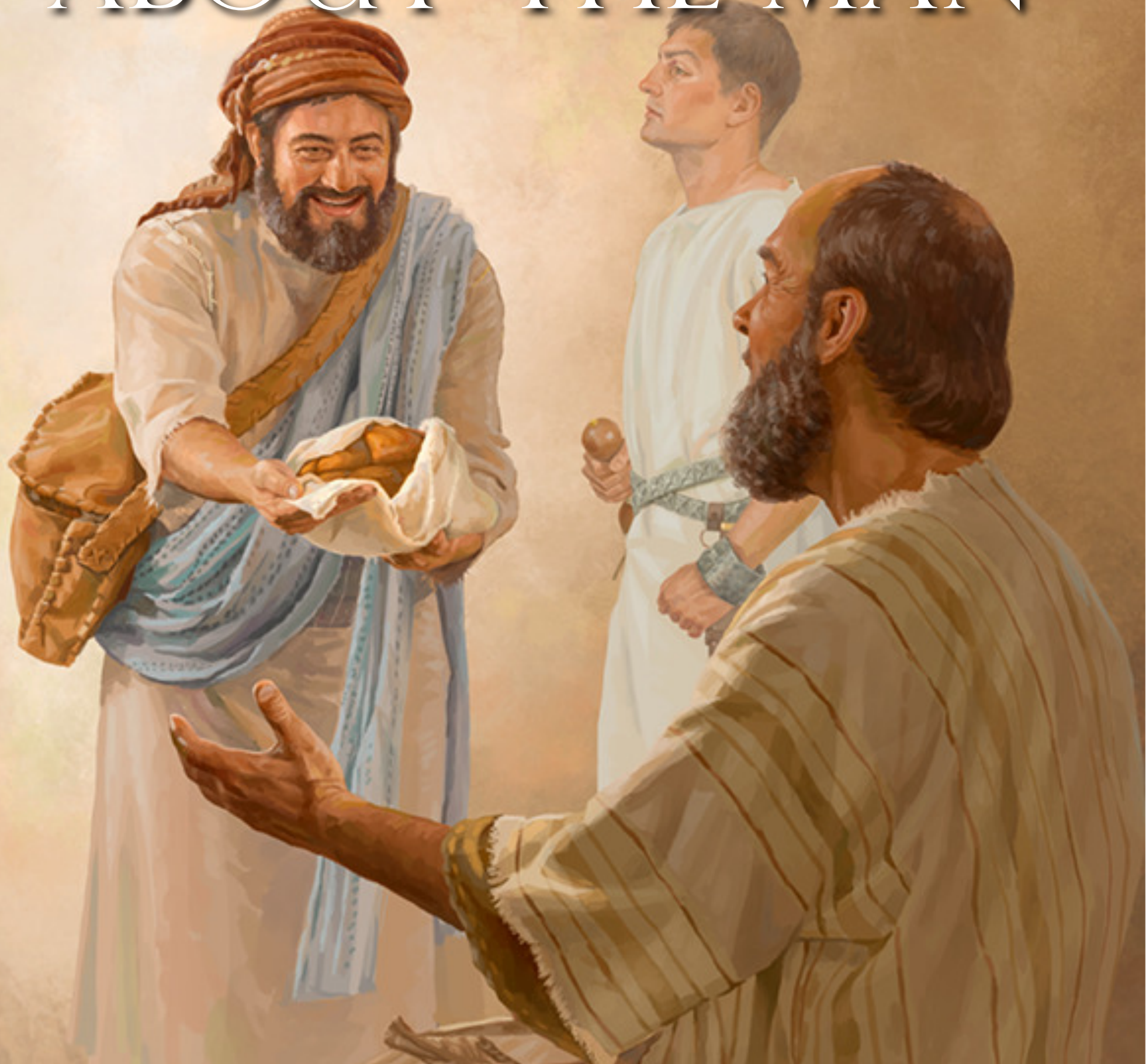


- **Epaphroditus was a faithful member of the Lord's church in Philippi (cf. Act 16; Phili 2:25)**
 - ▶ They repeatedly supported Paul financially (Phil. 4:15)
 - ▶ Among churches Paul held up as examples (2 Cor. 8)
 - ▶ Epaphroditus carried the most recent gift 600 miles (4:10, 18)

