

Living Like Epaphroditus
By Trey Sullins

What does it mean to be a good person? You might find different answers for this from nearly everyone you talk to. Some claim kindness, compassion, a caring heart, or charity makes a good person. The Bible reveals to us many good people which are described only in a few words. There is a pattern which you notice about them: their good qualities are all centered around a life and work for the Lord God. One great example of this is Epaphroditus in Philippians 2:25 and 4:8.

Epaphroditus was a “brother.” We do not know very much about his background, but he was a good Christian. “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” (Philippians 2:25). Paul refers to Epaphroditus as a brother. As a brother, he was a part of the family of God. First John 3:1 points out that God’s great love has allowed us to be called the children of God. Like Epaphroditus, do other Christians consider us as individuals to be brothers or sisters? Do they notice and feel the kinship based upon our love and actions we show them? If we are to be like Epaphroditus then we need to make sure that this is the case.

Epaphroditus was also a “fellow worker.” Philippians 2:25 says “fellow worker.” The book of Philippians was most likely written near the end of Paul’s life while he was a prisoner in Rome. This means that Epaphroditus was working with and helping a prisoner of the Roman government! While imprisoned Paul would have been much more restricted in what he was able to do as an evangelist so Epaphroditus helped Paul in these areas. His good work is also evident in that Paul called him a “fellow soldier” in the same text. A soldier is one who fights for a cause and endures whatever hardships may come. Philippians 2:30 reveals that Epaphroditus showed these same qualities, “because for the work of Christ he came close to death, not regarding his life.” Think about how much time we spend a week on different activities. If Paul saw our daily lives, would he say that we are fellow workers?

Epaphroditus was a messenger. To the Philippians he was a messenger bringing the good tidings and encouragements from Paul; To Paul he was messenger bringing the “acceptable sacrifice” from the Philippians. Paul was a man constantly on the move preaching, teaching, serving, and all while being persecuted. Paul certainly knew what a good messenger of God looked like. Because he was acting as an apostle, one sent, of Paul then he was doing a great work for the strengthening of the church. As a faithful Christian and one sent by Paul there is no doubt that he was also taking the word of God to those which he met. Once more would we consider ourselves to be messengers? How often do we “ring the message out” as we sing?

Though we do not know much about the man he certainly was a great Christian working and doing the things which are required of God! We know a lot about other figures like Paul and Peter, but the work of the early church was greatly expanded due to the efforts of thousands of lesser known people. Much like us today. Our names will most likely never be known among many and it does not matter. What matters is that we live like Epaphroditus by being members of God’s family, fellow workers in the kingdom, and messengers of the holy word of God.