

**Facing the Worst**  
**Philippians 2:14-30**

<sup>14</sup> Do all things without grumbling or disputing, <sup>15</sup> that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, <sup>16</sup> holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. <sup>17</sup> Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. <sup>18</sup> Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.

<sup>19</sup> I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I too may be cheered by news of you. <sup>20</sup> For I have no one like him, who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. <sup>21</sup> For they all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. <sup>22</sup> But you know Timothy's proven worth, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel. <sup>23</sup> I hope therefore to send him just as soon as I see how it will go with me, <sup>24</sup> and I trust in the Lord that shortly I myself will come also.

<sup>25</sup> I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need, <sup>26</sup> for he has been longing for you all and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill. <sup>27</sup> Indeed he was ill, near to death. But God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. <sup>28</sup> I am the more eager to send him, therefore, that you may rejoice at seeing him again, and that I may be less anxious. <sup>29</sup> So receive him in the Lord with all joy, and honor such men, <sup>30</sup> for he nearly died for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was lacking in your service to me.

—Philippians 2:14-30 (ESV)

v 14 – “Do all things ...”

grumbling – murmuring, grumbling, making comments under your breath

disputing – Gk *dialogismos* – just means to dialogue or discuss; can also mean reasoning within oneself – is often translated “thoughts.” Don’t constantly argue, debate, discuss...even to yourself.

v 15 – “that you may be blameless...”

The point is to live as a witness for Christ

How we handle things—how we go about our business—is an important part of our witness

“children” of God – think “adult children.” This is a sober instruction—it means that our moment-to-moment living should reveal that God is our Father and we approach each situation accordingly

“without blemish” – above reproach, in all matters, not just areas commonly recognized in the world—such as financial dealings

“in the midst of...”

This does not mean that everyone around us is “crooked and twisted”

It does mean that the world is sinful—and it has distorted and corrupted God’s standards

“among whom you shine”

Jesus used this same analogy—Paul is echoing it

This is a word to all who would live for Christ

How is the world supposed to know who God is and how He desires us to live?

Through preaching and teaching, certainly, but demonstration is essential

Godly living speaks for itself—and it points others, not so much to the person, but to God

Himself, whom the person is honoring

Godly living does not mean being “religious” all the time

“holding fast to the word of life”

We are saved by Christ—not by good works

Good works are an indicator and a testimony; they do not justify us

“so that in the day of Christ...”

The day of Christ—it is certain, and we should be certain about it

Paul’s great desire for his life was the glory of Christ and the salvation of others through Christ

“Even if I am to be ...”

Even if *spendomai*: “I am being poured out as a drink offering”

Even if this is something that is being done with me

Upon the sacrifice and service of your faith

A beautiful image that the sacrifice and faith of the Philippians is an offering in itself—

and that’s Paul’s life, perhaps, is an addition drink offering poured upon it

He took joy in knowing that the meaning and purpose of his life might be the eternal life of Christ that had been given to the Philippians

This was real—Paul’s death was a definite possibility at this time; and killed or not, his active ministry had been brought to a seeming standstill

He encouraged the Philippians to rejoice with him—not to mourn

vv 19-20 – “I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy...”

Such was Paul’s love and concern for them—and such was his trust in Timothy

v 21 – for they all seek their own interests

Without naming names, a moment of candor and disappointment from Paul

When the “going got rough,” some abandoned the ministry, including Paul

Matter of concept: Is being a Christian about serving the interests of Christ or about getting things and circumstances that I want?

vv 23 – “I hope therefore...”

Paul had his hopes and uncertainties just as we do—and he was the apostle, Paul

v 24 – “and I trust...”

trust – *peithó*, persuaded

Here Paul seems to have been given an assurance

vv 25-30 “I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus...”

Epaphroditus was sent by the Philippians to take a gift to Paul and to help him (4:18)

He had become ill and survived it

He apparently was struggling... it appears with some longing to return home, although

Paul kindly says that he “has been distressed because you heard that he was ill,”

which was no doubt a part of Epaphroditus’ struggles.

Nevertheless, he seemed unwilling to leave Paul—and perhaps felt that he would be seen as abandoning his post

So Paul, graciously and lovingly, makes it his (Paul’s) decision, and he sends

Epaphroditus back to Philippi

He sends him back with the strongest affirmation and appeals to the church to honor

Epaphroditus for his faithful service. (This letter was no doubt delivered by

Epaphroditus to the Philippians.)

In this, in spite of his own great difficulties, Paul acted in love and concern for others. His overriding concern was for the well-being of Epaphroditus.

Paul did not realize what God was doing with him. The key was that he remained faithful to God, to his calling, and committed to the welfare of others. And over 2000 years later, we are able to be helped by a letter he sent by Epaphroditus to Philippi.