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ABOUT THE MAN



- He was trustworthy (4:18)
- He was dearly loved (2:26,27)
- He was a hard worker (2:25,30)
- He was brave & devoted (2:26,30)

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PAUL'S DESCRIPTION

Philippians 2:25 (NKJV)

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;

MY BROTHER

- ▶ Same Father (1 John 3:1)
- ▶ Same birth (Jn 3:3-5; Gal. 3:26-27)
- ▶ Same family (Ep. 2:19; 1 Tim. 3:15)
- ▶ Same name (Acts 11:26)
- ▶ Same inheritance (1 Pet. 1:3-4)
- Indicates a special, personal, and affectionate bond (2:27)

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MY BROTHER

- **When we TRULY SEE one another as OUR brothers / sisters ...**
 - ▶ We will treat one another with kindness, compassion & forgiveness (Eph 4:31-32).
 - ▶ We will love them - putting their needs above our own (Phili 2:3-4).

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MY BROTHER

- **When we TRULY SEE one another as OUR brothers / sisters ...**
 - ▶ We will bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2).

Proverbs 17:17 (NKJV)

17 A friend loves at all times, And a brother is born for adversity.

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MY FELLOW WORKER

- **The word translated by “fellow worker” is “sunergos,”**
 - ▶ Refers to the exponential amount of work we accomplish working together (Eccl 4:9-12)
 - ▶ A term Paul used often (*Euodia and Syntyche* - 4:3; *Titus* - 2 Cor 8:23; *Timothy* - 1 Thes 3:2; *Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke* - Phile 1,24; etc)

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MY FELLOW WORKER

- Epaphroditus was not a pew-warmer, not a mere attender - he was a **DEPENDABLE, HARD** worker (2:12, 30)
- Epaphroditus was a ‘**TEAM player**’ - he worked **WITH** Paul - (cf 2:1-3; 14-16)

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MY FELLOW WORKER

- **Christians are to be workers (Philippians 2:12; 1 Cor. 15:58)**
- **We are to be FELLOW WORKERS!**
 - ▶ Every member is important! (Rom 12:1-16; 1 Cor 12:12-13:13)
 - ▶ Joined and knit together by what every joint supplies ... does its share (Eph 4:12-16)

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- **Christians are to be workers (Phili 2:12; 1 Cor. 15:58)**
- **We are to be FELLOW WORKERS!**
- **What could we accomplish if we gave the same diligence & united effort the NT teaches we should? (Phili 2:1-4; Eph 4:1-16; Rom. 12:1-16; Heb 10:23-25).**

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MY FELLOW SOLDIER

- This description takes us to yet an even higher level. Not only was Epaphroditus a fellow worker, he was a fellow soldier — he worked in the face of enemy fire with Paul. (cf. Neh 4:17,18)
- A term of honor - Epaphroditus was a soldier worthy of honor!

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MY FELLOW SOLDIER

- We are to be workers and soldiers — fighting the good fight, keeping the faith in the face of opposition (Mat 13:20,21; 2 Tim 3:12; 1 Timothy 1:18; 6:12).
- We need to put on the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6:14-18) and step into the battle.

