

RATHMINES BIBLE SCHOOL - 1962
(Magnetic Island)

PHILIPPIANS

Speaker: Brother B. McClure

Study #2 - Chapter 2

Now by this time you will have heard many expositions on the Word at this bible school. When you go away more than likely they will pass in the memory, our assurances that you won't let that happen, but we know in many cases that it does; but this second chapter of the Philippians, brethren, is one I'm going to ask you specifically not to forget. This is a very important chapter in the whole of scripture, particularly in verses 4 and 5, we have the principles of life which none of us, not one of us, should leave alone. 'Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, says Paul, which was also in Christ Jesus'. Those 2 verses form the very crux of this epistle, 'Let this mind, says Paul, be in you which also was in Christ Jesus', and as long as we display that mind, brethren, in every aspect of our life, whether it be at home or at work, amongst our brethren and sisters, and wherever we may be, that mind must permeate every action of ours. We say we belong to the ecclesia of God, we say we are the body of Christ, and we affirm that, Christ is the head of the ecclesia, and it is His mind that directs the affairs of the ecclesia. So when we walk in the way, we are allowing ourselves be lead by the mind of Christ as He determines the action of each brother and sister in the true ecclesia. So when we stray from the path, and when our actions deny that Christ is in us, then we have allowed the mind of flesh to take over and the mind of Christ is no longer operating in us so long as we have that mind, brethren. Now I want to impress this upon you as sincerely as I can, if we can only have that mind in us at all times, then we are assured of a position in the kingdom of God.

Toward the end of the first chapter, Paul asked the brethren at Philippi, if they would let their manner of citizenship be as that which becometh the gospel of Christ; that whether I come and see you or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs. that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel'. Here is a call by Paul to ecclesial unity; stand fast in one mind and one spirit and one purpose, one life action, and that ecclesia will prosper! We do pray that the ecclesia at Pancell, the ecclesia to which we belong, brethren, may profit by our recognition of that particular verse, if we in our ecclesias stand fast in that one spirit.

He goes on to say in chapter 2, 'That if there be therefore any consolation in Christ', and he's not doubting the fact that there is, but pointing out that as they may have benefited by being in Christ, so also should their mind be as the mind of Christ, in the development of the true man of God. 'If there be any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit', and this word occurs 6 times in this epistle, the word 'fellowship', and as we said the other day, it's an active participation in a common purpose. All active workers

together, there were not to be any sleeping partners amongst us, brethren; thereby we prove that we have contributed something to the partnership of God and therefore we sit back and wait for the returns. It's not like a company shareholding where we invest our money and sit back and wait for the returns. It's an active participation by every member of the ecclesia. 'Any fellowship of the Spirit', and there we have the activity of the mind, the mind which is directed to the things of the Spirit, and we display them in our everyday life. 'If any bowels of mercy' (the tender affections which are in Christ) if there be these things, brethren, at Philippi and you know very well there are because you have participated in them in the past, 'fill up my joy, he says, 'that ye be like minded'. You know, this idea of the **mind** runs right throughout this epistle particularly in chapter 2, and Paul is bringing up the mind of Jesus Christ here, he's revealing to us here in this chapter, the mind of Christ as He walked towards Galilee. From the very first moment that He began to realize His mission, to the time He expired upon the cross, that mind of Christ is revealed here, and also should be revealed in us.

We should have the same love, being of one accord (same word 'pauche'-5590-soul), being of one body, one life action striving together for the sake of the gospel, of one mind.

You know brethren, it's very hard to get that unity of mind within an ecclesia! but yet it was at Philippi, whilst not altogether completely a perfect ecclesia, it is no doubt the nearest that an ecclesia could get to, to be perfect. Here was an ecclesia which was enjoying a unity of mind; they were one-spirited in everything that they did, and they followed in the ways of Jesus Christ because He was of heaven. 'Let not one thing, he says in verse 3, 'be done through strife or vain glory', and these were the very things that were happening in Rome, as we saw in verse 15 of the first chapter, there were some who preached Christ through envy and strife. Paul says, 'don't let anything be done like that brethren, let not one thing be done through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves'.

