

Philippians 2:30

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.

Analysis

Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me (ὅτι διὰ τὸ ἔργον Χριστοῦ μέχρι θανάτου ἤγγισεν, παραβολευσάμενος τῇ ψυχῇ, ἵνα ἀναπληρώσῃ τὸ ὑμῶν ὑστέρημα τῆς πρός με λειτουργίας, hoti dia to ergon Christou mechri thanatou ēngisen, parboleusamenos tē psychē, hina anaplērōsē to hymōn hysterēma tēs pros me leitourgias)—Dia to ergon Christou ("because of the work of Christ") identifies cause: Epaphroditus nearly died in gospel service. Mechri thanatou ēngisen ("he came near to death")—mechri recalls Christ's obedience "unto death" (2:8). Epaphroditus follows Christ's pattern.

Parboleusamenos tē psychē ("having risked his life")—parboleuomai ("to risk, gamble, hazard") is gambling language. He gambled his psychē ("life, soul"). Purpose: hina anaplērōsē to hymōn hysterēma ("to supply your lack")—anaplēroō ("fill up, complete") what was hysterēma ("lacking, deficiency"). Tēs pros me leitourgias ("of your service toward me")—leitourgias ("service, ministry") is the support they couldn't personally deliver. Epaphroditus represented them. His near-death completed their service. This verse climaxes the section (vv. 25-30): Epaphroditus embodied Christ-hymn self-giving (2:5-11), deserving highest honor (v. 29).

Historical Context

The 800+ mile journey from Philippi to Rome was dangerous. Epaphroditus risked everything to represent the Philippians. 'Risking his life' (paraboleusamenos) language later inspired early church orders of parabolani—believers who risked infection to care for plague victims. Epaphroditus is their prototype. Completing the Philippians' 'lack of service' doesn't criticize them—distance prevented personal care; Epaphroditus stood in their place. Honor belongs to proxy servants.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. Who has 'risked their life' (paraboleusamenos) in service to Christ and to you?
2. How does Epaphroditus's near-death 'for the work of Christ' (dia to ergon Christou) exemplify 2:5-11?
3. What 'lack of service' (hysterēma leitourgiās) can you supply for others unable to serve directly?

Interlinear Text

ὅτι	διὰ	τὸ	ἔργον	τοῦ	Χριστοῦ	μέχρι	θανάτου
Because	for	G3588	the work	G3588	of Christ	unto	death
G3754	G1223		G2041		G5547	G3360	G2288
ἥγγισεν	παραβουλευσάμενος	τῇ	ψυχῇ	ἴνα	ἀναπληρώσῃ		
he was nigh	not regarding	G3588	his life	to	supply		
G1448	G3851		G5590	G2443	G378		
τὸ	ὑμῶν	ὑστέρημα	τῆς	πρός	με	λειτουργίας	
G3588	your	lack	G3588	toward	me	of service	
G5216	G5303		G4314	G3165	G3009		

Additional Cross-References

1 Corinthians 16:17 (Parallel theme): I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part they have supplied.

Acts 20:24 (Parallel theme): But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

Philippians 4:10 (Parallel theme): But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.

2 Corinthians 12:15 (Parallel theme): And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved.

Philippians 4:18 (Parallel theme): But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.