

OUR MISSIONARY (OUR EPAPHRODITUS)

PHILIPPIANS 2:25-30

BACKGROUND: A missionary like Epaphroditus in humility values others above himself. (**Philippians 2:3**) Missionaries want people to have what they have and will go to the ends of the earth to share the good news of Jesus.

GOES ON OUR BEHALF. A church can feel like a comfortable place, but a mission field usually does not. When missionaries go out, they are on the front lines doing battle with the enemies of Christ. That is why Paul calls Epaphroditus his brother, coworker, fellow soldier, and their messenger. The whole church could not go to his mission field, but he went on their behalf. (**Philippians 2:25, fn 2:25, I Corinthians 3:7-9, fn 3:7-9, John 4:34-38, fn 4:35, Luke 10:2-3, fn 10:2, fn 10:3**) *What would it take for you to be a missionary?*

RISKS EVERYTHING. Missionaries' livelihood is nearly always at stake, and their lives may also be at risk; but God's mercy and His grace give them assurance that He will never leave them or forsake them. (**Philippians 2:26-27, Mark 8:34-35, fn 8:35, Luke 14:25-27, fn 14:27, Luke 9:23-26, fn 9:24-25, John 10:27-30, fn 10:28-29**) *In what way could you experience "riches" like a missionary?*

DESERVES HIGHEST HONOR. Hansen says that Epaphroditus' homecoming "calls for a standing ovation, wholehearted embracing, and many other expressions of overwhelming gratitude to God that Epaphroditus is well again and that he has successfully completed his mission." Paul urges the church "to give (him) a really great banquet and a place of honor rather than a simple potluck supper and a quick nod for his service...Paul uses the welcome that (he) should receive as a model for the way to honor people like him...Ultimately, the work that Epaphroditus did was commissioned by Christ." G. Walter Hansen, The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Letter to the Philippians, p. 208. (**Philippians 2:29-30, II Corinthians 8:22-24, I Corinthians 16:15-18, I Thessalonians 5:12-13, fn 5:12-13**) *How does your church honor its missionaries?*

How is the honor given to Epaphroditus and people like him really honor given to Christ?

Are you taking time to experience the presence of the Holy Spirit with the Living Word teaching you and giving you His joy, His love, and His peace?