The idea of 'strife' (2054) here, literally means 'those who labour for wages'. The idea of it is used of those to pay that they might gain a following; it is those who are social climbers and wish to get to the top and be preeminent among people. The word 'vain glory' (2756) means merely 'conceit', and so he says 'don't do anything with an ulterior motif, other than the display of the mind of Jesus Christ; and don't let conceit come into any aspect of our ecclesial life. I think if we reflect brethren, they are the two things that do more to bring trouble to an ecclesia than anything else, it's either done through strife or conceit; partly through social climbing or personality in the structure of an ecclesia, or it's done through

pure pride and conceit on behalf of brethren and sisters. Paul says, '**don't let this happen**'. I've seen what's happened at Rome and I've seen the fruit of it, don't let it happen at Philippi. Let the one mind of Jesus Christ be in you! The principle is, that in this 'lowliness' (5012) or 'humbleness of mind' as the word means, 'in humbleness of mind let each esteem another better than themselves'. That word 'esteem' (2233) means a definite thinking of the mind; it is not just a passing thought, it's an activity of the mind, brethren, and we have to esteem others better than ourselves.

Verse 4, 'Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on things of others'. We're to take heed, we're to take a special heed, not just to our own personal things, our own personal interests brethren, but also the personal interest of others; more than that we mustn't think that we ourselves are the best in the ecclesia, we mustn't think that if we weren't here that the ecclesia would crumble to the ground. We must look to others and see in them the goodness in them, that in this humbling process we might reckon them to be better than ourselves, and Paul here is making an appeal to them that they might exercise a humility of mind that they be not puffed up and become conceited in their own standing in the truth.

So he says in verse 5, 'Let this mind be in you which also was in Christ', and the idea expressed, brethren, is a habit of mind; you know we can do something once and we think we ought not to do it, we do it again, it's not so bad, and after a while it becomes a habit. Generally, it's a bad habit! Paul means to bring to attention something that is a good habit; he asks us to have a habit of mind, that is, it becomes purely a matter of habit that the mind of Christ is exercised in all that we do. Obviously, because we have the mind of the flesh, it is almost impossible, but through the strength which comes from God, because Paul says in the 13th verse of this chapter, 'that it is God who works in us; it's God who is able to give us the strength to accomplish that, then we can do it, and it can become a habit of mind, so that no matter where we be found and under what circumstances of life we're found, brethren, that habit of mind can be there. What was the habit of mind of Christ? The very things that we see in verses 3 and 4. What did He do? He was a man begotten in a very special way, here was a man who had been given so that He might accomplish so much and did He go through that with the idea in mind of being conceited or climbing up the social ladder? By no means, brethren, He did it for others; all that Christ did, He did it for us, and whilst He Himself benefited by what He did, nonetheless, the purpose of it, was that He should do something for His brethren, so that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. So the world had need of redemption and Christ was the medium of that redemption.

We come on then to verse 6 down to verse 11, we notice that in verse 5, Paul mentions the mind of Christ Jesus; he's speaking about the mind of Christ, he's also speaking about a man who's name is Jesus; he's speaking about a man who's name is Jesus and who was anointed, and by virtue of this, brethren, he's pinpointing the time when Jesus was born and from that time onward and from the time that He was anointed because as you know, these verses that follow are taken by most professing Christians to preach to us, the pre-existence and the co-equality of Christ with God. These verses are stated and quoted in proof of the Trinity, and yet we're speaking about Christ Jesus. Luke is very specific when he says, 'and His name shall be called Jesus', and from the moment He was born, brethren, He was Jesus from that time onwards, and He was the Christ by virtue of His anointing, anointed as it were from birth, at His baptism and at His resurrection. But it speaks to us of Jesus from the time that He was born, and from no previous time to that, because He did not exist before that time.

So we come to these verses which as one writer has stated, 'that the diversity of opinion provided amongst interpreters in regard to the meaning of the principal passage,

bearing on the subject of Christ's humiliation, is enough to fill the student with despair and to afflict him with intellectual paralysis', and might I add that he says this not so much to develop diversity of opinion amongst Christadelphians and others, but rather amongst professing Christians themselves; because even on these verses here, Trinitarians cannot agree and they go to great length in their theses, to explain their own points of view. Christadelphians come in with a different aspect altogether and that is the aspect of the truth.