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MY FELLOW SOLDIER

- We **MUST** contend for the faith without compromise (Jude 3,4; 2 Cor 6:14-7:1; Gal 2:5; 5:11,12)
- Sadly, too often we are too busy fighting each other (James 3:13-4:4; Galatians 5:15)
- We need to submit to the Lord's teaching and be **FELLOW SOLDIERS!**

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BUT YOUR MESSENGER

- From the Greek word for “apostle” i.e., “One sent on a mission, appointed to bear a message” — A general term used of:
 - ▶ Barnabas (Acts 14:14);
 - ▶ Timothy & Silas (1 Thess. 2:6);
 - ▶ Titus & brethren (2 Cor. 8:23);
 - ▶ Andronicus & Junia (Rm. 16:7)

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 - ▶ Christ (Heb. 3:1) – One sent with divine authority from the Father (cf. Heb. 1:1,2)
 - ▶ The 12 apostles of Christ - those chosen & sent by Him - Acts 2

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BUT YOUR MESSENGER

- The trust the brethren in Philippi had in Epaphroditus is seen in that they chose him to bear their gift to Paul & minister to him (4:18; cf. Prov 13:17; 26:6)
- We need to be trustworthy — in order to be trusted in big things, we must be trustworthy in small things (Luke 16:10-12; Mat 25:21,23)

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BUT YOUR MESSENGER

- The word translated here is not the commonly used term for minister (diakonos) but “leitourgos”
- Minister - leitourgos (leitourgós, 3011) ... “one who discharged a public office at his own expense,” then, in general, “a public servant, minister. ... representative service is in view;” - Vine's

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BUT YOUR MESSENGER

- Epaphroditus was not merely a servant — He was a sacrificing servant (2:3-5; Mt. 20:26-28)
- Are we sacrificing servants? (1 Chro 21:24; Rom. 12:1-3; Heb. 13:15,16)
- What are we NOT willing to give up to minister to others? (2:30; Luke 9:23-26, 57-62)

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- **"My brother"** - in Christ
- **"Fellow-worker"** - in face of difficulty / spreading the gospel
- **"Fellow-soldier"** - shared in the conflicts against enemies of Christ
- **"Your messenger"** - bore the gift from Philippi to Paul risking his life (600 miles) cf. Php 4:18
- **"Who ministered to my needs"** - he offered himself in service to Paul

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Philippians 2:26–28 (NKJV)

²⁶ since he was longing for you all, and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. ²⁷ 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.

- **Trustworthy** - (The church in Philippi trusted him with their gift - 4:18)
- **Dearly loved** - (by Paul & the church in Philippi — 2:26,27,28)
- **A hard worker** - (almost worked himself to death for the Lord — 2:25,30)
- **Brave & devoted** - (he risked his life for the cause of Christ in service to his brethren — 2:26,30)

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Philippians 2:29-30 (NKJV)

29 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.

- This faithful minister must be received with deep gratitude to the Lord (Phil. 2:29)
- Such sacrificial service for the Lord should be respected, encouraged and supported! (Phil. 2:29)
- He was NOT an elder, or famous preacher / he was a servant, as all of us should be in whatever capacity we are able! (Rom 12:6-8)

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- The church needs more members like Epaphroditus!
- Not only do we need to be sacrificial servants - we need to encourage others as well in the service they give: — our elders, our deacons, Bible class teachers, song leaders, those who LABOR behind the scenes!

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- Real, genuine joy can ONLY be found in real, genuine sacrificial service in God's cause ...
 - ▶ First must obey the gospel (Heb 5:8,9; Mk 16:16)
 - ▶ Growing in faith, diligently serving the Lord (2 Pet 1:5-10)
 - ▶ Eternal joy awaits (Rom 8:18; 1 Cor 15:58)



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What an exemplary lifestyle for every believer to follow.



HYMNS

395

170

489

397

332

457



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Charts by Don McClain

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Luke 14:25–35 (NKJV)

²⁵ Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, ²⁶ “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. ²⁷ And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. ²⁸ For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has *enough* to finish *it*—²⁹ lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see *it* begin to mock him, ³⁰ saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’

Luke 14:25–35 (NKJV)

³¹ Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? ³² Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. ³³ So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple. ³⁴ “Salt *is* good; but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? ³⁵ It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill, *but* men throw it out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”