

## Philippians 2:17 – 3:1

We spent the last couple of weeks on the first 16 verses of chapter 2.

We worked through some theology of the incarnate Jesus, the Son of God who made Himself of no reputation and took on flesh in the likeness of man. We learned that, “He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of death, even the death of the cross*” (verse 8) and in His exalted state, every knee will bow and tongue will confess that He is LORD, all to the glory of the Father (vvs 9-11).

We learned that this isn’t brain candy and that all revelation of who Jesus is should evoke a response. The response should be both internal (I know my Savior even more and I love Him for who He is) and external, “how can I minister to you, LORD?”.

Paul didn’t answer the last question with probing thoughts of a calling of the LORD on our lives. No, he kept it simple:

1. Do all things without complaining and disputing,
2. Shine as lights in the crooked and perverse world; Light makes things visible; light is a guide along the road; light can bring warmth and comfort; light can be a warning to those who are teetering or have never seen the TRUTH of Jesus. I might add to be salt as well. Salt preserves; salt enhances taste; salt can heal;
3. Hold fast the word of life, either by clinging to its truths or by holding it up as the Light of Life.

Now verse 17 appears disconnected a bit but if you consider how Paul expects us to behave, I think he’s giving an example of his walk upon a road chosen by Jesus.

(Philippians 2:17 NKJV) Yes, and if I am being poured out *as a drink offering* on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. (18) For the same reason you also be glad and rejoice with me.

A little background to the drink offering:

The first recorded occurrence of a drink offering was that given by Jacob in [Genesis 35:14](#), right after God changed his name to Israel. Drink offerings were also included with burnt and grain offerings in God-ordained sacrifices, including the morning and evening sacrifices of [Exodus 29:40](#). Drink offerings were often wine but could also include oil. As far as the “why” to offer a drink offering, no one knows for sure. An orthodox rabbi said that it comes under “God commands it, just do it”. Christian commentators nearly always comment on the connection to Jesus and Paul.

We can see a drink offering in the death of Jesus. At the last Passover before His death, Jesus said,

[Luke 22:20 ESV](#) ... “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.

And it was poured out when the spear of the Roman soldier pierced His side and blood and water came pouring out.

So why use this metaphor of a sacrificial offering of wine?

Paul used the image of a drink offering twice to describe his own life of service. Speaking to the Philippians, Paul describes the reality of His ministry and knew that he **poured out** his life for this church (and others). He **poured out** his energy, his time and his talents. This is no brag, just fact and most importantly, he knew the source of all these things: **Jesus**. So, Paul poured out his life for Jesus just as Jesus did for him. But just as importantly, he **poured into** those he loved.

Then he says something amazing: "...if this is so, then I am glad, and I rejoice. And, I want you to rejoice with me!" How could he say this??? Well, in the letter to the Romans, he wrote,

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us. [Romans 8:18 NKJV](#)

Perspective, perspective, perspective

As to the second time, we read in [2 Timothy 4](#), sensing the end of his life on earth was near, he wrote:

[2 Timothy 4:6-8 NKJV](#) For **I am already being poured out as a drink offering**, and the time of my departure is at hand. (7) I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. (8) Finally, there is **laid up for me the crown of righteousness**, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

I am not advocating suffering; I am advocating for an attitude that can still bring glory to God if we go through it.

Finally, Paul tells them, in between the lines, that if their lives were to be poured out as a "drink offering", then they too should also be glad and rejoice! In Paul's mind, and in the mind of many of the Apostles, it was considered an honor to sacrifice their lives for the LORD and His Gospel!

[\(Philippians 2:19 NKJV\)](#) **But I trust in the Lord Jesus** to send **Timothy** to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state. (20) For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. (21) For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus. (22) But you know his proven character, that as a son with *his* father he served with me in the gospel. (23) Therefore I hope to send him at once, as soon as I see how it goes with me.

Timothy, whom Paul considered a son, was with Paul in Rome. But not knowing how things will go (a trial, a sentence, an execution), Paul wants to send Timothy to them. He longs for good news from the church. He also trusts Timothy to bring to them the truth about Paul's situation and perhaps to stay and minister to them as well. Paul also makes a side-comment about other workers that are with him, but he sees them as selfish and how Christ is not formed in them. "But, you can trust Timothy!"

[\(Philippians 2:24 NKJV\)](#) **But I trust in the Lord** that I myself shall also come shortly.

Paul's hope was always in the LORD; While some believe that Paul's imprisonment ended with his death, many believe that he was released after two years only to be sent back to a Roman prison again where he was then executed in 67AD (by tradition, not Scripture). There are references made in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy and in Titus, that seem to indicate that Paul traveled after his first release. Historians from that time period and later, testified to Paul's release and re-imprisonment (Chrysostom, Jerome, Eusebius, and even Clement of Rome, who lived in the latter part of the first century A.D.)

You'll have to look him up when you get to heaven to ask him about the details and veracity of these traditions.

(Philippians 2:25 NKJV) 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.

This is the only reference in the NT for this man. He was sent by the Philippian Church with some "practical" support for Paul. But after he got to Rome, he became deathly ill. Word got back to the Philippians and of course, they distraught! Paul is sending him back so that they can rejoice over God's mercy towards man of God.

But I want you to notice something: there's no mention of Epaphroditus' instant and miraculous healing. Sometimes we get sick and sometimes we die due to illness or accident. Sometimes, for His purposes, He heals immediately, or later, or not at all here but with perfect healing that takes place in heaven. Now, if, like me, you were raised in legalism, very often we see **all** sickness as punishment. Not True. Yes, there is some sin that leads to death, but for the believer, it is never punishment!!

Paul sees Epaphroditus' healing as compassion and mercy from the LORD. He freely admits that the LORD was also merciful to him because Epaphroditus' death would heap up even more sorrow on Paul's back.

Rejoice with him when he returns to you and treat him well for the sacrifices he made for the LORD.

(Philippians 2: 29 NKJV) 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 asks that they rejoice in his return and acknowledge his service and sacrifice for the work of the LORD.

The phrase, "to supply what was lacking in your service toward me" wasn't a dig. Paul was simply acknowledging that they really didn't have the opportunity to help him being so far from Rome. The NLT translates it as, "while doing for me what you couldn't do from far away".

This last section of chapter 2 is strangely reminiscent of Paul's closing comments in other letters.

Mentioning others, giving some testimony and encouragement. But Paul is not done, and his letter continues.

So, what can we take away from this chapter as we enter chapter 3?

Any thoughts?

Consider how the Man Jesus lived a life of humility, a life of sacrificial giving and a life of love and compassion. Now, consider how the Son of God poured out His life as a fulfillment of ALL sacrifices, so that He could, purely through His grace, pour eternal life into us who receive it by faith.

This pouring out and pouring in isn't just for pastors or teachers. It's for us all. It's the response to the grace given to every believer.

([Philippians 3:1 NKJV](#)) Finally, my brethren, **rejoice in the Lord**. For me to write the same things to you *is* not tedious, but for you *it is* safe.

Paul continues but again, this is not the end of the letter. But fear not, chapter 4 starts with "therefore" and in 4:8, his "finally" is finally final!

Greek scholar Wuest say that the word finally in the Greek can be better translated as "...as for the rest", that is, here's the rest of my thoughts.