So we read, 'Jesus Christ being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made Himself of no reputation and took upon Himself the form of a servant made in the likeness of men' and so on. We have in this word 'being', the fact that a word means, 'someone who was existing and who continued to exist'. The case and tense of this verb implies that and in the RV margin, it says concerning this word that being originally but that's not the idea brethren. The idea means, **someone who was and continues to exist in that same form**. It's speaking about Jesus Christ and it speaks about a time after He was born; He was in the form of God, He was also in the form of a servant; and we have here 2 parallel offices, connected at one and the same time, because Jesus who was and continued to exist as being in the form of God was also in the form of a servant, that is, by the aspect of His own mind, in what He could be as a servant. So we have the word 'form' or 'morphe' (3444) which speaks about the form or shape of an object or a person; it is the same word that you have in chapter 3 and verse 21 where Paul says concerning Jesus Christ, 'when He returns shall change our vile body or our humble body, that it might be fashioned or formed in shape like unto His glorious body'. There's a particular shape involved in a special aspect concerning the body of Jesus Christ. In that same body we shall be fashioned ourselves at the resurrection. Jesus was both in the form of God and in the form of a servant!

Now in Mark chapter 16 and at verse 12, we have the record where Jesus appeared to two men on the way to Emmaus, (and I must say brethren, I wish to apologize for an error in the notes and I think there are a number only in the quoted passages, I hope. Brother Martin wrote to me, 2 or 3 weeks before the bible school commenced and said, 'I hope you have the notes on the way because I did tell you, you had to do notes, didn't I?' In the same letter he mentioned the thunderings and curses of Mt. Ebal, that they would be thundered against me if I didn't do certain other things'. I wrote back to our brother John and said, 'No, you didn't tell me about the notes, the curses of Mt. Ebal were principles; the curses against him at that time were not'. Here in the notes I have Matthew 16 verse 14 and it should be Mark). In that record we have there, when Jesus appeared to these men on the way to Emmaus, verse 12, 'He appeared in another form (the same word 'morphe'); they now had their eyes opened and they should know Him and later He was revealed unto them. We notice in this verse that it wasn't the nature of Jesus Christ that was involved, it was His form, his outward appearance and so when they come back to Jesus being in the form of God, we see Him in the aspects of appearing in the form of God as mentally and morally. Jesus was God manifested in the flesh; we have in Romans 2 verse 20, it speaks about a form of knowledge, the same word is used again, 'a shape of knowledge', In 2 Timothy 3 verse 5, 'a form of godliness', and when you turn to the 12th chapter of Romans we can see how there's a

definite shape or form of the mind and this is the shape or form which is involved in this particular chapter in Philippians.

Romans 12 verse 2, he says asking them to submit their bodies to be a living sacrifice; wholly acceptable unto God. 'Be not conformed to this world, but be ye 'transformed', and there we have a word which is 'metamorphoo'(3339) a changing of the shape, our minds at one time were directed to the things of the flesh; Paul says, change the shape of that mind and conform it to the pattern of the mind of Christ. 'Be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God'. So Jesus Christ being in the form of God, both mentally and morally, He 'thought' (2233). verse 6, and here again we have that definite aspect of the mind, it's a careful reasoning of the mind, it means to 'esteem or account or reckon', and so in the mind of Christ there was no esteeming or reckoning equality with God. The word thought it not robbery to be equal with God, if you notice in the Diaglot there are many references and renditions of this phrase given, but means as the Diaglot rightly says 'didn't think it a thing to be grasp at'; and the word 'robbery' (726) as in other places in the scripture as a verb, always speaks of 'something being taken by force'. You'll notice in the New Testament, and they are quite illuminate where things are taken by force, things are stolen or plundered. Jesus Christ did not have this mind! there was no esteeming on His part, to grasp at by force or to steal or to plunder an equality with God, and yet brethren, there was an equality, there was undoubtedly an equality between God and Christ; when Jesus says, 'I and my Father are one'. When Zechariah says concerning the 'man who is my fellow', there is an equality but it was an equality of the mind, brethren. because Jesus revealed the mind of God so completely.

