

## FULL COMMITMENT

Friday, May 1st 2020

***Philippians 2:25-30***

*“But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, co-worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs. For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill. Indeed he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow. Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you may be glad and I may have less anxiety. So then, welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor people like him, because he almost died for the work of Christ. He risked his life to make up for the help you yourselves could not give me.”*

The Philippian church had good intentions and wanted to support and encourage Paul by sending him a monetary donation (Phil. 4:18). But did you also notice that this good deed almost brought Paul greater sorrow? No one could have probably prevented Epaphroditus from getting so sick that he nearly died. But we should ask ourselves if this donation really was worth the church sending one of its own members on such a long and dangerous journey in order to help another Christian who was stuck in Rome! Epaphroditus, the messenger, and the Philippian church must have been aware of the great risk of an accident or sickness on such a journey. (Rome ↔ Philippi: more than 1000km! On foot!)

But Paul stresses here that the church should honor and recognize Epaphroditus for putting his life on the line for Christ by travelling to Rome despite the dangers. Even if Epaphroditus didn't end up surviving his sickness, I don't think Paul would have seen the donation as a bad idea. If anything, Epaphroditus risking his life revealed what was in his heart: a fervent love for God and His church, and a deep concern for advancing God's good news by helping his brother, Paul, who was in need.

We can't always plan for sickness and crises; they just happen. But we should be sure to keep in mind God's mission to go out into the world despite all worries and tough situations and love our neighbor under any and every circumstance!

Reflect on where you might be losing sight of Christ and His mission and because you're worried about losing something, such as your reputation, status, relationships, or even your life, as in Epaphroditus' extreme case. Why do you think Epaphroditus was so committed? What sort of commitment do you wish to give God?

***Prayer:*** *Jesus, please show me how valuable full commitment to You is. Thank You that I know You have given me Your Spirit to grow me in my commitment to You, so that I don't have to do it out purely out of my own strength. Amen.*

-Eva Deuchert-