But what did Jesus do? Verse 7, 'He made himself of no reputation' (2758), He emptied Himself as the word means. Jesus poured out His soul onto death, there was an emptying of Himself of any conceit, of any vain glory or strife; He would be no party to these things, but there was only the one and certain way in which He could please the Father, but emptying Himself of these vanities of the flesh and being an obedient servant unto God. So Jesus made a determination on His own behalf; He made a determination that He would follow God in every way. So what the Father wanted Him to do, He would do it! and He would not stray from it. What was empty? everything that reflected the flesh was empty. 'Let this mind be in you which also was in Christ', He's the revelation of the mind of God; this is what He did, seeking not for Himself but for the things of others; seeking not of His own interest but thinking of the interest of others. Can we do the same, brethren? Can we honestly say that mind is in us? We know only too well, we always think of ourselves first and last, we care not at times of the things of others, we become very selfish in our motives and all we want to do is please ourselves.

So he goes on in verse 7 to say, 'And He took upon Him the form of a servant'. Here was an attitude of mind. Jesus voluntarily took upon Himself the form of a servant. He was the form of God and of a servant at the same time; it's obvious that He's speaking about the manifestation of a God and of a servant; He is speaking of the demeanour of God and the demeanour of a servant; He says to the apostles, 'I am among you as He that serveth', and so He did, He served His brethren. There are many passages in the

Old Testament, that speak to us brethren, that speak of the servitude of Jesus Christ. I think there is none better than Psalm 40 verses 6 to 8, 'Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened', and here this Messianic psalm is speaking concerning the Christ. God didn't delight in the sacrifice of bullocks and rams; He didn't delight in the sin offerings and the burnt offerings of Israel, what God wanted was a contrite and a humble heart. 'Mine ear hast Thou opened', says Jesus, and the Word there speaks of a servant, who when the year of the Sabbath came along, he could freedom from his servitude, he could go free; but if the servant was pleased to dwell with his master, he could go back to him and say, I prefer to stay with you and be your servant for ever or for the rest of his life. So they went through a formality whereby the servant's ear was bored and pierced and he was pierced to the doorpost of the master's house. So that man then went around Israel, that servant, with a mark in his ear to show that he was a servant for life, and that he would be obedient to every word of his master, that he would subjugate every right of his, to his master's mind. That's what Jesus Christ did, He was a servant of God voluntarily, He didn't seek His freedom at the end of the Sabbath but His ear was pierced and it was opened, it was receptive, and Jesus went about with His ear open all the time to the word of God. Therein lay His strength, 'burnt offering and sin offering Thou hast not required; then said I, lo, I come in the volume of the book and it is written of Me, I delight to do thy will, O God. Yea, thy law is in my heart'. So Jesus Christ subjugated His own feelings and His own rights that God alone might be served. That He would be obedient to everything the Father said and that Law was in His heart! It has to be in our heart too, brethren, we have to have that Law within our heart and our mind must be influenced as well. When you turn to the 50th chapter of Isaiah verse 4, 'He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned. The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting' and so on. There's the attitude of mind of Jesus Christ.

So in the remaining verses of that particular section, in Philippians in chapter 2, we have there details concerning the servant; of how He was made in the likeness of men, how He came to be exactly as all other men; how that there were those in the days in Israel who said, 'isn't this Joseph's son? isn't He the carpenter's son? we know from whence He is, but from whence the Christ comes, we do not know!' He was just like all other men! He was no different, there was no ostentatious display by this man. He was found in fashion as a man, showing in these verses, b&s, His absolute mentality; there was no difference between Him and us as far as our constitution is concerned. But He humbled Himself! He was obedient, not only was He obedient to the will of God as far as the Word was concerned, He was obedient as far as being obedient unto death; and not only being obedient unto death, brethren, He was obedient to death upon the cross. This was needful in the divine plan that Jesus Christ should be lifted up that He might draw all men unto Him, so the crucifixion of the flesh was necessary that an exhibition might be made to all men!

Paul then says, 'Wherefore, because of all this, because of the attitude of mind in Jesus Christ in all these things, God has highly exalted Him; God has exalted Him above all

other things and God has given Him a name. That word 'given' brethren, is a word which means (5483) 'an act of grace', an act of favour' and if ever there was a verse which proves that Jesus Christ was not co-equal with the Father, it is this one! God was pleased to give Him as an act of favour, the divine name; a name which is above every name, so that at that

name every knee should bow, every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. For the Trinitarians we ask, if that which transpired for Jesus in Jesus Christ, if it was for the glory of God the Father, what about the glory of God the Holy Spirit? Doesn't he come into all this? wasn't it also for his glory, if there were such a person in existence? of course, that doesn't apply, brethren. Things in heaven, the saints they are the ones who are in the heavenlies, those in the earth, I believe, are the Jews, they shall be the constituted heirs of the land of Israel in the millennium, and those under the earth, the multitudes of the fishes of the nations, all shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Here is the supreme example of humility, brethren, it is an example we ought to follow.

So Paul goes on to speak concerning the Philippians themselves. Verse 12, 'Wherefore my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as to my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling'. As Jesus with fear and strong tears worked out His salvation, we have to do the same brethren. We have to work out our salvation, and as he goes on to say in verse 13, 'Don't despair that the way is too hard', don't despair and say we can't do it! because if that mind is in us, which also was in Christ, if we think of others and not our own, if we care for their welfare and their spiritual well-being as well as our own, 'then it is God which worketh in us, both to will and to do of His good pleasure'. It is God that works in us and it is His strength which accomplishes that which is accomplished in us. You notice in the word 'presence' (3952) in verse 12, it is also used in the previous chapter, brethren, in verse 26 'coming'; you notice in chapter 1 verse 26, 'that your rejoicing may be more abundant in Christ Jesus, for me by my coming' we have the word 'parousia' (3952) a word which means 'presence'. The Jehovah Witnesses take this word and say it relates to the invisible presence of Jesus Christ. Paul says concerning his presence or his coming to them, that their rejoicing might abound more; in verse 12, he says 'you've always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence (666) 'apousia', a word which is the opposite to 'presence'. Paul was to be there in body, he was no invisible spirit, as far as he was concerned.

Verse 13, 'For it is God which worketh in you', brethren, it was God who was in Christ, reconciling the world; it was God who was in Paul working up the administration of reconciliation through the gospel of peace; it is God who can work in us to do the self-same

thing. 'Do all things, he says, without murmurings and disputings', verse 14, these are the very outcome of those things which are brought to pass through strife and vain glory; Paul says, please don't let that which has happened in Rome happen to you, and in this he is drawing a lesson to Israel of the past. The words which occur in verses 14 and 15, are those which are taken from the song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32, 'do all things without murmurings and disputings'. The murmurings, the Septuagint uses that

same word for the murmurings of Israel in the wilderness, Israel murmured, Paul says, **don't do what Israel did**, don't murmur against the instructions of God. These disputings, these oppositions to authority, remember in effect, Korah, Dathan and Abiram and what happened to them; when there were disputings in the camp; remember Miriam when she thought she should take authority upon herself?; remember what she did when she disputed with Moses? Don't let it happen in Philippi, brethren! because if it does, the selfsame things that happened in the Old Testament will happen to you. You've seen the effect at Rome and you know what strife can cause in an ecclesia; don't let it happen! and I say the same to us here, brethren, don't let it happen in our ecclesia. Once vanity and conceit and self-seeking comes into ecclesial affairs, that ecclesia is ruined. It's so easy to ruin an ecclesia, brethren, it's very hard to build it up again; and once those seeds of self-seeking and conceit are found in an ecclesia, it's terribly hard to get them out again. It takes individual hard labour and effort to do so.

Verse 15, he says, 'that we might be blameless and harmless, the sons of God'. Do you see how he refers to both Israel and also to Jesus Christ; blameless and harmless, the son of God. Israel - they weren't blameless as the 32nd chapter of Deuteronomy tells us, he says concerning them, Moses, 'ye are a crooked and perverse generation'; concerning Jesus Christ, harmless, blameless, the son of God. We must be the same! Philippians 2 verse 15 says, 'be blameless and harmless the sons of God, without rebuke or without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation among whom ye shine as lights in the world.' In Philippi they stood out amongst the darkness and perversity of that age; in Philippi, but for the ecclesia of God, they were in complete and utter darkness; 'you are in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation. What I want you to do brethren, is to shine ye as lights of the world, shine out midst that darkness that men may behold you as luminaries and they might be influenced by the light. Here Paul is making an allusion both to the days of creation, when the lights were set in the heavens to divide the darkness. Also later, to rule the world, he's also making a reference to the Urim and the Thummim, those bright lights and those standards which the high priest wore, as an evident token that the reflected glory was in Israel, it should have been in the whole of Israel, but they were a crooked and perverse nation, said Moses, but in the midst of that crooked and perverse nation there was a reflected light through the glory of God. 'Be like that' says Paul, be the reflected glory of God amongst a wicked and perverse nation; shine out and be luminaries in the darkness of the world in which you live'.

We have the words in Daniel 12 verse 3, speaking concerning this time when we shall shine forth in brightness; concerning those who'll come forth to a resurrection of life, 'And they that be wise shall shine with the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever'. Also in 2 Peter 1 verse 19, 'We also have a more sure word of prophecy whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place until the day dawn and the day star arise in your hearts'. Shine forth brethren, in the midst of a wicked and perverse nation, be the reflected light of the glory of God and God will ever let you at times, that you'll be a star supreme in the heavenlies in the age to come.

Chapter 2 verse 16, 'Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain. Yea, he says, I would be offered, I would pour out my life in the sacrifice and service of your faith'. Paul was prepared to do that on behalf of the brethren at Philippi; 'For the same cause do ye joy, and rejoice with me!' Now in the last few verses of that chapter. brethren, we find two men are brought before us. The one is Timothy and the other is Epaphroditus, Timothy is styled by Paul as, 'Paul's dearly beloved son in the faith', a remarkable title for a young man; my dearly beloved son in the faith, concerning whom in Acts 16 verse 2, says they knew the proof of that man; he was well reported of them. Paul says, 'I trust to send him to you shortly, that I may also be of good comfort when I know your state'.

He says concerning Timothy, 'For I have no man like minded' and the word 'like' (2470) there is the same word as 'equal' as we have in verse 6, 'I have no man who is of equal mind'. Here is a man who was influenced in his mind, here was a young man that Paul could send out to Philippi with complete confidence; he had no doubt that what Timothy did that he could say 'amen' to it. He knew very well that when Timothy went to Philippi, that what Timothy did was for the elevation of the truth. He had no doubts about him because he knew the mind of Timothy; he had seen Timothy display that mind in every vicissitude of Paul's life, he had no doubt, no hesitancy whatever, in sending Timothy to them. 'A man who will naturally care for your state', you know, those at Rome would seek their own things not the things of Christ Jesus. As Christ sought not his own things but the things of his brethren, so Timothy sought not his own things but the things of his brethren and the things relating to Jesus Christ. 'Ye know the proof of him, says Paul, 'that as the son with the father, he has served as a slave with me in the gospel'; how so much as the words of verses 6 to 11, as the son with the father, he has served as a slave with me. Jesus Christ had served with His Father in the reconciliation of the world. Timothy with Paul the same work was involved. Verse 23, 'Him therefore I hope to send presently, and says Paul, 'I trust also myself to come' when the outcome of the trial is named.

In verses 25 to 30, we have this brother, Epaphroditus. We don't hear very much of him in the scriptures, brethren, but he's a wonderful brother indeed. He's a brother that we can copy in every detail; did you notice in verse 25, what Paul says concerning him. 'He is my brother', well of course, he was Paul's brother, so were all the brethren of Paul's, but Paul is singling him out especially and saying, he's my brother; what a wonderful commendation that is! Paul was happy and prepared to say he is my brother completely. 'he is my companion in labour', the work that Paul had done in the labours for the truth, Paul was a companion with him. There was a relationship between these brethren that was unique. Paul had laboured for his life, so had Epaphroditus! 'he was a fellow soldier', and the aspect of a soldier comes to our mind, a man who is waging a warfare, the rigours and discipline of war and with one object in view that the warfare should be accomplished. Paul says concerning Epaphroditus, he's my fellow soldier; I'm in the battle line right next to him, and I'm proud to be there! What a wonderful brother this is! I wonder what Paul would say about us? I wonder if he would call us, my brother, my companion in labour; could he call us his fellow soldier? Are we like those of whom Paul says, 'don't be like those who are breaking ranks and acting like a frightened wild

horse and breaking our ranks and stampeding? Not Epaphroditus, he stood by Paul as a fellow soldier.

'He's your messenger' and here we have the word 'apostle' (652). We see here that Epaphroditus was an apostle, not an apostle of Jesus Christ in the sense that he was sent by Jesus Christ, but he was sent by the Philippians with a gift for Paul and therefore, he came to him with a purpose, he was one sent. Epaphroditus (1891) was a Gentile, his name implies that because his name is taken from the goddess Aphrodite, and it's obvious that his name was dedicated to the worship of that goddess, but now he had become associated with the gospel of peace and whilst his name wasn't changed, brethren, his mind was! So there was in his life a display of the mind of Jesus Christ and the verses which follow show that; 'he that ministered or served my needs' (that word should not be 'my wants'. 'He longed after you all, verse 26, and was full of heaviness because that ye had heard that he had been sick'. Just imagine, Epaphroditus was upset because the Philippians knew that he was sick; because Epaphroditus knew just how the Philippians would feel for him when they knew that he was sick; a great fellow feeling between these brethren and this ecclesia.

Verse 27, 'Yes, indeed he was sick, nigh unto death; but God had mercy on him, and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. I sent him therefore the more carefully (or the more eagerly, as Rotherham says) that when ye see him again, that ye might rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful. Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such in reputation'. We have a great example here, brethren, that those who serve in the truth we should hold in reputation. Not that we honour them above others in the sense that we give them glory and praise for what they're doing, but we listen to what they say, we listen to their ministrations upon the Word because they are ministering to our needs, and they have something that they can give us and help us on the road through life, we should hold them in honour and respect and reputation.

Notice in verse 30, 'Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death' and as Rotherham says, 'running hazard' or Lockwood says, 'having gambled with his life'. Here was a man who had gambled his life away, brethren, for the truth. Not that he did stupid things, in doing things wildly and just throwing caution to the wind, but here was a man whose whole life was given over for the truth even if it killed him, he would carry that work out. He worked and worked and worked struggling on for the service of the truth. You see, he had been redeemed from something, but for the grace of God, he would have been worshipping that goddess! He would never have known of the grace of God, but because he had been turned around, because now he pursued the Christ, he gave everything over to Christ. So he gambled his life, hazarded his life away, brethren, 'that he might supply your lack of service toward me'. Those words don't mean that the Philippians had a lack of service for Paul, but rather as the Diaglot says, 'to supply the remainder of your ministrations to me'. So Epaphroditus came to Paul with a message, had become sick in Rome, had been sick nigh unto death, and so Paul was going to send him back to them, because Paul knew how greatly they would be rejoicing to receive this brother back in their midst.

What's the lesson, brethren? Primarily, **the mind of Christ**. If you take nothing else away from this conference but that, then I, anyway am pleased. If you take away with you the resolve that the mind of Christ shall be with you in every action, and I mean every action, brethren, not just when we come to the Sunday morning meeting or come with the brethren, it's easy to be good then and to appear as though we're good, but in every circumstance of life; in business, at work, at home, everywhere the mind of Christ. Secondly, let us shine forth as luminaries in a dark world. Let men behold our light, and it will be a bright light, not just a mere wispy thing that we can hardly see, but a light which reflects the glory of God. Christ should shine from us, brethren, here are His characteristics, a servant unto death. Our life brethren is dedicated to death; we are dead, says Paul, in Romans 6, we are dead to sin, therefore, let us not live any longer'. So these lessons, brethren, can help us, I feel, if we take them from this place and enact them in our lives from this day forward.